

‘Off to Moscow with no passports and no money’: the 1921 Spanish syndicalist delegation to Russia

Arturo Zoffmann Rodriguez

European University Institute, Florence, Italy

Abstract: This article will follow the steps of the 1921 Spanish syndicalist delegation to revolutionary Russia. It will use the delegation as a window into the revolutionary subculture of post-war Europe and into the experience of foreign representatives in early Soviet Russia. Particular attention will be paid to the complex ways in which syndicalist militants that were strongly influenced by anarchism grappled with the realities of Soviet Russia, to argue that the thought process foreign visitors traversed was often contradictory, being simultaneously attracted and repelled by the Bolshevik regime.

Key words: Syndicalism, Bolshevism, anarcho-syndicalism, CNT, Russian Revolution, Third International, travel, Spain

Introduction

The years 1917-1921 were characterized by political instability and revolutionary effervescence across Europe. In the eyes of many, the Bolshevik Revolution heralded the downfall of the capitalist system, and Soviet Russia became a beacon flare for revolutionaries everywhere. One of the countries where the impact of the Russian Revolution was felt the most was Spain. On the

opposite side of Europe, it was often labelled 'the Russia of the West', a country characterised by its backwardness and where an increasingly restless labour movement, an impoverished peasantry, daunting national and colonial questions combined into an explosive tinderbox.¹ Indeed, like Russia, Spain would also be shaken by revolutionary upheaval in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is therefore no surprise that the news of the Russian Revolution arrived in Spain as a bombshell.²

Whereas in other European countries the revolutionary appeal of the Bolsheviks was often taken up by left-wing tendencies within Social Democracy, in Spain the most important harbingers of social revolution came from the anarchist tradition. The anti-statist *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (National Confederation of Labour, CNT) became an enthusiastic champion of Soviet Russia.

The CNT has often been placed in the cosmos of revolutionary syndicalism, an international movement that crystallized in 1906-1912, inspired by the French *Confédération Nationale du Travail* (General Confederation of Labour, CGT). To the reformist, gradualist tactics of the Second International, syndicalism counterpoised a militant approach to the class struggle, based on direct action and the general strike; the centrality and self-sufficiency of trade unions; the hostility to the state and parliamentary politics, or at least the independence of the unions from political parties; the primacy of the economic over the political struggle; and the opposition to bureaucracies and rigid hierarchies. This movement was seen by some as the logical evolution of anarchism; indeed, it took many of its cues from Pierre Joseph Proudhon and the anti-authoritarian wing of the First International.³ In Spain, the anarchist colouring of the syndicalist movement was stronger than anywhere else. This is perhaps unsurprising in a country where anarchism had been remarkably influential since the 1870s.⁴ Indeed, in 1919 the CNT

formally endorsed the cause of ‘libertarian communism’ and proclaimed itself a ‘firm defender of the principles that guided the First International, as conceived by Bakunin’.⁵ Its membership however was not homogenous, and ranged from nonpartisan trade unionists weary of ideological hair-splitting to hard-line anarchists.⁶

In Spain’s *Trienio Bolchevista* (Bolshevik Triennium) of 1918-21, when the country was gripped by unprecedented social agitation, the CNT was able to grow significantly, boasting almost 800,000 members in 1919 and displacing the socialists of the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party) from the helm of the Spanish labour movement. The generalized optimism and enthusiasm of these years clouded the ideological divergences between the Bolsheviks and the libertarian CNT, which affiliated to the Third International in 1919. What is more, the appeal of the CNT in these years was not unrelated to its capacity to associate itself with the Russian Revolution and to pose as the Spanish counterpart of the Bolsheviks.⁷

By 1921, the revolutionary tide in Spain and the rest of Europe began to ebb, tempering the enthusiasm about the Russian Revolution. Repression against the labour movement intensified, while Spanish anarcho-syndicalists were dragged into an attrition war with the authorities and with right-wing gunmen. In the years 1921-22, the majority of the CNT began to turn against the Russian communists, reasserting their anarcho-syndicalist traditions, while a minority tendency grouped around the newspaper *Lucha Social* became lastingly committed to Bolshevism. By June 1922, after a bitter debate with the pro-Bolsheviks, the anarcho-syndicalists managed to disaffiliate the CNT from the Third International, reaffirming its libertarian, anti-statist character.

In the period of CNT membership in the Third International, two official delegations were sent to Russia. The first was in the summer of 1920, when Ángel Pestaña attended the second congress of the Third International. Pestaña was a veteran syndicalist who was sceptical of the Russian Revolution. His trip to Russia, where he met Piotr Kropotkin and other leading Russian anarchists, further dampened his views on the Bolsheviks. However, his arrest upon his arrival in Spain delayed the presentation of the report outlining the negative impressions he had during his visit.⁸ In 1921, a larger group composed of Andreu Nin, Joaquín Maurín, Jesús Ibáñez, Hilario Arlandis and Gaston Leval participated in the founding conference of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), the trade union front of the Third International. What follows is a detailed account of the second CNT delegation to Russia. It will focus mostly on the personal aspects of the trip and the experiences of the delegates, but will also situate the mission in Spanish and international labour politics and assess its political significance and ulterior impact.

The historiography on this mission remains fragmentary. Different works have touched on the 1921 delegation, but have often done so in the passing in broader studies on the CNT, the RILU, the international syndicalist movement, or in biographies of some of its protagonists. They have therefore tended to look at particular aspects of the delegation and only at certain sources; a comprehensive analysis of the delegation and its significance is yet to be written.⁹

This article will bring together a wide range of sources on the mission, some well-known to the field, such as Joaquín Maurín's *Revolución y contrarrevolución en España*; others seldom cited and understudied, such as Gaston Leval's unpublished memoirs or Pere Foix's autobiography. Other documents used in this paper have, to my knowledge, never been used before. The latter include the minutes of the 1922 Zaragoza conference, where the CNT discussed the behaviour of the 1921 mission; the memoirs of delegate Jesús Ibáñez; or the reports filed by

Deleted: ,

the Spanish police and by the German and French embassies, which tracked the movements of the delegates.¹⁰

Several aspects make the mission particularly interesting. The large size of the delegation has left us a wealth of accounts that can be cross-referenced. This cannot be done with Pestaña's trip, of which he was virtually the only chronicler. The records on the 1921 delegation also vary in their views and interpretations. Joaquín Maurín, Andreu Nin, Hilario Arlandis, and Jesús Ibáñez were sympathetic towards the Soviet regime, although their communist leanings have often been exaggerated, having been painted as 'Marxists in syndicalist clothing'.¹¹ Their support for the Bolsheviks was strengthened in the course of the visit. Nin, Maurín, and Ibáñez had only joined the CNT in 1918-19, and, although they had sincerely embraced syndicalism, they had not fully imbibed the libertarian culture that suffused Spanish syndicalist milieux.¹² Conversely, the additional delegate, Gaston Leval, was a veteran anarchist who became even more unsympathetic towards the Soviet regime upon his return from Russia.

Joaquín Maurín was a teacher by profession, born in the Catalan-speaking Franja of Aragon, who had initially flirted with socialist and republican ideas.¹³ He had converted to syndicalism after attending the national congress of the CNT in 1919, where syndicalism had struck him as 'more real, more audacious, more youthful'.¹⁴ Andreu Nin, born in 1892 in El Vendrell, in Tarragona, and also a teacher, had been a member of the socialist party until the radicalising effect of the Russian Revolution and the socialists' reticence to support the Third International had impelled him to join the CNT.¹⁵ As he put it before the CNT congress of 1919, 'from the day that the Socialist Party decided to persist in its outdated forms, I resigned to fight unconditionally on your side in the battle of the pure class struggle'.¹⁶ Jesús Ibáñez (alias 'Toño') born in 1890 in Santoña and a carpenter by profession, had also been a member of the socialist

party and, like Nin, felt constrained by the reformist policies of the socialists. He was drawn towards the CNT, which was seen as the Spanish equivalent of the Bolsheviks: 'I felt closer to the methods of the anarchists of the CNT and to the philosophy of the Russian Bolsheviks'.¹⁷ Maurín provides a vignette of this picaresque youth: 'he was young, around thirty, was attracted by adventure, and, more importantly, he detested the jack plane'.¹⁸ The information gathered by the Spanish government described him in similar terms, albeit less affectionately: 'they say he was a carpenter, lazy, uncultivated, but very conceited'.¹⁹ Hilario Arlandis, a marble cutter, born in Valencia in 1888, was a seasoned anarcho-syndicalist who, however, had been seduced by Bolshevism.²⁰ In the 1919 congress, he had actively called for 'affiliation to the Third International because it embodies all of our aspirations'.²¹ Gaston Leval, a Frenchman who resided in Barcelona, was an 'orthodox' anarchist who from the outset felt lukewarm about Bolshevism. As he put it in his memoirs, 'more educated from a theoretical point of view, we harboured reservations about those who claimed to lead the world revolution'.²² He was a member of the Catalan Federation of Anarchist Groups, and was invited to join the delegation so that the views of the 'pure' anarchist tendencies of the CNT were represented.

In addition to the extensive accounts of the journey by Maurín, Ibáñez, and Leval, other figures they encountered during their trip wrote about their impressions of the Spanish delegation. Victor Serge and Alfred Rosmer, former syndicalists who had embraced Marxism after the Russian Revolution, befriended the *cenetistas* (CNT militants). Catalan anarchist Pere Foix (alias León Xifort) travelled to Russia with the CNT delegates, leaving an impression of the trip in his memoirs. Bruno Lladó and Francisco Durán, two *cenetistas* who also travelled to Russia in 1921, wrote a series of articles on the delegation. In addition, the Spanish authorities, aided by their embassies abroad, followed the steps of the representatives.

This wealth of information allows for a comprehensive snapshot of the journey to be drawn and provides a window into the experience of foreign delegates travelling to revolutionary Russia: how they undertook the dangerous trip across a convulsive Europe, their activities in Russia, their relations with their hosts, the networks they created in the course of the journey. Studies on travel to the early Soviet Union have tended to focus on the Stalinist period, and have arguably overstressed the ‘insularity’ of the country in 1917-1921.²³ This paper will counterbalance these narratives to provide a more comprehensive and original view of travel in revolutionary Russia. An investigation into the Spanish delegation can also tell us a lot about the varying ways in which foreign delegates viewed the Soviet regime depending on their ideological background.

Finally, the journey was of great political significance for the Spanish labour movement. The CNT is commonly seen as an exception to the general decline of syndicalism after the First World War and the Russian Revolution. In other countries, syndicalist organizations either maintained their ideology (often strengthening its anarchist component) but declined, gravitated towards reformism, or fell under Moscow’s spell – or, more precisely, tended to split in these three directions.²⁴ The CNT, however, despite slackening in the mid-1920s, remained a mass, anarcho-syndicalist organization, the only of its kind in the interwar period.²⁵ It did nonetheless go through a phase of internal crisis in the early 1920s, largely elicited by the dilemmas and challenges raised by the Russian Revolution.

The 1921 delegation to Moscow represents a major flashpoint in the crisis of the CNT. It strained the relationship between the pro- and anti-Bolshevik tendencies of the confederation. The behaviour of the delegation became a bone of contention in the organization’s heated debates, with the anarcho-syndicalists accusing Maurín, Nin, Ibáñez, and Arlandis of being too soft

towards the communists. The polemic over the delegation paved the way for the anarchist campaign for disaffiliation from the RILU. In the course of the polemic with the pro-Bolsheviks, the anarchist identity of the CNT was reaffirmed, although not without taxing controversies. At the same time, the mission to Russia reaffirmed the pro-Bolshevik sympathies of the delegates (except Leval's), who in the following years drifted towards squarely Marxist positions.²⁶ In the 1930s, Nin and Maurín became the leaders of the anti-Stalinist *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, POUM), an important actor in the Spanish Civil War, immortalised by George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*.

The mandate of the Barcelona plenum

In the spring of 1921, in the midst of a violent clampdown against the syndicalist movement, the CNT received an invitation to attend the founding congress of the RILU. A national plenum was secretly held on April 28, 1921 in Barcelona, in the working-class neighbourhood of Poble Sec, to elect the delegation that was to travel to Moscow.²⁷ One of the attendants, Joaquín Maurín, recalled the precarious conditions in which the *cenetistas* gathered:

It was the highpoint of the *ley de fugas* [a repressive measure that de facto legalised the murder of syndicalists by the police], we met on a Sunday morning, in a shack made of canes, on the north face of the Montjuïc mountain. We arrived in twos, pretending to be ordinary strollers.²⁸

The plenum was attended by Andreu Nin, who represented the CNT's national committee; Joaquín Maurín, Lucas, and Joaquim Ferrer from Catalonia; Hilario Arlandis from Valencia; Jesús Ibáñez from Asturias; Jesús Arenas from Galicia; Arturo Parera and another, unnamed

delegate, from Aragon; and Beloso, from the North (Palencia and León).²⁹ The Andalusian Margalet was late to arrive.³⁰ The proceedings were terse:

A shovel on the frontline of the revolution... Lookouts posted outside. Nin, who has accidentally become the secretary of the CNT, chairs the meeting. A quick report: We don't even have a cent in the coffers! Everything is used for direct action or for prisoner relief. It goes without saying!³¹

After a brief discussion, Nin, Maurín, Ibáñez, and Arlandis were selected to travel to Moscow. Gaston Leval, from the Catalan Federation of Anarchist Groups, was also invited so that the 'pure' anarchist factions were represented. A key criterion for the selection of the delegates was the knowledge of foreign languages (the five men could speak French).³² It seems that the choice of such a large delegation, surprising at a time of hardship for the CNT, responded to the exhortations of Jaime Salán (alias Wilkens), a prominent Spanish anarchist. Salán had allegedly been corresponding with Nin after travelling in Russia, where he had grown sceptical about Bolshevism and believed that a large Spanish delegation would buttress the strength of syndicalism in Moscow.³³

The mandate that was given to the delegates at the plenum consisted of four points:

1. The need for autonomy in the trade union movement.
2. The acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat exercised by the trade unions of the CNT.
3. To accept an exchange of delegates between the Communist International and the RILU.
4. That the International is based in Moscow.³⁴

According to Maurín, the delegation received an additional mandate: to try to secure Soviet weapons for the CNT.³⁵

It was later claimed by the hard-line anarcho-syndicalists that the Barcelona plenum of April 1921 was ‘irregular’ and was hijacked by Bolshevik infiltrators.³⁶ From what has transpired from the plenum, it seems that there was nothing irregular about it, notwithstanding the difficulties of meeting in a context of ‘absolute repression’, as the committee that organised the gathering put it.³⁷ Inevitably, in periods of violent crackdown, the CNT, a decentralized, democratic organization, had to take important decisions in clandestine plenums that gathered a limited number of representatives. They often did not know one another, as the waves of arrests generated a high turnover in the organization’s structures, while more generally, the CNT’s anti-bureaucratic ethos elicited frequent reshuffles of its leading organs.³⁸ Subsequently, it was easy for disgruntled activists to quibble with the decisions of these precarious clandestine meetings, launching accusations of bureaucratism and arbitrariness.³⁹

The accusations levied against the plenum seem unfounded. Out of the representatives that attended the gathering, only Nin, Maurín, Ibáñez, and Arlandis would embrace communism while the rest were ‘orthodox’ libertarians. Jesús Arenas, the Galician delegate in Barcelona in 1921, explained in 1922, when he had become resolutely anti-Bolshevik, that ‘there were no ploys in the Barcelona plenum, only a sincere desire to find out more about the situation in Russia’.⁴⁰ Upon his return to Spain, Gaston Leval, the member of the Catalan Federation of Anarchist Groups who joined the official delegation to Russia, referred to the accusations levied against the plenum as ‘slander’ and claimed that ‘the delegates had no malicious intent’.⁴¹ In his unpublished memoirs, referring to the men that were elected to travel to Moscow, he commented: ‘They made a good impression, they had a valid mandate, that was enough’.⁴² In another account written in 1954, he emphasized that the delegates were elected in a ‘perfectly correct’ manner.⁴³ Even the leader of Catalan syndicalism, Salvador Seguí, one of the most authoritative voices in

the CNT, who felt sceptical towards the Third International, stepped in to defend the mission, criticizing the ‘virulence’ of the campaign against the delegates.⁴⁴

It seems that the mandate of the 1921 delegation still reflected the views of at least an important sector of the Spanish syndicalist movement, much of which was still in favour of the Soviet regime at this point.⁴⁵ In fact, Ibáñez, who was dispatched to the Barcelona plenum after a meeting of the Asturian section of the CNT, claims to have carried the mandate of ‘continuing onwards to Russia’ had the national leadership of the confederation refused to send a delegation; which implies that the Asturian section was so supportive of the Russian Revolution that it was ready to break with the CNT over this question.⁴⁶ As the anarchist activist and historian José Peirats conceded, at the time of the plenum, ‘the Russian reality continued to be a mystery for most delegates. Thus can be explained the fact that they elected an openly pro-communist commission to attend the Third Congress of the Third International of June that year’.⁴⁷

It is important to remember that these were years of intense repression for the Spanish labour movement, particularly for the CNT. These dire conditions mollified the concern for the truth of what was happening in Russia, and impelled many to hold onto comforting illusions about the Bolsheviks. As Gaston Leval noted years later, ‘the CNT was dominated by the immediate class struggle [...]. It did not occupy itself with questions of theory or doctrine, which [...] attenuated the critical awareness of the militant masses before [...] Bolshevism’.⁴⁸ Moreover, the international syndicalist movement was, in the spring of 1921, and despite mounting criticisms, still supportive of the RILU, and believed that syndicalists should intervene therein. In an international gathering in Berlin in December 1920 (where the CNT was absent), numerous syndicalist organizations decided to participate in the foundation of the RILU.⁴⁹

The journey to Russia

In May 1921, the delegation, according to Maurín, 'took off to Moscow – with no passports and no money' (Jesús Ibáñez, however, did have a passport and money given to him by the Asturian CNT, while Leval received enough money from the Catalan Federation of Anarchist Groups to reach Berlin).⁵⁰ The young men were extremely excited. For these five radicalized youths, three of them manual, autodidact workers, and the other two provincial teachers, the trip across a convulsive Europe to the heartland of the revolution, where they would meet the Bolshevik leaders and militants from across the globe, must have been a thrilling prospect. Ibáñez fantasized with vaunting his mission before the police as he travelled to Barcelona, from where he was meant to travel to Russia:

I was so happy I thought of exclaiming to the guards: Here I am! It's me!
Toño from Santoña! I am travelling to an illegal plenum of the CNT! I am
travelling to Barcelona! And, from there, onwards to Russia! Do you know,
poor wretches, where Russia is? I'm going to Russia!⁵¹

The delegation divided into four, with the plan of reconvening in Paris: Ibáñez left first, followed by Nin and Maurín, Arlandis, and Leval. The clandestine crossing of the Pyrenees through Andorra, accompanied by smugglers over the ragged, misty mountains, was a dangerous enterprise.⁵² It was, however, the habitual path for Spanish revolutionaries in the well-trodden route to France; as Basil Thomson from Scotland Yard noted in a report commissioned by the Spanish foreign ministry, 'there is a constant to and fro of emissaries between Spain and France, who avoid checkpoints by making their way over the Pyrenees'.⁵³ The delegates made a prolonged stopover in Paris, where they were hosted by Pierre Monatte, the French syndicalist leader. Monatte and his *Vie Ouvrière* group, which also converted to Bolshevism, were to have a

lasting influence on the pro-Soviet *cenetistas*.⁵⁴ They also met the German libertarian Augustin Souchy, who was in Paris at the time, and who, according to his own account, provided the delegates with money to continue their journey.⁵⁵

In Paris, another *cenetista* joined the delegation: Pere Foix (alias León Xifort). In February 1921, he had been sent to Paris by the CNT to lead an international campaign against repression in Spain. He had been collaborating closely with the anarchist paper *Le Libertaire*, the syndicalist *La Vie Ouvrière*, and the communist *L'Humanité*. If we are to believe the detailed report compiled by the Spanish authorities, Xifort had been attending as a guest the meetings of the executive committee of the French Communist Party, invited by Ludovic Frossard.⁵⁶ That the anarchist Xifort, who would later lambaste the communists, would have attended these meetings shows the openness and permeability of revolutionary politics in the giddy years of the Russian Revolution. During the stopover in the French capital, Arlandis had invited Xifort to travel to Russia with the delegates. Curious to see the revolution first-hand, he accepted.⁵⁷ In Berlin, typewriting his mandate 'on a white handkerchief', and using a 'counterfeited stamp', they convinced the Soviet embassy that Foix had been elected as an alternate delegate to the RILU congress.⁵⁸ Once in Russia, he became profoundly disenchanted with Bolshevism. Upon his return to Paris, he agitated for disaffiliation from the RILU.⁵⁹

Monatte directed the delegates to Metz, where they split again and crossed the heavily patrolled German border, assisted by a group of Alsatian syndicalists that supported political fugitives in this dangerous crossing.⁶⁰ Leval (presumably with Arlandis and Foix) was taken to Luxemburg, and from there into the German Rhineland and to Cologne. To avoid a patrol by the Allied occupation troops on a train to Berlin, Leval had 'no option but to lock myself in the toilet for half an hour'.⁶¹

Maurín and Nin crossed the French-German border illegally on foot at night, guided by an Alsatian coalminer. Once in Germany, in Saarbrücken, the Spaniards, asking in French for rooms to spend the night, were initially met with a 'keine Zimmer!' in all the hotels they visited. Perplexed, and preparing themselves to sleep rough, they asked a waiter why they had been denied rooms everywhere: '–Perhaps because you are French. –French? We're Spaniards!' After this clarification, they were subsequently treated to dinner and given a room in the best hotel in town by the guild of hoteliers:

Spain had remained neutral during the war [...] and had cultivated good relations with Germany. [...] The honourable guild of hoteliers of Saarbrücken saw in us the image of Germanophile Spain. [...] We quixotically thought of telling them: Please, do not confuse us with Alfonso XIII, Maura, Vázquez Mella, Baroja and Benavente, or with the bishops and generals! We are who we are. And we are travelling to Moscow to the third congress of the Third International as members of the National Confederation of Labour.⁶²

On the German side of the border, it was the irony that the more anarchist Arlandis, Foix, and Leval were taken to the capital and housed by German communists. However, even the hard-line libertarian Leval was content with the company, 'I was not dissatisfied [...]. We were treated as revolutionaries, moving freely in the offices of the communist organisation'.⁶³ Arlandis, Foix, and Leval wrote a controversial article for the German communist press aggressively scolding the anarcho-syndicalists of the *Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschlands* (German Free Workers' Union, FAUD) for their 'backhanded and negative' criticisms of the RILU and calling for all syndicalists to rally to the upcoming congress in Moscow.⁶⁴ The fact that Foix and Leval contributed to such

an article is significant. They later became virulent enemies of the RILU, and, in the accounts written upon their return from Russia, would pose as unwavering opponents of the Bolshevik dictatorship, and would try to sweep this incident under the rug.⁶⁵ This episode shows the plasticity of views within the revolutionary movement in these years, and the contradictory sentiments kindled by the Russian Revolution. As Leval later confessed, ‘I have to say that I left for Russia open to collaboration with the Bolsheviks [...]. I thought revolutionary collaboration was possible, that it was possible to walk part of the road together’.⁶⁶

Maurín, Ibáñez, and Nin, after a brief stay in Frankfurt, made their way to the address of the anarcho-syndicalist Fritz Kater in Berlin’s Kopernikustrasse. Kater edited the libertarian newspaper *Der Syndikalist* (the organ of the FAUD) along with Rudolf Rocker, Augustin Souchy, and Theodor Plievier (who later became a world-renowned novelist). Nin and Maurín were hosted by one of the printers of the publication, and Plievier, who spoke good Spanish after having worked in Chile, acted as their guide in the city. The editors of *Der Syndikalist* (Rocker in particular) were critical of Bolshevism.⁶⁷ Ibáñez recalled their surprise at Rocker’s invective against the Bolsheviks, which he accused of wanting to ‘smash’ the Russian anarchist movement ‘using the vilest methods’. Ibáñez at least was impervious to these criticisms: ‘in my mind at least, the towering edifice of the Russian Revolution completely eclipsed Rocker’s arguments’.⁶⁸

The Spaniards wrote two articles in *Der Syndikalist*, that represent interesting indications of their position vis-à-vis the Third International on the eve of the congress of the RILU. They were also probably written as a response to the contentious article by Arlandis, Foix, and Leval that had just been published.⁶⁹ It is thus worth quoting Nin and Maurín’s articles at length. Nin commented:

In December 1919 the CNT provisionally joined the Third International. [...] Even if we are far from agreeing with Moscow, the CNT considers that the two main competing tendencies are Moscow and Amsterdam [the Social Democratic labour international], that is to say, revolution and reformism. [...] The CNT has given us a mandate to defend above all the principles of the trade union organisation. We should thus go to Moscow and carry out all the necessary efforts so that the revolutionary syndicalist organisation, and especially the doctrines of revolutionary syndicalism, come out strengthened from the Congress.

In a more theoretical article, Maurín observed:

The doctrines of revolutionary syndicalism are gaining ground over traditional Marxism. Marx's doctrine, as interpreted by the socialist parties, leaves very little space for individual action and freedom. Furthermore, its conception of the state clashes with the transformative spirit of our epoch. [...] The betrayals of Social Democracy are making the workers understand that it is the economic organisms rather than the political ones that should be in charge of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.⁷⁰

As can be seen once again, the delegates, far from being infiltrators or 'Marxists in syndicalist clothing', saw themselves as revolutionary syndicalists, critical of Bolshevism, and who were genuinely committed to fulfilling their mandates.

Berlin was a hub for radical movements in Europe in the early 1920s. It became a place of exile for thousands of persecuted radicals from across Europe and beyond, and a port of call for revolutionaries travelling to Russia, who stopped in the German capital to plan their trip.⁷¹ They

gathered in the café Bauer, 'where the coffee was wretched, but you could see newspapers from all the different countries'.⁷² Arlandis and Leval met the Italian anarchist terrorist Francesco Ghezzi as he was trying to reach Moscow, escaping the authorities.⁷³ The stay of the Spanish delegation in Berlin was complicated by the revelation that two of the murderers of Spanish Prime Minister Eduardo Dato, the anarchists Ramón Casanellas and Luis Nicolau, were in Berlin trying to make their way to Russia. Eventually, Nicolau was arrested by the German police, while Casanellas was able to reach Russia.⁷⁴ Dato's murder represented a major scandal for the Spanish government, and provided a pretext to intensify repression against the CNT. The Prime Minister was shot eighteen times by the anarchists from a motorcycle sidecar while at the wheel of his car in Madrid on March 8, 1921. This incident stood out from other anarchist attacks in this period for its sophistication and careful planning. Anarchist action groups tended to operate locally and without the formal consent of the confederation. However, on this occasion it is certain that leading *cenetistas* connived with the gunmen, or gave the operation the seal of approval. Indeed, Dato was in the CNT's crosshairs for his personal role in the brutal crackdown against the labour movement.⁷⁵

The group was held back by Ibáñez's carelessness. He flouted the precautions taken by the other delegates and was arrested in an anarchist commune ('Zarathustra's Cave') in the outskirts of Berlin. This collective propounded nudism and free love, 'and this ignited Ibáñez's adventurousness'. According to Maurín, he became the 'most solicited' member of the community. The Spaniard elicited the jealousies of the founder of the commune, a bearded Dominican libertarian, Filareto Kavernido, who got into a fight with him, to the effect that he spent several days in jail. 'What tormented me in the Berlin prison', he recalled, 'was not repatriation, but the idea of not being able to go to Russia'.⁷⁶ However, he was soon released, on

the condition that he abandoned Germany. This was a close call, since the German police was on the lookout for Spanish radicals, with Nicolau and Casanellas on the run.⁷⁷

During the journey, Maurin reflected upon the national particularities of Spain, France, and Germany. He saw the different stages of economic development of society reflected on the three countries: Spain was a backward 'shepherds' country'. Its 'tragic situation' of poverty and underdevelopment conditioned the 'disastrous fatalism' that, according to Maurin, characterises the Spaniards. France was a country of farmers, 'where agriculture triumphs and the small owner is dominant. Industries, while important, cannot exert their hegemony over the countryside'. The more advanced Germany, on the contrary, was 'an industrial nation. All its life, all its activity, all its spirit emanate from its industrial character'.⁷⁸ It seems that his trip to Russia began to shape one of the features that were to enduringly characterise Maurin's thought: his emphasis on national idiosyncrasies, his belief in the impossibility of a universal blueprint for revolution, and his concern with Spain's particularisms.⁷⁹

The Soviet embassy furnished the delegates with false Russian repatriate passports and were taken to Stettin (Szczecin), where they took a boat to Reval (Tallinn), in the recently-founded Republic of Estonia.⁸⁰ They were following the itinerary that Pestaña had travelled the previous year: from Paris to Berlin, from Berlin to Stettin, and from there to Reval and into Russia. This appears to have been the easiest way to reach Russia from the West, not because the risk of being arrested was any less serious, but because there were reliable networks of revolutionaries and safe houses abounded. Moreover, the sailors of Stettin were renowned for their radicalism; the majority belonged to the pro-Bolshevik wing of the syndicalist *Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschlands*, and protected militants travelling to Russia.⁸¹

Most of their fellow passengers were revolutionaries, ‘men and women from all countries’, including the infamous French communist Jacques Doriot, who later on became a fascist.⁸² Most of the travellers became terribly seasick during the voyage, and Ibáñez, the philanderer, finding himself uncontested, was able to seduce the most attractive of the female passengers, ‘a so-called artist from the Petrograd opera’.⁸³

Estonia was also of interest for Maurín. Its recently-attained independence made him reflect upon the question of nationalism, that, as an Aragonese Catalan, was to engross him throughout his lifetime. He saw the new republic as a ‘feudal’ nation ‘submerged in the most atrocious poverty’, where ‘the landowners had sought through independence and with the help of the Entente to preserve the property rights that in Russia had crumbled forever’.⁸⁴

The CNT delegation in Soviet Russia

The delegates travelled by train to the Soviet border with other representatives that were making their way to the RILU congress and to the third congress of the Third International, which was to gather immediately before that of the RILU. On their way to the border, the *cenetistas* witnessed the traces of the Russian Civil War: ‘one can see the devastation of the hordes sent by European capitalism under Nikolay Yudenich’s command to crush the proletarian regime [...]. But the unwavering courage of the red soldier pushed back the invaders and threw them into the sea’. As they neared the border, Maurín recounted:

We could see red flags on the booths: it is the border. We arrive, the red soldiers salute the train of revolutionaries. We cannot resist to sing the Internationale. An overpowering emotion grips our souls. [...] After emerging from countries where the workers are persecuted, we reach the

land where the exploiters have been done away with. We have reached the
Russia of the social revolution. Long live Russia!⁸⁵

Many of the speeches delivered by Bolsheviks during the visits of foreign delegates were not translated, which made the singing of the Internationale (in a babel of languages) a powerful bonding experience.⁸⁶

Leval's account was much more sober: in his memoirs, he recalls the ceremonies upon their arrival as procedural and pompous.⁸⁷ His account, however, was, unlike Maurin's, written long after the events (his memoirs are undated, but we know that they were written after the Second World War), when the split between anarchism and communism had become unbridgeable. It seems, considering also Pestaña's admission of the euphoria he felt upon his arrival, confessing to have felt 'enthusiasm, admiration, intense happiness', that the entry into Russia was a truly moving experience for foreign revolutionaries.⁸⁸

From the border, the representatives travelled to Petrograd. The city looked 'desolate' after years of war – yet Maurin regarded in it as the capital 'of the great truths and hopes', a city of 'heroism and tragedy'.⁸⁹ As he gnawed the 'Siberian dog meat', the 'stinking fish', and 'the blackest of breads' that were provided for the delegates, Ibáñez commended the courage of the Russian people:

I thought of the titanic struggle waged by the 'bands' of hungry, barefoot and naked soldiers, against the alliance of the capitalist powers...; I thought of that engineer, an old Bolshevik, who passed out of hunger (yes, of hunger!) as he saw me devour the crumbs of black bread [...]. There was such dignity in the way this hero of the revolution turned down the food I offered him!⁹⁰

When Ibáñez's luggage was stolen by a poverty-stricken administrator in one of the hotels where they stayed, he was sympathetic and refused to report him.⁹¹ Ibáñez's romantic vision of the Russians' poverty and obduracy contrasted with Pestaña and Leval's, who decried the misery that reigned in the country and the preferential treatment given to foreign delegates.⁹²

Leval and Arlandis visited Victor Serge, who, 'in private' was highly critical of the Soviet regime, decrying the excesses of the Cheka, Soviet secret police, and the abuse of power by the communist bureaucrats. From Petrograd, the delegates travelled with Serge to Moscow, where they arrived at some point in mid-June, several weeks before the start of the RILU congress, which was due to begin on July 3.⁹³ They were lodged in the Hotel Lux, on the Tverskaya, 'the most beautiful hotel in Moscow' (indeed, Leval was critical of the excessive luxuriousness of the hotel) and the residency for foreign revolutionaries visiting Russia. On the eve of the two congresses, the hotel was teeming with foreign representatives.⁹⁴

The activity of the Spaniards outside the congress was frantic, and shows that their concerns and interests were far from those that would have been expected from orthodox communists. In Maurín's words, 'the main concern for the CNT delegation was the question [...] of the persecution of Russian anarchists'.⁹⁵ By 1921 this had become a major source of concern for foreign libertarians who had previously supported the Bolsheviks.⁹⁶ In France, the renowned anarchist newspaper *Le Libertaire*, which had some following in Spain, was loudly campaigning about this issue.⁹⁷ The shooting that summer of two anarchist prisoners, Lev Chernyi and Fanya Baron, caused commotion among the RILU delegates.⁹⁸ In light of this, the *cenetistas* attended the meetings organised by the anarchist Alexander Shapiro, where the plight of the Russian libertarians was discussed, and where prominent figures of the movement such as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman intervened.⁹⁹ Goldman reminisced: 'The French, Italian,

Spanish, German and Scandinavian Anarcho-Syndicalists lost no time in seeking us out. In fact they made our place their headquarters'.¹⁰⁰ The Spaniards were respected participants in these discussions, 'and their opinions were heeded with the utmost interest, and often had a decisive influence'.¹⁰¹ The *cenetistas* issued a resolution, in conjunction with the French anarcho-syndicalist delegates, protesting against the repression levied against the anarchists.¹⁰² The Spaniards participated in two delegations of foreign delegates that lobbied for the release of their imprisoned Russian comrades. They first visited the head of the Cheka, Felix Dzerzhinsky, with Dmitry Manuilsky acting as the Russian interpreter. Dzerzhinsky shunned the list of political prisoners presented to him as a 'robbers and murderers'. The second party interviewed Lenin, who was somewhat more cooperative, and promised to raise the issue in the Politburo.¹⁰³

The pressure of the syndicalist and anarcho-syndicalist RILU delegates was important to ensure the release and deportation of numerous Russian libertarians in the summer of 1921.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the group of Russian anarchists, grouped around Grigori Maksimov and Vsevolod Eikhenbaum (alias Volin), had decided to go on a hunger strike from the Tanganka prison 'as an act of protest before our Western comrades who have come to the Profintern [RILU] congress'. The hunger strikers were able to smuggle a manifesto to the foreign delegates that demanded freedom of thought and the release of political prisoners.¹⁰⁵ The foreign syndicalists mediated between the Soviet authorities and the Russian anarchists, delivering a message to the prisoners by Trotsky notifying them that they would be released if they agreed to go into exile. Despite this concession, the War Commissar was visibly irritated by the whole affair.¹⁰⁶ After agreeing to release the prisoners, the demand for further guarantees by Arlandis prompted Trotsky to grab the Valencian by the lapels and violently buffet him, 'petty bourgeois that you people are!'¹⁰⁷

In the RILU congress, the Spaniards were particularly active in the discussions about repression and White Terror. One of the first initiatives taken by the CNT delegates was to pass a resolution in solidarity with the Spanish labour movement in the face of the repression from the authorities. Read out by Arlandis, it was especially stirring: he had just found out that his brother had been murdered by right-wing terrorists in Valencia. Nin also tabled a resolution in solidarity with Italian anarchists Errico Malatesta and Armando Borghi, who had recently been imprisoned.¹⁰⁸

The Spaniards also organised informational gatherings in their room with Victor Serge, who was known, as Pestaña had remarked in his visit, as an honest and critical observer of life in Soviet Russia, ‘the best source of information’ on the situation in the country.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Serge was one of the personalities that was closest to the Spanish delegation (Serge continued to have close connections with them into the 1930s and the Spanish Civil War). The other was the French syndicalist Alfred Rosmer, who had previously befriended Pestaña. The Frenchman remembered the Spaniards as ‘young, eager and enthusiastic, very likeable on a personal level’.¹¹⁰ Rosmer, who was close to Trotsky, arranged a meeting between the *cenetistas* and the War Commissar. The Spaniards raised before him their mandate to request weapons for the CNT. Trotsky, reflecting on the success of the Bolshevik agitation among the soldiery in 1917, responded:

To make a revolution one needs the sympathy of the majority of the population, and then one can also win over the soldiers, who are the ones that have the rifles. The weapons needed for the Spanish revolution are in Spain. You will get them when you have the support of those who carry them.¹¹¹

Trotsky overlooked the significant fact that the Spanish army had not gone through the experience of the First World War, and remained largely loyal to the Bourbon regime throughout these years.¹¹²

At different points, the Spaniards also met Bukharin, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Kalinin, Rykov, Tomsy, Lunacharsky, Radek, Krupskaya, Kollontai, and other leading Bolsheviks. As Pestaña had done the previous year, the *cenetistas* went on tours to different institutions and sites, including schools, factories, and army battalions.¹¹³ On a more personal note, Leval added that ‘most of us found Russian girlfriends’ – an observation that was corroborated in detail by the ever-boastful Ibáñez, who skipped important events to go on romantic escapades with his ‘beloved Nyura’.¹¹⁴

The *cenetistas* attended, as spectators, some of the sessions of the third congress of the Third International, and had the opportunity of listening to the speeches and polemics of the leaders of the Russian Revolution. In one of the breaks, Ibáñez, the iconoclast, approached Lenin and touched the sleeve of his coat without him noticing, making the sign of the cross in jest afterwards, stirring the ire of the other delegates.¹¹⁵ The congress was a momentous event, perhaps of greater importance than the second congress of 1920. The communist movement had to come to terms with what appeared to be the stabilisation of European capitalism and the ebb in post-war labour mobilization, as well as with the continued resilience of Social Democracy in many countries. The united front strategy, that dictated cooperation with the socialist parties, began to take shape.

The *cenetistas* felt bitter that a mass organisation like the CNT had been relegated to the RILU, which ‘mostly gathered minority organisations’ and which was ‘eclipsed’ by the Third International. The CNT ‘was treated as a second-class organisation. The protagonist was a so-

called Spanish Communist Party [...] which was better known in Moscow than in Spain'.¹¹⁶ Maurín, who over the 1920s had a turbulent rapport with the official communist movement, would later blame the Bolsheviks for having mauled and disregarded the CNT both in Spain and in Moscow, and thus having isolated the forces of Spanish communism from the most dynamic movement of the working class in the country.¹¹⁷

Although Maurín might have been retrospectively too keen to put the blame on Moscow for the shortcomings of Spanish communism, it is undoubtedly true that, in the early 1920s, the Soviets had little time for Spain, seen as a distant backwater, and did not display much tact towards its revolutionary movement. Communist leader Dmitry Manuilsky is credited with stating that 'a small strike in Germany had more importance than all that happened in Spain'.¹¹⁸ The first agents sent to Madrid by the Third International in 1919, the Belarusian Bolshevik Mikhail Borodin and the American communist Charles Philips, described by Maurín as 'second class internationalists', were ignorant of the politics of the Spanish labour movement, and were vehemently hostile to anarchism.¹¹⁹ After being invited to meet the Madrid leadership of the CNT in the spring of 1920, they arrogantly concluded that 'not much can be done with the Syndicalists. I mean the leaders. The masses will come gradually to the Communist Party'.¹²⁰ Instead, they focused their energies on forcing the Socialist Youth into an untimely, poorly organised split, plotted as an 'internal coup'.¹²¹

Despite Maurín's future disagreements with the Spanish communists, the 1921 delegation had a cordial relationship with the communist representatives from Spain. According to Maurín, their connection was purely personal, not political.¹²² This, however, is not true – a meeting, organized by Solomon Lozovsky, was held on July 21 between the *cenetistas* and the Spanish communist delegates to decide the orientation of the RILU vis-à-vis the social democratic trade

union federation, the UGT (*Unión General de Trabajadores*, General Workers' Union), to which many communists were affiliated, and where they would be allowed to remain, at least temporarily.¹²³ This would subsequently serve as ammunition in the hands of the anti-Bolshevik *cenetistas*.¹²⁴

The CNT in the founding congress of the Red International of Labour Unions

Although the RILU congress was overshadowed by that of the Third International, it still represented an important event. It was attended by 380 delegates from 41 countries. The RILU claimed to represent 17 million workers.¹²⁵ This is doubtlessly an exaggeration, although it is true that a communist trade union movement had indeed crystallised in the previous years, albeit if still under the shadow of the Social Democratic, Amsterdam-based International Federation of Trade Unions, which outstripped Moscow by far.¹²⁶ It is worth noting that attempts to capture the major European Social Democratic trade union federations in previous years had largely floundered, and thus a significant part of the contingents of the RILU came from syndicalist and anarcho-syndicalist federations, especially in the Latin countries. This turned the syndicalists into an important (if not a key) player in the 1921 congress. As Reiner Tosstorff has observed, 'the Red International of Labour Unions was constituted as an alliance with the syndicalists. The foreground would now be occupied by the attempts to reach a compromise with them'.¹²⁷

In the congress, the Spanish delegates played an active and even 'leading' role, as Gerald Meaker put it in his book on the Spanish revolutionary left.¹²⁸ In a congress that was dominated by communist trade unionists, the Spaniards rallied around them the other critical syndicalist factions, and prepared, tabled, and read out most of the oppositional resolutions. The main bone of contention between syndicalists and communists regarded the link between the Third

International and the RILU, which engrossed many of the sittings of the congress.¹²⁹ The ‘organic’ connection between the two internationals, that was favoured by the communists, was seen by the syndicalists as a threat to trade union autonomy, a cornerstone of syndicalist doctrine. Not only were there fears of subordination to the Third International in Moscow, but of handing over the trade unions to the different national communist parties. After a lengthy debate, the Spaniards, at the head of the other critical delegates, were able to change the wording of the RILU’s constitution to make the link between the unions and the communist parties ‘highly desirable’ rather than obligatory.¹³⁰ The ambiguously-worded resolution, however, continued to stimulate heated debates in syndicalist milieux.¹³¹

In addition to the question of trade union independence, a whole range of additional issues were discussed at the gathering: the importance of factory councils, the superiority of industrial unions over craft unions, the role of women in the class struggle, and the labour movement in colonial countries. Inevitably, theoretical polemics arose about the dictatorship of the proletariat, the position of the unions in the revolution, and the desirability of electoral participation.¹³² In all of these issues the *cenetistas* defended a syndicalist line.

Perhaps the most impassionate defence of revolutionary syndicalism was made by Andreu Nin:

Revolutionary syndicalism is a doctrine with solid foundations [...]. Marxism and Proudhonian at the same time, it adopts from the founder of scientific socialism the principle of the class struggle, of which the trade union is considered to be the most vigorous expression, and adopts from Anarchism its critical spirit, its federalism, and its opposition to the state. Revolutionary

syndicalism considers itself the most powerful instrument in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.¹³³

Gaston Leval's experience in Moscow was somewhat different. He failed to attend many of the congress' sittings, and devoted most of his time to establishing connections with the Russian libertarian movement and to campaigning for the liberation of the imprisoned anarchists. He even found his way into the Butyrka transit prison with the help of Olga Maksimov (the wife of Gregori Maksimov), where he interviewed the libertarian Volin before he was transferred to Tanganka. Leval's relations were not limited to the Russian anarchists, he also established a rapport with other dissident groups of the left, including the Social Revolutionaries, the Tolstoians, and the Workers' Opposition of the Russian Communist Party.¹³⁴

Pere Foix's disappointment with Bolshevism was even greater than Leval's. According to his account, he rapidly became disenchanted with the Soviet regime, and clashed with Nin, Maurín, Arlandis, and Ibáñez, refusing to attend the sessions of the RILU congress. He claims the breaking point was a controversial lecture Bukharin delivered to the syndicalist delegates on the subversive activities of the Russian anarchists, which Foix considered intolerable slander. The negotiations on the Russian anarchist prisoners took place outside of the framework of the congress, and the question was not on the agenda. Bukharin's intervention was seen as a provocative intromission.¹³⁵ In this session, Foix claimed to have exchanged insults with the head of the Cheka, Felix Dzerzhinsky, who was also attending the sitting. Foix called him a 'dirty bourgeois'.¹³⁶ He spent the rest of his time in Russia trying to secure an exit visa, an undertaking that took him several days – the delay, he feared, was related to his altercation with Dzerzhinsky. It is possible, however, that in his memoirs he might have presented himself as more defiant than he really was. Indeed, Bukharin's lecture, which, he claims, prompted him to abandon the

congress, took place at the last session of the gathering.¹³⁷ The controversial pro-Bolshevik article he signed while in Berlin in June 1921 should also be remembered.

The accounts by Pestaña and by the 1921 delegation reveal a craving to learn about the Soviet regime and the Russian Revolution as possible models to import to Spain. It appears that they had relative freedom to travel around Moscow, Petrograd, and the rest of the country. They were not alone: hundreds of foreign radicals of different stripes (few of them committed Bolsheviks) visited Moscow. English trade unionist Jack Murphy described the multitudes of ‘socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, trade unionists, revolutionary nationalists of almost every race and clime’, that had travelled to Russia.¹³⁸ The chaos in Russia during and immediately after the Civil War and the lack of a tourism industry gave foreign visitors a great deal of autonomy, that allowed Pestaña to interview Kropotkin and Gaston Leval to enter a prison to speak with an incarcerated Russian anarchist. In addition, the anxieties about encirclement by imperialist powers were counterbalanced by a euphoric belief in the revolutionary potential of the Western proletariat during the pan-European agitations of 1917-1920. Therefore, foreign working-class revolutionaries were welcomed and held in high esteem.

Back to Spain: the birth of communist-syndicalism and the crisis in the CNT

Gerald Meaker claimed that Maurín, Nin, Ibáñez, and Arlandis discovered that they were ‘Leninists at heart’ while in Moscow.¹³⁹ Undoubtedly, their trip to Soviet Russia and the influence of such figures as Trotsky or Lenin, drew them closer to the Bolshevik worldview, although it seems that Meaker’s assertion might have been too categorical. In Moscow the delegates spoke the language of syndicalism and struggled to defend what they believed to be the ethos of the CNT. As Arlandis argued in the Zaragoza conference of 1922, where he defended the

line of the delegation, 'we were energetic in our opposition to the communists [...] and rejected the tendencies towards subordination'.¹⁴⁰ Adhesion to the RILU was not framed in ideological terms, but for the expedience of 'relating to the entire revolutionary proletariat'.¹⁴¹ Spanish anarchist Bruno Lladó, who travelled in Russia in 1921 and attended the RILU congress as a guest, also conceded that the delegates were moved (naively, in his view) by their 'faith in revolution' and their desire to 'build an international organisation capable of working towards social revolution'.¹⁴² It should be noted that syndicalists from other countries, namely the representatives from Italy, Portugal, Mexico, the Netherlands, and France, also left Russia in 1921 convinced of the need of remaining in the RILU for the sake of unity, and clashed with the recalcitrant anarchists upon their return.¹⁴³

The return trip of the delegates was inauspicious. Maurín and Ibáñez were arrested in Stettin on October 2. Maurín was let go, but Ibáñez, having violated his extradition order, was sent to a jail in Berlin, and was later deported to Belgium.¹⁴⁴ He was soon released from jail in Brussels, but was again arrested again upon his arrival in Spain and would remain in prison until April 1922.¹⁴⁵ Arlandis and Nin were also arrested in Berlin and were investigated for their possible implication in Dato's murder.¹⁴⁶ According to the Spanish embassy, Arlandis was carrying two million German marks given to him by the Russian communists (although in a context of hyperinflation this did not amount to much). The two men were freed after a series of rallies were held across Germany (eighteen, according to the Spanish legation) pressing for their release.¹⁴⁷ After this, Nin decided to return to Russia, where he would remain for several years.

The transition from syndicalism to Marxism is difficult to gauge in the case of Nin. He remained in the Soviet Union after his failed attempt to return to Spain. He did not clearly outline his views until a few years later, when he began to publish articles in Spanish papers from a

unmistakably Marxist standpoint. Maurín, however, did produce abundant material on his views on Bolshevik Russia, and gained a certain following in the Catalan CNT. In the years 1922-1923 he tried to syncretise syndicalism and Marxism, basing himself on the heretical ideas of Georges Sorel, and kept the Spanish Communist Party at arm's length.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Maurín and his close circle of followers would only join the party in October 1924.¹⁴⁹ Ibáñez joined the campaign for the CNT's permanence in the RILU upon his release from jail, but, according to his own account, only joined the communist party in 1924, at the same time as Maurín.¹⁵⁰ Although Arlandis seems to have joined the communist party earlier, he remained a heretic, strongly influenced by anarchist ideas and opposing electoral participation.¹⁵¹ As Nin's biographer Pelai Pagès has noted, 'the "pro-Bolshevism" of this group was more practical than theoretical, and they would take years to join the Communist Party. At this point [1921], and for two more years, their ideological positions were strictly syndicalist'.¹⁵²

The visit to Russia began a slow conversion from syndicalism to Marxism, which was not as seamless as implied by Meaker. It was not only conditioned by the trip to Russia, but also by the crisis of the CNT in the 1920s, which had to deal with ever-growing levels of repression and with the demoralisation of rank-and-file workers, which made many reconsider the ideas and strategies of the labour movement. The doctrinaire turn of the anarcho-syndicalists after 1921, who called for 'prophylaxis' against the pro-Bolshevik 'rabble', also drove Maurín and his followers away from syndicalism.¹⁵³ Moreover, attempts to build a dissident syndicalist faction within the RILU rapidly floundered due to internal disagreements and to the inflexibility of the communists.¹⁵⁴ After 1921, neither the Bolsheviks nor the anarcho-syndicalists tolerated what a libertarian activist referred to as the 'amphibian tendencies'.¹⁵⁵ As the biographer of Nin and Maurín, Víctor Alba, commented, the conversion to Marxism was a 'painful' process, largely

conditioned by the turbulent state of affairs in the CNT, and not the direct result of the trip to Russia.¹⁵⁶

Conversely, Gaston Leval's views on the Bolsheviks were not significantly transformed by his travels in Russia. Although in his memoirs he claims to have been abhorred by the Soviet regime, in the Zaragoza conference of 1922 he supported the CNT's continuation as a member of the RILU, affirming that 'there are more pros than cons for adherence', and defended the delegation against the 'slander' levied against the mission by the hard-line anarcho-syndicalists.¹⁵⁷ Curiously, this was also Pestaña's position in March 1922, when he presented a memo calling for the CNT to remain in the RILU, where, he believed, the syndicalists could exert 'a positive influence'.¹⁵⁸ Only in the Zaragoza conference of June would Pestaña unequivocally throw his weight behind disaffiliation.¹⁵⁹ This suggests that Leval and Pestaña's views on the Soviet regime probably remained ambiguous after the trip, and only hardened when the split between anarchism and Bolshevism became complete in 1922.¹⁶⁰

During their travels the syndicalist delegates were subjected to forces pulling in opposite directions.¹⁶¹ On the one hand, the allure of the Third International, which was gathering hundreds of delegates from across the globe and calling for world revolution; the victory in the Civil War, which had left the Bolsheviks and their dictatorship at the forefront of the first successful socialist revolution in history; and the pull of the personalities of Lenin, Trotsky, and other leading communists. On the other hand, the poverty, arbitrary repression, and dogmatism that they encountered, and the accounts of the Russian anarchists, would definitely have repelled them. As Maurín put it, libertarians in Moscow were 'under two powerful and contradictory pressures'.¹⁶² It is likely that the journey to Russia did not clarify the doubts of the delegates, but

possibly aggravated them, and that only the ulterior polemics within the CNT and the European syndicalist movement pushed them to take a definitive stance.

Finally, it is important to comment on the broader impact of the 1921 mission on the CNT. The controversy over the RILU congress polarised positions further between pro- and anti-Bolsheviks in the confederation. It also stimulated the doctrinaire turn of the anarcho-syndicalists, directed not only against the supporters of the RILU, but also against those sectors of the organisation that were perceived to be too moderate and heterodox. While in and of themselves the agreements of the RILU congress were hard to stomach for many *cenetistas*, the controversy over the delegation has to be placed in the context of the wider crisis of the CNT, which, in the early 1920s, found itself demoralized and decimated after years of intoxicating successes, and facing the unwelcome competition of the small but aggressive and strident Spanish Communist Party, created as a unified body in 1921. In these dire straits, the latent tensions between ‘pure’ syndicalists and anarcho-syndicalists, between moderates and radicals, between the younger generation and the old guard, came to the fore. The anarcho-syndicalists responded to this crisis by burning their bridges with the Russian Revolution, reaffirming their libertarian identity, and rallying their forces in the CNT against the perceived threats of Bolshevism and reformism. As Antonio Bar affirms, the dispute over the RILU was ‘magnified’ and used by the radical anarcho-syndicalists as a political weapon against their adversaries in the organisation.¹⁶³

The process of anarchist ideological reaffirmation the CNT went through after the 1921 RILU congress also took place in syndicalist organizations in other countries, which sought in the Bakuninist wing of the First International the ideological arsenal to articulate and justify their opposition to Bolshevism. As Reiner Tosstorff has put it, after the controversy over the RILU, ‘syndicalism became anarcho-syndicalism’.¹⁶⁴ The particularity of the Spanish case is that, while

the major syndicalist formations of other countries gradually split, declined, or gravitated to communism after 1917, the CNT, with its deep roots in the Spanish working class, and aided by the stillbirth of Spanish communism, remained a mass anarcho-syndicalist organisation and would play a decisive role in the upheavals of the 1930s.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Reiner Tosstorff and Chris Ealham for their invaluable advice and insightful observations in the preparation of this paper. I would especially like to express my gratitude to Reiner for having forwarded me the articles from *Der Syndikalist* and for helping me navigate the German-language material.

Notes

¹ Gerald Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914-1923* (Stanford, CA 1974), 126.

² Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (Oxford 1980), 53-4.

³ Wayne Thorpe, *'The Workers Themselves': Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913-1923* (Amsterdam 1989), 14-21.

⁴ Ralph Darlington, *Syndicalism and the Transition to Communism: An International Comparative Analysis* (Aldershot 2008), 71-2.

⁵ *Memoria del congreso de la CNT celebrado en el Teatro de la Comedia de Madrid los días 10 al 18 de diciembre de 1919* (Barcelona 1932), 373. In the Hispanic world, the word 'libertarian' is synonymous with 'anarchist'.

⁶ Antonio Bar, *La CNT en los años rojos: del sindicalismo revolucionario al anarcosindicalismo, 1910-1926* (Madrid:1981), 778-9.

⁷ Carlos Forcadell, *Parlamentarismo y bolchevización: el movimiento obrero obrero español: 1914-1918* (Barcelona 1978), 258-62.

⁸ Two detailed papers by Francisco Romero Salvadó and Reiner Tosstorff have already been published on Pestaña's trip: Francisco Romero Salvadó, 'The views of an Anarcho-Syndicalist on the Soviet Union: the defeat of the Third International in Spain', *Revolutionary Russia*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1995), 26-38; and Reiner Tosstorff, 'Mission Impossible: Ángel Pestaña's Encounter as CNT Delegate with the Bolshevik Revolution in 1920', in: David Berry and Constance Bantman, eds, *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour, and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational* (Newcastle 2010), 94-110.

⁹ See: Gerald Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1917-1923* (Stanford, CA 1974); Thorpe, 'The Workers Themselves'; Reiner Tosstorff, *The Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), 1920-1937* (Leiden 2016); Yveline Riottot, *Joaquín Maurín : de l'anarcho-syndicalisme au communisme, 1919-1936* (Paris: 1997) ; Xavier Paniagua, 'La visió de Gastón Leval de la Rússia soviètica', *Recerques*, n.8 (Barcelona 1974), 199-224; Pelai Pagès, *Andreu Nin: una vida al servicio de la clase obrera* (Barcelona 2011).

¹⁰ International Institute of Social History, IISH (Amsterdam), *CNT Archives*, 68A.1, 'Actas de la conferencia de Zaragoza' (June 1922). The historiography has used the reports from the CNT press to study the Zaragoza conference. The original minutes, however, are much more detailed. Jesús Ibáñez, *Memorias de mi cadáver* (Mexico: 1946); Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN, Madrid), *Ministerio de Exteriores*, H.2760, 2761 & *Ministerio de Interior*, H.A17.

¹¹ Jason Garner, 'Separated by an "ideological chasm": The Spanish National Labour Confederation and Bolshevik Internationalism, 1917-1922', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (August 2006): 324. A similar, unbalanced portrayal of the delegation is conveyed

in: Thorpe, *'The Workers' Themselves'*, 175-6; and, to some extent, in: Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left*, 397. For a critique of the historiographical distortions on the Nin-Maurín group, see: Chris Ealham, 'An impossible unity: Revolution, Reform, and Counterrevolution and the Spanish Left, 1917-1923', in: Angel Smith & Francisco Romero Salvadó, eds, *The Agony of Spanish Liberalism: From Revolution to Dictatorship, 1913-23* (Basingstoke 2010), 102-3.

¹² Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left*, 397.

¹³ For biographical material on Maurín see: Anabel Bonsón Aventín, *Joaquín Maurín (1896-1973). El impulso moral de hacer política* (Huesca 1995); Riottot, *Joaquín Maurín*.

¹⁴ Maurín, Joaquín, 'A manera de prólogo', *Hombres e Historia* (1961).

<http://www.fundanin.org/maur%EDn9.htm> [Accessed 15/1/2015].

¹⁵ For biographical material on Nin see: Pagès, *Andreu Nin*.

¹⁶ *Memoria del congreso de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, 374.

¹⁷ Ernesto Burgos, 'Un mierense en el III Internacional', *Nueva España*, Gijón (11/12/2007).

¹⁸ Joaquín Maurín, 'Berlín: 1921', *Hombres e Historia* (1961).

<http://www.fundanin.org/maur%EDn7.htm> [Accessed: 06/04/2015]

¹⁹ Archivo Histórico Nacional, *Ministerio de Exteriores*, H.17A, 02/10/1921.

²⁰ Andrew Durgan, *Comunismo, revolución y movimiento obrero en Cataluña 1920-1936* (Barcelona 2016), 28.

²¹ *Memoria del congreso*, 52.

²² Paniagua, 204-6. The manuscript of his memoirs can be found in Amsterdam's IISH. See: *Gaston Leval Papers*, 'Mémoires'.

²³ See for instance: Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Soviet Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy & Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (Oxford 2012), 28-9.

-
- ²⁴ Darlington, *Syndicalism and the Transition to Communism* (Aldershot 2008), 157-80.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 157-8.
- ²⁶ Durgan, *Comunismo*, 31-4.
- ²⁷ IISH, *Víctor Alba Papers*, Maurín, Letter to Víctor Alba (29/05/1972).
- ²⁸ Joaquín Maurín, 'Hombres e historia. Terror y contraterror', *España Libre* (05/08/1960).
- ²⁹ 'Confederación Nacional del Trabajo: Reunión del pleno del comité', *Redención* (Alcoy: 07/05/1921).
- ³⁰ 'Introducción de la delegación de la CNT que asistió al congreso constitutivo de la ISR en Moscú los días 3-17 de julio de 1921', *La Lucha Social* (Lleida: 27/05/1922).
- ³¹ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 241.
- ³² Joaquín Maurín, *Revolución y contrarrevolución en España* (Paris 1964), 256.
- ³³ Garner, "Separated by an "ideological chasm"", 311.
- ³⁴ 'Informe de la delegación de la CNT (primera parte)', *Lucha Social* (27/05/1922).
- ³⁵ Maurín, *Revolución y Contrarrevolución en España*, 264.
- ³⁶ IISH, *CNT Archives*, 68A.1, 'Actas de la conferencia de Zaragoza: Tercera sesión' (04/06/1922), 7.
- ³⁷ 'Reunión del pleno nacional', *Redención* (29/10/1921).
- ³⁸ Antonio Bar, *La CNT en los años rojos, del sindicalismo revolucionario al anarcosindicalismo (1910-1926)* (Madrid 1981), 757-62.
- ³⁹ Anna Monjo, *Militants: Democràcia i participació a la CNT als anys trenta* (Barcelona 2003), 250-2.
- ⁴⁰ 'Actas de la conferencia de Zaragoza: Tercera sesión', 7.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 6.

⁴² Leval, 'Mémoires', 73, 75.

⁴³ Gaston Leval, 'Turno de Gaston Leval' (1954). Reproduced in: José Peirats, *Figuras del movimiento libertario español* (Barcelona 1978), 155.

⁴⁴ 'Actas de la conferencia de Zargoza: Tercera sesión', 7.

⁴⁵ Paniagua, 'La visió de Gaston Leval', 204-5.

⁴⁶ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 239.

⁴⁷ José Peirats, *La CNT en la revolución española* (Paris 1971), 30.

⁴⁸ Leval, 'Mémoires', 85. See also: Leval, 'Turno de Gaston Leval', 156-8.

⁴⁹ Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, 149-60.

⁵⁰ Leval, 'Mémoires', 74.

⁵¹ Ibáñez, *Memoria*, 239.

⁵² Joaquín Maurín, *Recuerdos* (1975). <https://www.marxists.org/espanol/maurin/1972.htm>

[Accessed: 11/04/17]

⁵³ AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, L.57, box 2, Ministerio de Estado Madrid (26/07/1919),

'Anejo, copia traducida', Basil Thomson.

⁵⁴ Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 269-70.

⁵⁵ Agustin Souchy, *Attention anarchiste ! Une vie pour la liberté* (Paris 2006), 50. According to Leval, it was Monatte who financed the trip. Leval, 'Turno de Gaston Leval', 157-8.

⁵⁶ AHN, *Ministerio de Estado*, H.2761, file 66, 'El Ministro de Estado al Embajador de España en París (25/03/1921), n.218'.

⁵⁷ Pere Foix, *Apòstols i mercaders: seixanta anys de lluita social a Catalunya* (Barcelona 1976), 158-9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 160-1.

-
- ⁵⁹ León Xifort, 'Contra la delegación', *Nueva Senda* (Madrid 01/06/1922).
- ⁶⁰ Leval, 'Mémoires', 74.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 75.
- ⁶² Joaquín Maurín, 'Hombres e historia: de España a Berlín sin pasaporte', *España Libre* (New York 16/02/1962).
- ⁶³ Leval, 'Mémoires', 75.
- ⁶⁴ 'Kampf aus Spaniens', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (Berlin: 04/06/1921).
- ⁶⁵ Reiner Tosstorff, *The Red International of Labour Unions*, 270-2.
- ⁶⁶ Antonio Albiñana and Mercedes Arancibia, 'Última entrevista con Gaston Leval', *Tiempo de Historia* (September 1978), 13.
- ⁶⁷ Margaret Vallance, 'Rudolf Rocker: a biographical sketch', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.8, No.3 (July 1973), 79-80; Joaquín Maurín, 'Berlín: 1921', *Hombres e Historia* (1961).
<http://www.fundanin.org/maur%EDn7.htm> [Accessed: 06/04/2015]
- ⁶⁸ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 244. On the uneven development of anti-Bolshevik sentiments in the international anarcho-syndicalist movement see: Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 119-20, 280.
- ⁶⁹ Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 272.
- ⁷⁰ A Spanish translation of the German originals was published in: Andreu Nin, 'Notas internacionales', *Acción Social Obrera* (San Feliu de Guixols 18/06/1921); Joaquín Maurín, 'El sindicalismo en Alemania', *Acción Social Obrera* (San Feliu de Guixols 25/06/1921).
- ⁷¹ Kris Manjapra, *M.N. Roy: Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism* (Abingdon 2010), 39-40.
- ⁷² Alfred Rosmer, *Lenin's Moscow* (London 1971), 34-9.
- ⁷³ Leval, 'Mémoires', 75. For an account of Ghezzi's exile, see: Victor Serge, 'Francesco Ghezzi', *La Wallonie* (Liege 18/01/1938).

⁷⁴ Víctor Sergio, 'Ramón Casanellas en Moscú', *Lucha Social* (Lleida 04/02/1922).

⁷⁵ Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Que sean fuego las estrellas: Barcelona (1917-1923), una historia narrativa de sindicalistas y pistoleros* (Mexico City 2015), 332-4.

⁷⁶ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 259.

⁷⁷ Ernesto Burgos, 'Jesús Ibáñez en la caverna de Zarathustra', *La Nueva España* (Gijón 26/05/2009); Maurín, 'Berlín: 1921'. Ibáñez's memoirs mention the incident in a rather obscure chapter. He gives the impression that he was arrested along with Bruno Lladó and another *cenetista* called Tejeros during an ordinary raid by the German police, but then inserts an esoteric passage where he ruminates about Zarathustra, sex, and revolution. Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 245-58. The Spanish embassy in Berlin mentioned the arrest of Ibáñez, Lladó, and Tejeros in a telegraph to Madrid, but did not elaborate on it. AHN, *Ministerio de gobernación*, Interior H.A17, 'Nota del presidente de la policía alemana' (01/06/1921).

⁷⁸ Joaquín Maurín, 'Notas rápidas: tres tipos de pueblo', *Lucha Social* (11/06/1921).

⁷⁹ Víctor Alba, *Dos revolucionarios: Andreu Nin y Joaquín Maurín* (Madrid: 1975), 142-3.

⁸⁰ Leval, 'Mémoires', 76. The use of expatriate passports seems to have been a common way to smuggle delegates into Russia. See: Armando Borghi in *Mezzo secolo di anarchia* (Catania 1954), 223-9; Souchy, *Attention anarchiste !*, 28.

⁸¹ Rosmer, *Lenin's Moscow*, 22-34; Souchy, *Attention anarchiste !*, 28; Armando Borghi, *Vivere da anarchici* (Bologna 1966), 171-3.

⁸² Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 259; Leval, 'Mémoires', 76-7. Leval and Ibáñez give somewhat contradictory accounts about the passengers of the boat.

⁸³ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 259.

⁸⁴ Joaquín Maurín, 'Notas de andar y ver: camino de Moscú', *Lucha Social* (Lleida 30/07/1921).

On the passage through Estonia and the problems of securing an Estonian visa see the account of American communist Charles Shipman (alias Phillips): Charles Shipman, *It Had to Be Revolution: Memoirs of an American Radical* (Ithaca, NY 1993), 98-9.

⁸⁵ Maurín, 'Notas de andar y ver: camino de Moscú', *Lucha Social* (Lleida 30/07/1921).

⁸⁶ Joaquín Maurín, 'Una casa de descanso', *Redención* (Alcoy 25/11/1921). See also Borghi, *Mezzo secolo*, 229.

⁸⁷ Leval, 'Mémoires', 76-7.

⁸⁸ Ángel Pestaña, *Setenta días en Rusia: lo que yo vi* (Barcelona 1924), 8. For other accounts about the exciting experience of arriving in Russia, see: Borghi, *Mezzo secolo*, 227-9; Alexander Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920-1922)* (London 1989), 28-30.

⁸⁹ Joaquín Maurín, 'Petrogrado, la ciudad del heroísmo y de la tragedia', *Lucha Social* (Lleida 19/11/1921).

⁹⁰ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 264.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Leval, 'Mémoires', 81; Ángel Pestaña, *Seventy Days in Russia: What I Saw* (2012), 18.

⁹³ Leval, 'Mémoires', 90.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 94. On day-to-day life for foreign delegates in Moscow, see: Shipman, *Memoirs of an American Radical*, 102-5.

⁹⁵ Maurín, *Revolución*, 261.

⁹⁶ The Kronstadt uprising had taken place in March 1921, but at this point it seems to have been off the radar of most anarchists. It would only become a major bone of contention later on.

⁹⁷ Garner, 'Separated by an "ideological chasm"', 313.

⁹⁸ Leval, 'Mémoires', 98

⁹⁹ Wayne Thorpe has underlined the importance of the dissident libertarian networks weaved in Russia in 1920-21 for the ulterior creation of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workingmen's Association in 1922: Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, 149-50.

¹⁰⁰ Emma Goldman, *Living my Life*, vol. 2 (New York 1931), 906.

¹⁰¹ Maurín, *Revolución*, 262.

¹⁰² *Bulletin Du Premier Congrès International des Syndicats Révolutionnaires*, n. 15 (Moscow: 19/07/1921), 13.

¹⁰³ Maurín, *Revolución*, 262-3.

¹⁰⁴ Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, NJ 1967), 232.

¹⁰⁵ Grigori Maksimov, 'Kamera n° 4 golodaet', *Za chto i kak bol'sheviki izgnali anarkhistov* (Berlin 1922).

¹⁰⁶ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 262.

¹⁰⁷ Serge, *Memoirs*, 142; Wilkens, 'Los mercenarios de la calumnia', *Nueva Senda* (04/05/1922).

¹⁰⁸ 'La delegación de la CNT en Rusia', *Lucha Social* (Lleida 03/06/1922).

¹⁰⁹ Pestaña, *Setenta días*, 210.

¹¹⁰ Rosmer, *Lenin's Moscow*, 158.

¹¹¹ Maurín, *Revolución*, 264.

¹¹² Francisco Romero Salvadó, *Spain 1914-1918: Between War and Revolution* (London 1999), 129-30.

¹¹³ Maurín, *Revolución*, 265.

¹¹⁴ Leval, 'Mémoires', 83.

Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 264.

¹¹⁵ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 261.

¹¹⁶ Joaquín Maurín, *El Bloque Obrero y Campesino: Origen-Actividad-Perspectivas* (Barcelona 1932), 8.

¹¹⁷ Maurín, *Revolución*, 270.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Maurín, *El Bloque Obrero y Campesino*, 8.

¹²⁰ Fundación Pablo Iglesias (FPI, Madrid), *Internacional Comunista: informes de España*, AAVV-CV-16, Madrid (19/03/1920), Charles Phillips, 'Conversation', 82.

¹²¹ FPI, *Internacional Comunista: informes de España*, AAVV-CV-16, Madrid (06/03/1920), Charles Phillips, 'Conversation (Merino Gracia, Ugarte, Ramírez)', 1.

¹²² Maurín, *Revolución*, 259.

¹²³ Lozovsky mentioned this meeting in: 'Deuxième séance du Conseil Central de l'I.S.R', *Bulletin du Premier Congrès International des Syndicats Révolutionnaires*, n. 16 (Moscow 21/07/1921), 1. See also: Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 351 and 409-10.

¹²⁴ Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left*, 432-3.

¹²⁵ 'Première séance', *Bulletin du Premier Congrès International des Syndicats Révolutionnaires*, n. 1 (03/07/1921), 1-2. For a balanced and very detailed analysis of the congress, see: Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 348-421.

¹²⁶ Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 359-60.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left*, 396.

¹²⁹ Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 401n.

¹³⁰ *Résolutions et statuts adoptés au Ier congrès international des syndicats révolutionnaires, Moscow, 3-19 juillet 1921* (Paris 1921), 17. See also: Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 376, 412.

¹³¹ Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, 192-4.

¹³² Rosmer, *Lenin's Moscow*, 159-61.

¹³³ 'Séance du 14 juillet 1921 soir', *Bulletin*, n.10 (14/07/1921), 11.

¹³⁴ Leval, 'Mémoires', 87-90; Albiñana & Arancibia, 'Última entrevista', 14.

¹³⁵ On this incident, which brought the congress 'to the brink of dissolution', see Tosstorff, *The Red International*: 387-90.

¹³⁶ Foix, *Apòstols i mercaders*, 172.

¹³⁷ Wayne Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, 199.

¹³⁸ John Thomas Murphy, *New Horizons* (London 1941), 132.

¹³⁹ Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left*, 397. This view is echoed by Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, 175-6.

¹⁴⁰ 'Actas de la conferencia de Zaragoza: tercera sesión', 8.

¹⁴¹ 'Actas de la conferencia de Zaragoza: segunda sesión', 5.

¹⁴² Bruno Lladó, 'Alrededor del congreso sindical en Moscú', *Nueva Senda* (Madrid: 16/03/1922).

¹⁴³ Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, 192-4.

Tosstorff, *The Red International*, 557-60.

¹⁴⁴ Joaquín Maurín, 'Cómo, dónde y cuándo conocí a Casanellas', *La Batalla* (Barcelona 13/09/1923); AHN, *Ministerio de Exteriores*, H.2760, 'Telegrama al ministerio de gobernación' (02/10/1921), Embajada española en Berlín.

¹⁴⁵ Ibáñez, *Memorias*, 265-72; AHN, *Ministerio de Exteriores*, H.2760, ‘Telegrama al ministerio de gobernación’ (17/10/1921), Embajada española en Berlín.

¹⁴⁶ AHN, *Ministerio de Interior (Histórico)*, L.17, Serie A, file 3 (1921), ‘Embajada de España en Berlín, n.383’, (21/11/1921)

¹⁴⁷ AHN, *Ministerio de Exteriores*, H.2760, ‘Telegrama al ministerio de gobernación’ (04/11/1921), Embajada española en Berlín. On German reactions to the arrests and on the Dato affair in Germany, see: Wolfgang Mettgenberg, ‘The Extradition of the Assassins of the Spanish Premier Dato by the German Reich’, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1922): 542-60.

¹⁴⁸ Joaquín Maurín, *El Sindicalismo a la luz de la Revolución Rusa* (Lleida 1922).

¹⁴⁹ Riottot, *Maurín*, 64.

¹⁵⁰ Ibáñez, *Memoria*, 220.

¹⁵¹ Durgan, *Comunismo*, 28.

¹⁵² Pelai Pagès, *Historia del Partido Comunista de España* (Barcelona 1978), 69.

¹⁵³ ‘Profilaxis sindicalista’, *Redención* (Alcoy: 25/11/1921).

¹⁵⁴ Thorpe, ‘*The Workers Themselves*’, 192-4.

¹⁵⁵ Hermoso Plaja, ‘Pseudo revolucionarismo’, *Redención* (11/11/1921).

¹⁵⁶ Alba, *Dos revolucionarios*, 14.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Actas de la conferencia de Zaragoza’, 6.

¹⁵⁸ Ángel Pestaña, *Consideraciones y juicios acerca de la Tercera Internacional* (Madrid 1968), 49.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Actas de la conferencia de Zaragoza: tercera sesión’, 9-10.

¹⁶⁰ This ambiguity also characterized the attitude of Armando Borghi, who travelled to Russia in 1920 representing the Italian anarcho-syndicalists: Fedele, *Una breve illusione*, 118.

¹⁶¹ Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, 188.

¹⁶² Maurín, *Revolución*, 251.

¹⁶³ Bar, *La CNT*, 780-2. See also: Ealham, 'An Impossible Unity', 104-105.

¹⁶⁴ Reiner Tosstorff, 'The syndicalist encounter with Bolshevism', *Anarchist Studies*, Vol.17, No.2 (September 2009), 10.

BIO

Arturo Zoffmann Rodriguez is a PhD candidate at the European University Institute (Florence). His work focuses on the impact of the Russian Revolution on the Spanish anarchist movement in the years 1917-1924, developing his previous MPhil thesis completed at the University of Oxford. As of the spring of 2018, he is a visiting lecturer at the University of Barcelona. His research interests revolve round labour history, the history of anarchism and communism, and the transnational comparative history of revolutions. Languages: Spanish, English, Catalan, Italian, French, Russian, Greek.