Interview with Mundo Obrero

From your position as a philosopher and scientist, how do you view Spanish society in late 1984? What do you think of the most recent changes?

It’s very difficult to answer such a radical, comprehensive question. Obviously, I cannot give a sociological analysis just like that, in merely answering a question, quite apart from the fact that that is not my function either. What one can do, I think, is point to the main features of the situation from one’s own point of view.

For a person with my background and my convictions, there can be no doubt about it: the main feature of the situation is the collapse of the Left. This is the situation’s decisive feature. I must say, although it may seem smug, that I saw it coming. I had been a member of the PSUC’s Central Committee since 1956 and a member of its Executive Committee for more than ten years, as well as being a member of the PCE’s Central Committee. In the summer of 1970, there was a very important plenary meeting that I will never forget, because it was the moment when I decided that I could not continue working there. I said quite clearly then that we were heading toward a collapse, that if we continued like that we would fade away. As for the PCE, a policy like the one it represented could have only one real political outcome, if it was going to be the policy (I didn’t agree with it, but it was the only one that would have been a real policy): merger with the PSOE. And this, years later, was what Santiago Carrillo would say in an interview with Oriana Fallaci.

That was not an idea that appealed to me. I was not in it for that, of course, but in any event that would have been a policy. What has actually been done is nothing, neither that nor the opposite of that, nor anything else that could be sustained as a policy.

Viewed very subjectively, and very much from the position that I occupied as a Communist militant, the most painful part of this whole development was the complete collapse of the PCE on the basis of a lack of policy, something which could already be seen in the 1960s. People who were not especially smart

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had already said so. I am not especially smart as a politician, but I had already realised this in 1970, and I said so. I really don't say this out of arrogance; I say it as a way of letting off steam, because this was very painful and, in addition, it was the fundamental damage. The PCE’s collapse is this country’s greatest misfortune. There is nothing to compare it with; that is the source of it all, the source of the collapse of the entire Left.

I forgot to mention another aspect of the situation, which is the PSOE’s treachery. But anyone who is surprised by the PSOE’s treachery has never read any history. That is what a Social Democratic party is made for – to prevent the triumph of the workers; that’s what the Socialist Party is made for. Not from the very beginning by any means, not when it was the Second International, but certainly ever since there has been a Third International. So, since the PSOE’s backsliding had to be taken for granted, was a given, the PCE’s collapse must be seen as the decisive cause of the Left’s collapse.

There were also less momentous things, but which were likewise very important. In following that strange policy, which was in fact a lack of policy, the PCE’s and PSUC’s leadership ended up doing astonishing things. For example, the Centre de Treball i Documentació [Work and Documentation Centre] (CTD) in Barcelona has preserved some documents from the era of working underground, and among them you can see a report from a member of the leadership in Paris which is a monument to political foolishness. In the letter, he announces the good news that they are axing the PSUC’s organising within education – I was still in the Party at the time – because, it seems, we were proving too revolutionary or too leftist for him, and for that reason he thought that liquidating the movement was perfect. That letter is in the CTD, you can read it; this is not a legend. So, it went as far as acts of madness like that, which are a sign of a complete lack of political intelligence, a lack of thought, a lack of authenticity.

As a matter of fact, things of that sort had occurred much earlier. I remember that in 1958 we began to prepare, in the committee of intellectuals of the PSUC in the interior, something that we called the ‘First Congress of Catalan Culture’, which had been thought out very seriously, as something very important, with commissions working in different areas: language, geography, history, science. Then, the person who at that time served as our link to the Executive in Paris thought that what should come out of all this was a piece of paper with lots of signatures, instead of a real congress, which is what we wanted. On that occasion, we in the interior won out and there was a congress; we did something quite serious because it the first time under Francoism that

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1 That is, within Francoist Spain [Ed.].