

# The Spanish Communist Party and the Andalusian countryside: Rural mobilisation and social empowerment (1956-1979)

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## ABSTRACT

This study offers an overview of the interventions of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in rural Andalusia during the 1960s and 1970s, from the party's initial steps in the late 1950s to their mobilizations in the last years of Franco's regime. Emphasis is placed on the evolution of Communist discourse regarding the “agrarian issue”, especially agrarian reform, the struggle for land and the way in which the party managed to get involved in the everyday life of Andalusian rural workers, who became gradually empowered to fight for their rights as workers and citizens. We believe this certainly influenced the successes of the party in the 1979 local government elections.

## KEYWORDS

Spanish Communist Party, Rural Andalusia, 1960s-1970s, Agrarian reform

The effectiveness of the political project of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in rural Andalusia (characterised by large properties and casual labour particularly in Córdoba and Seville) can be acknowledged by both the results of the 1979 local elections and, to a certain extent, by the percentages of affiliation to the Spanish trade union *Comisiones Obreras del Campo* (Rural Workers' Commissions) in 1978.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> These results were communicated by the trade union itself at its first congress in 1978. See Tables 1 and 2 in the Appendix. The PCE achieved an important 20.38% of the votes from Seville's countryside –against 29.02% by UCD and 24.17 by PSOE – and 35.80% from Cordoba's countryside – compared to 25.12% by UCD and 26.63% by PSOE. Similarly, a large number of mayoral seats was achieved in these regions, along with a considerable number of councillors. See *Realidad. Boletín informativo de las Comisiones Obreras de Sevilla*. Año III, nº 19, 6 de abril de 1979, pp. 8-9. [www.datoselecciones.com/elecciones-municipales-1979/andalucia](http://www.datoselecciones.com/elecciones-municipales-1979/andalucia)

matching of interests between an individual (as a bearer of certain aspirations) and a political party (embodying those aspirations and promising to stand up for them if the necessary social support is provided) was established by the democratic decision to vote for a given political group.

What caused such successful electorate support to the Communist project in Andalusia? In the following article, we shall present a general panorama of the PCE's work in the Andalusian countryside from the late 1950s (when the party began its underground organisation after the severe repression during the Civil War and early Francoism) to 1979 (following the dictator's death and the celebration of the first democratic local elections). A theoretical approach facilitating a complex and multidimensional analysis of social mobilisation in these rural contexts during late-Francoism and the period of the transition to democracy will be used.

### **Theoretical underpinnings**

The theoretical approaches underlying this article focus on *constructivist* theories, which allow for the interpretation of social action, the development of social identities and common frameworks of reference, as well as discourse analysis.<sup>2</sup> This approach leads us to regard social mobilizations against Francoism in rural Andalusia as social interaction and interrelated processes established during everyday life, rather than as a result of the structural characteristics of the social context they stem from.

Tools provided by recent theories applied to democratization processes and the development of pro-democratic, social values in rural areas are also considered in this study. Following the lines of previous research<sup>3</sup> into democratization processes in rural

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<sup>2</sup> On the creation of collective social identities and common frameworks of reference, see, for instance: SNOW, D. and BENFORD, R.: "Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization". In: KLANDERMANS, B. *et al.* eds., *International Social Movement Research. From structure to action: comparing social movement research across cultures*. Vol. I. London: JAI Press, 1988, pp. 197-217; "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest". In: MORRIS, A. and MUELLER, C. eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 133-155; BENFORD, R.: "Frame Disputes within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement". *Social Forces*. n.71, 1993; HUNT, S., BENFORD, R. AND SNOW, D. "Marcos de acción colectiva y campos de identidad en la construcción social de los movimientos". In: LARAÑA, E. AND GUSFIELD, J. eds., *Los nuevos movimientos sociales: de la ideología a la identidad*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2001, pp. 221-249, p. 228; RIVAS, A. "El análisis de marcos: una metodología para el estudio de los movimientos sociales". In: IBARRA, P. and TEJERINA, B. eds., *Los movimientos sociales. Transformaciones políticas y cambio cultural*. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1998, pp. 181-215, pp. 190-193. The discursive construction of reality has been studied in Spain by Miguel Ángel Cabrera and others. CABRERA ACOSTA, M. A. "Historia y Teoría de la Sociedad. Del giro culturalista al giro lingüístico". In: FORCADELL, C. and PEIRÓ, I. eds., *Lecturas de la Historia. Nueve reflexiones sobre Historia de la Historiografía*. Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2002, pp. 255-272; "On Language, Culture, and Social Action". *History and Theory*. vol. 40, n.4, 2001, pp. 82-100; *Historia, lenguaje y teoría de la sociedad*. Madrid: Cátedra-Universitat de València, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> MARKOFF, J., GONZÁLEZ DE MOLINA, M. and VILLA, I. "Los procesos de democratización en la Andalucía rural contemporánea. Propuesta de análisis para una reinterpretación de la historia andaluza del siglo XX". *Actas del XIII Congreso Internacional de la Sociedad Española de Historia Agraria*. Lleida, 2011; HERRERA, A. *et al.* "Los procesos de democratización en el campo. Democracia y mundo rural en la Andalucía del siglo XX". In: *Nuevos horizontes del pasado. Culturas políticas, identidades y formas de*

Andalusia, the study of late-Francoism and the period of the transition to democracy are also taken into account with special focus on the frameworks of political mobilization which help us understand the construction of citizenship and democracy in this region. It is necessary to redefine and flexibilize the concepts of citizenship and democracy in this period of Spanish history in favour of an alternative narrative that considers the essential role played by rural areas in the construction of democracy in Andalusia and Spain as whole. This will lead us to a better understanding and judgment of all the social agents involved in practices of political engagement, considered by researchers today as democratic, despite these practices being unconsciously performed in many cases.<sup>4</sup> The process of political learning and socialization, and therefore, of social empowerment, developed during the 1960s and 1970s in Andalusia may be best understood this way.<sup>5</sup>

### **The PCE's reorganization and the revival of organized protest. First steps (1956-1960)**

The PCE's agrarian programme<sup>6</sup> stemmed from the confirmation that traditional rural society was in crisis as the result of the capitalization of agriculture, with mechanised farming and rural depopulation as the main catalytic factors.<sup>7</sup> The general feeling of discontent, alienation and frustration among rural workers, due to the lack of real opportunities to gain access to a decent life, was used by the PCE as the catalyst for social mobilization and protest and as an opportunity to raise pro-democratic attitudes able to identify Francoism with a predatory economic system and the cause of their poor living

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*representación*. Actas del X Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea, Santander, 16 y 17 de septiembre de 2010 - Facultad de Filosofía y Letras - Universidad de Cantabria; HERRERA, A. y MARKOFF, J. "Rural movements and the transition to democracy in Spain". *Mobilization: the International Quarterly Review of Social Movement Research*. Volume 16, n.4, diciembre de 2011, pp. 455-475.

<sup>4</sup> The present study focuses on the work of the PCE in this process without detriment to other movements promoting mobilisation and democratic awareness of the rural population, such as Christian-oriented movements. See SABIO ALCUTÉN, A. "Cultivadores de democracia. Politización campesina y sindicalismo agrario progresista en España 1970-1980". *Historia Agraria*. N.38, 2006, pp. 75-102; GONZÁLEZ MADRID, D. and MARTÍN, O. J. "Cristianos conscientes en el mundo rural. Los movimientos de curas rurales en la diócesis de Albacete (1965-1977)". In: ORTIZ HERAS, M. and GONZÁLEZ MADRID, D. eds., *De la cruzada al desencanche. La Iglesia española entre el Franquismo y la Transición*. Madrid: Sílex, pp. 265-289.

<sup>5</sup> As pointed out by Gil Andrés, power defines and redefines democracy by means of laws and constitutional texts, but street and countryside inhabitants have a leading role too, by means of an open, persistent and collective defiance shown by social mobilizations. "Esas luchas pueblerinas". *Mobilización política y conflicto social en el mundo rural republicano (La Rioja 1930-1936)*. *Ayer*. n. 89, 2013, pp. 93-119, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Documentation available at the PCE Archive on the "agrarian issue" is profuse. However, the most complete piece of work on this issue during the late 1950s is GARCÍA, T. (Juan Gómez) *La evolución de la cuestión agraria bajo el franquismo*. Madrid: Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 1993 based on the intervention of Juan Gómez himself at the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the PCE in 1957. See also GÓMEZ, T. *La evolución de la cuestión agraria bajo el franquismo*. Archivo Histórico del PCE, Sección Documentos del PCE, Documentos por años, Actas del Pleno del Comité Central del PCE, 1957.

<sup>7</sup> For further information on this matter, see ABAD, C. and NAREDO, J. M. "Sobre la "modernización" de la agricultura española (1940-1995): de la agricultura tradicional hacia la capitalización agraria y dependencia asistencial". In: GÓMEZ BENITO, C. and GONZÁLEZ RODRÍGUEZ, J. J.: *Agricultura y sociedad en la España contemporánea*. Madrid: CIS, 1997, pp. 249-317 and NAREDO, J. M.: *La evolución de la agricultura en España (1940-2000)*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2004.

conditions. By means of a positional readjustment regarding the “agrarian issue”, the myth of agrarian reform was provided with a renewed symbolic impetus, turning day labourers and small tenants into the main protagonists of the construction of democracy in rural Andalusia.<sup>8</sup>

Since the late 1950s, the PCE initiated a slow, but constant, process of reorganization as renewed protests spread throughout the Andalusian countryside. It was the first time that Spanish Communists managed to link the pre-civil war traditions of working-class *associationism*, mainly developed by Socialists, Anarchists, Republicans and Catholics, with the general, rather diffident, sentiment of discontent fuelled by the application of capitalism in agriculture after the autarchy period. Communists succeeded in making discontented peasants and casual workers recover their collective memories of previous associative experiences, present until the end of the Second Spanish Republic, in the defence of their economic interests, thus creating new associative networks.<sup>9</sup>

The celebration of both the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the party's Central Committee in 1957 and the *Huelga Nacional Pacífica* (National Peaceful Strike) in 1959<sup>10</sup> were two important milestones in this process. The first signs of discontent and rebellion across Andalusian rural areas had appeared prior to the celebration of the meeting.<sup>11</sup> In many

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<sup>8</sup> For further information on the origins of Communist discourse connected with the “agrarian issue” and the agrarian reform, consult COBO ROMERO, F. *Por la Reforma Agraria hacia la revolución. El sindicalismo agrario socialista durante la II República y la Guerra Civil (1930-1939)*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2007; ACOSTA RAMÍREZ, F. CRUZ ARTACHO, S. GONZÁLEZ DE MOLINA, M. *Socialismo agrario, conflicto rural y democracia en el campo español (1880-1930). Los orígenes de la federación de trabajadores de la tierra*. Madrid: Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Medio Rural y Marino, 2009; HERRERA GONZÁLEZ DE MOLINA, A. *La construcción de la democracia en el campo, (1975-1988). El sindicalismo agrario socialista en la transición española*. Madrid: Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Medio Rural y Marino, 2007. For further information on the PCE's ideas in the 1950s, see COBO ROMERO, F. and ORTEGA LÓPEZ, T. “El Partido Comunista de España y la cuestión agraria en Andalucía durante el Tardofranquismo y la Transición política a la Democracia, 1956-1983”. *Historia Actual Online*. n. 7, primavera 2005, pp. 27-42. ÁLVAREZ, S. *El Partido Comunista y el campo. La evolución del problema agrario y la posición de los comunistas*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1977.

<sup>9</sup> In this regard, the theoretical approaches herein adopted are those of Pamela Radcliff, considering the PCE as the main catalyst for these protest movements. We believe this party managed to provide this incipient discontent and embryonic rural protests not only with human resources, but also with linguistic and discursive instruments, ideas, values and social networks which helped build the foundations of a common democratic and civic way of thinking and behaving. RADCLIFF, P. B. *Making democratic citizens in Spain. Civil society and the popular origins of the transition, 1960-78*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> The impact and scope of both the *Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional* and the *Huelga Nacional Política* upon the Spanish Communist structure are clearly explained in SÁNCHEZ RODRÍGUEZ, J. *Teoría y práctica democrática en el PCE (1956-1982)*. Madrid: Fundación de Investigaciones Marxistas, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> For further information on protest revival in Andalusia, see HEINE, H. *La oposición política al franquismo, 1939-1952*. Barcelona: Crítica, 1983; HEINE, H. y AZUAGA, J. M. *La oposición al franquismo en Andalucía Oriental*. Madrid: FSS Ediciones, 2005; FOWERAKER, J. *La democracia española. Los verdaderos artífices de la democracia en España*. Madrid: Arias Montano, 1990, pp. 135-143. BERNAL, A. M. “Resignación de los campesinos andaluces: la resistencia pasiva durante el franquismo”. In: ORTIZ HERAS et al. *España franquista: causa general y actitudes sociales ante la ditadura*. Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1993, pp. 145-159; BAENA LUQUE, E. y ORTEGA LÓPEZ, T. M<sup>a</sup>. “1962, “el mayo andaluz””: Andalucía ante las huelgas mineras de Asturias”. In: VEGA, R. ed., *El camino que marcaba Asturias. Las huelgas de 1962 en España y su repercusión internacional*. Oviedo: Trea, 2002, pp. 143-160; COBO ROMERO, F. and ORTEGA LÓPEZ, T. “La protesta de sólo unos pocos: el débil y tardío surgimiento de la protesta laboral y la oposición democrática al régimen franquista en Andalucía Oriental, 1951-1976”. *Historia*

cases, this attitude and commitment to struggle was evident before the presence of the PCE was established in many rural municipalities. At this precise moment, the Communist party started to coordinate these sentiments of disaffection with Franco's rural policies into an organized structure. The party became progressively more strategically involved in the everyday life of rural workers dissatisfied with Franco's regime. There was an attempt to integrate the demands from all sectors of rural society – young people, women, casual labourers, small peasants and tenants and other opposition forces – whose rights were violated by Franco's agrarian policies in common struggle against the Francoist regime, as a prior step to the implementation of socialist and communist policies.<sup>12</sup>

The PCE's definite position in favour of the necessity of an agrarian policy focused on mass mobilization in the Andalusian countryside first appeared after the resolutions adopted at the 3rd Plenary Meeting. Social mobilization was seen as a *sine qua non* to gain democracy in Spain.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the PCE's *Política de Reconciliación Nacional* (National Reconciliation Policy) marked a watershed in the Communist struggle against Francoism and in favour of democracy. In addition to the numbers who participated during this particular celebration on May 5, 1958, it also proved successful in terms of a experiential and referential learning process that helped further the goals of the party and its supporters.<sup>14</sup> In fact, from the Communist point of view, the *Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional* (National Reconciliation Day) brought back a renewed impulse for the fight for labour rights, particularly lost after the traumatic government repression of the post-Civil War years. This PCE initiative was regarded as successful since it helped Andalusian rural workers to get politically involved again, recovering their previous fighting spirit. The Communists defined this as a strategy “to move beyond friendly discussions to being more closely tied to the place of work and linked to the masses”<sup>15</sup>. This attitude of confrontation led to a certain *assimilation* of behaviour or “pull effect” among rural areas, all towards a common cause, a definite change of attitude among rural workers regarding Franco's regime, which the PCE deemed necessary to coordinate. As the party summarized the feelings of rural workers: “we want to work the olive groves,

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*Contemporánea*. n. 26, 2003, pp. 113-160; ORTEGA LÓPEZ, T. “Algunas causas de la conflictividad laboral bajo la dictadura franquista en la provincia de Granada (1939-1975)”. *Ayer*. n. 50, 2003, pp. 235-254; *Del silencio a la protesta: explotación, pobreza y conflictividad en una provincia andaluza, Granada 1936-1977*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2003; MARTÍNEZ LÓPEZ, D. y CRUZ ARTACHO, S. *Protesta obrera y sindicalismo en una región "idílica": historia de Comisiones Obreras en la provincia de Jaén*. Universidad de Jaén, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> The PCE's initial proposals regarding the need for reorganization and being present in the everyday life of Andalusian rural workers are clearly stated in the microfiches contained in the section “Nacionalidades y Regiones: Andalucía” from the PCE Archive. The first examples in particular, with references to the late 1950s are also found in this collection. AHPCE, Nacionalidades y regiones, Andalucía y Extremadura, Microfichas.

<sup>13</sup> For a complete analysis of the Communist's position regarding the consequences of capitalized agriculture, the process of land concentration and proletarianization of rural workers, see GÓMEZ, T. *La evolución de la cuestión agraria bajo el franquismo* Op. Cit.

<sup>14</sup> AHPCE, Nacionalidades y regiones, Andalucía y Extremadura, Microfichas. Microficha 37, 1957; microficha 40, 1958; microficha 42, 1958.

<sup>15</sup> AHPCE, Nacionalidades y regiones, Andalucía y Extremadura, Microfichas. Microficha 43, 1958.

but [only] earning *cinquenta pesetas* and our day meal, landlords themselves can work the land”<sup>16</sup>.

According to Communist documents, the subsequent celebration of another day of protest in Spain – the *Huelga Nacional Pacífica* (National Peaceful Strike) – celebrated on June 18, 1959 was largely supported by rural workers all over Andalusia,<sup>17</sup> and meant both a step forward towards the reorganization of the party in rural areas and the confirmation of the general sentiment of change developed by the previous celebration of the National Reconciliation Day.

### **The 1960s: rural assemblies, the dynamism of protest and the democratic awareness of rural society**

To analyse the activities of the PCE in the 1960s (the increased dynamism of protests and the democratic empowerment of rural Andalusia) we should also explore its framework of discourse constructed around the “agrarian issue” particularly how it was addressed to rural areas after the resolutions adopted at party's 6th congress.<sup>18</sup> Communist Party discourse regarding the “agrarian issue” with its two principal emphases – agrarian reform and the slogan “Land for the Tiller” – was largely successful, not only persisting, but evolving over the decade.<sup>19</sup> The PCE succeeded in spreading such a discourse among Andalusian rural workers and across different rural sectors, as rural people became personally involved and familiar with pro-democratic civil practices. In this sense, rural *asamblearismo*<sup>20</sup> (democratic assemblies for the adoption of decisions and agreements) and the slogan “Land for the Tiller” were catalysts for social action and protest, and together with the creation of rural commissions, played an essential role as platforms from which Communist agrarian discourse could be extended.

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<sup>16</sup> AHPCE, Nacionalidades y regiones, Andalucía y Extremadura, Microfichas. Microficha 71, 1958.

<sup>17</sup> *‘El hecho más resonante fue el paro en masa de los trabajadores del campo en Andalucía y Extremadura, y muy particularmente en Córdoba, Sevilla, Jaén y Badajoz. Era la primera vez que los obreros agrícolas participaban tan ampliamente en una huelga política; que ella se produjese, además, bajo la dictadura fascista del general Franco revelaba el alto nivel de conciencia adquirido por las masas del campo’* (The most resounding was mass unemployment among Andalusian rural workers, particularly among those from Córdoba, Sevilla, Jaén and Badajoz. It was the first time such a large number of rural workers had supported a political strike; and the fact that it had happened under Franco's regime showed the high level of awareness which the rural masses had acquired).

<sup>17</sup> *Historia del Partido Comunista de España*. París: Éditions Sociales, 1960, p.269. This official history was written by a special commission of the PCE's Central Committee formed by Dolores Ibárruri, Manuel Azcárate, Luis Balaguer, Antonio Cordon, Irene Falcón and José Sandoval.

<sup>18</sup> AHPCE, Sección Documentos del PCE, Congresos, VI Congreso del PCE, 1960.

<sup>19</sup> GALLEGO, I. “Consideraciones acerca de la consigna «la tierra para quien la trabaja””. In: *Nuestra Bandera. Revista teórica y política del Partido Comunista de España*. n. 33, 1962, pp. 3-23; AHPCE, *La tierra para el que la trabaja*. Documentos del PCE, Congresos, VII Congreso, Resolución política, 1965.

<sup>20</sup> A term in connection with the Spanish countryside already used, among others, by: A. M Bernal in BERNAL, A. M., LÓPEZ VILLAVARDE, A. L. and ORTIZ HERAS, M. *Entre surcos y arados*. *El asamblearismo agrario en la España del siglo XX*. Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, 2001. pp. 17-47. We develop these questions in COBO ROMERO, F. and FUENTES NAVARRO, M. C. “Los comunistas, la democracia y el campo. El “asamblearismo campesino” y la difusión de valores democráticos entre la sociedad rural, 1962-1975”. In: ORTEGA LÓPEZ, T. and COBO ROMERO, F. eds., *La España rural. Siglos XIX y XX*. Granada: Comares, 2011, pp. 319-357.

The work displayed by the party at the time across Andalusian rural areas and the strong impact of its discourse on both social mobilization and the spread of common democratic values was self-evident. In our research, the above-mentioned rural *asamblearismo* leads us to highlight the importance of the contexts of micro-mobilization,<sup>21</sup> along with networks of sociability and interpersonal relationships constructed through participation in social movements. Spanish Communists managed to spread their discourse related to agrarian reform and the slogan “Land for the Tiller” among different rural sectors, all workers affected and injured by Franco's agrarian policies. This discourse also touched the hearts of the incipient pro-democratic trade unions and rural commissions created at the time. In sum, this strategy seemed to contribute to the creation of a collective and clearly delimited “us” and the necessity to struggle against “them” as a prior step necessary for the later construction of a global democratic identity against Francoism, strong enough to bring together the demands of a wide range of different social sectors.<sup>22</sup>

This increased dynamism of protest and the democratic awareness of rural Andalusia during the 1960s persisted and increased in the next decade, when the PCE was able to reap the results of its efforts made since the late 1950s, in the form of both massive mobilisations and electoral support, once the period of the transition to democracy had commenced.

### **Harvest time. The PCE and the Rural Workers' Commissions during the 1970s: social mobilizations and the construction of citizenship in rural areas**

The PCE's policy and discourse during the 1970s focused almost entirely on the preparation of Communists for the process of the transition to democracy with emphasis on support in rural areas as necessary for the attainment of democracy. The Spanish Communists entered the revolting 1970s with a strong and powerful discourse supporting once again agrarian reform and the slogan “Land for Tiller” as a *sine qua non* to gain democracy in Spain. While such a discourse started to gradually slip back into the shadows both for the PCE and the Rural Workers' Commissions as the decade progressed, its strength remained alive when it came to mobilizing rural workers, beginning to bear fruit and produce positive results for the process of democratization and the Communist movement.

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<sup>21</sup> Thought as a mechanism of personal interrelation based on primary cohabitation experiences is able to generate operative collective identities capable of defining common objectives. On this regard, see McADAM, D. “Micromobilization contexts and Recruitment to Activism”. In: KLANDERMANS, B., KRIESI, H. and TARROW, S. eds., *From Structure to Action. Comparing Movements Across Cultures*. International Social Movements Research, vol. 1. Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press, 1988, pp. 125-154. These micro-mobilization contexts are herein considered as primary sociability nucleuses or “social alveoli” framed within a general observation field revolving around the axis delimited by the study of identity formation and collective action frameworks.

<sup>22</sup> We deal in depth with all these questions in the article FUENTES NAVARRO, M<sup>a</sup> C. “El Partido Comunista de España y la sensibilización democrática de la población rural andaluza durante los años sessenta”. *Historia y Política*. In press.

Unemployment rates and lack of land were the major concerns for Spanish Communists in rural areas at the time, two problems that had been already been developing since the late 1960s. Most actions, carried out not only by those workers affiliated to the Rural Workers' Commissions but also by groups of independent workers, were based upon these two objectives and were connected to both the implementation of a profound agrarian reform able to democratize the structures of land property in Andalusia and to the slogan "Land for the Tiller". In addition, the centralization of assemblies was essential in order to raise social protests and make decisions. The PCE was capable of integrating the demands from rural society within the general context of its pre-democratic transition discourse. In this way, the entire policy of pacts and alliances, already advocated and established by the party since the late 1970s – the *Alianza de las Fuerzas de la Cultura y el Trabajo* (the Alliance of Cultural and Labour Forces) and the *Pacto para la Libertad* (Pact for Freedom) – which also included members of the so-called "rural intelligentsia" were developed to resolve the critical problems of unemployment and lack of land. Apart from these alliances and pacts, certain other arrangements were claimed as necessary for the construction of democracy in rural areas, such as the reform of local power structures through local democratic commissions, the organization of panel discussions and other assorted forms of democratic protests and mobilizations.<sup>23</sup>

The work initiated by the party since the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s was reflected in continuous protests and mobilizations, always led by the party's demands and manifestos. While the demand for profound agrarian reform able to democratize the agricultural structures of the Spanish countryside was always at the foreground of the party's discourse, this project also involved the demand for uncultivated or poorly cultivated land to be distributed among unemployed workers as well as the creation of jobs and an unemployment insurance fund.

In addition, Spanish Communists continued their campaigns in favour of democratic awareness among the rural population throughout this decade. Beyond labour conflicts, the PCE tried to incite Andalusian rural workers to engage in social actions to claim their rights, thereby assisting rural workers to participate in the construction of democracy and citizenship.<sup>24</sup> It can be acknowledged then that its pro-democratic project in rural areas did not simply deal with the mobilization of rural workers for the

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<sup>23</sup> "Declaración del Comité Ejecutivo del Partido Comunista de España, ¡Marchamos hacia el Pacto para la libertad! ¡Lucha de masas para acabar con la dictadura!". *Mundo Obrero*, año XL, n.º 2, Madrid, 23 de enero de 1970; ÁLVAREZ, S. "Campo español y pacto para la libertad". Speech at the Central Committee's Plenary Meeting of the Spanish Communist Party, July 1973, in AHPCE, Documentos, Documentos sueltos por años, Carpeta 54, 1973; "El Partido Comunista de España y los campesinos. Intervención de Santiago Álvarez en la conferencia de los PPCC de la Europa capitalista sobre el problema agrario y la crisis", AHPCE, Sección, Dirigentes, Santiago Álvarez, Caja 1, Carpeta 3, 1975, pp. 22 y ss; "Manifiesto-Programa del Partido Comunista de España. La contradicción entre las exigencias de un desarrollo moderno para España y el régimen fascista. La lucha por las libertades", in AHPCE, Documentos, Documentos sueltos por años, Carpeta 56, 1975.

<sup>24</sup> *La Voz del Campo Andaluz*. mayo de 1972; "Dos Hermanas". *La Voz del Campo Andaluz*. julio-agosto de 1974; Senda, Órgano del Comité Provincial de Sevilla del Partido Comunista de España, Agosto-septiembre, 1975: "Morón, por el agua y el pan"; El clamor de los pueblos de Sevilla". *La Voz del Campo Andaluz*. septiembre de 1975; "La enseñanza rural: reforma agraria y reforma educativa". *La Voz del Campo Andaluz*. junio de 1975.



achievement of labour rights connected with the implementation of agrarian reform and the slogan the “Land for the Tiller”. The discourse and actions of the PCE showed that its commitment to rural areas had been designed at a global scale. Without the adhesion of the rural social sectors, the transition to democracy in Spain was not possible. Thus, rural people had to be educated about democratic-civic principles and values and provided with the appropriate tools for the upcoming transition process. In close connection to this, the PCE incorporated a policy of alliances, promoted by the party at the time, to fight for the construction of rural democracy, succeeding in engaging wide sectors of the Andalusian rural population.<sup>25</sup> The party continued to engage in protests beyond labour questions, teaching democratic values to the rural population.

Finally, between 1975 and 1983, the PCE and the Rural Workers’ Commissions –the latter known as the Federation of Rural Workers’ Commissions once it was legalized in 1976– started to reap the benefits of what they had sown especially during the 1960s and 1970s in the provinces of Córdoba and Seville. Their campaigns for social mobilization, democratic-civic awareness and the empowerment of ample rural sectors were successful during the period of transition to democracy. The positive effect of their discourse among rural workers was confirmed by the high level of participation and involvement in mobilizations in the 1970s, by the increasing number of people affiliated to the rural workers' trade union, and by the support obtained in the 1979 local elections (See tables in Appendix).

## Appendix

**Table 1. Members affiliated to the Rural Workers’ Commission in Andalusia according to branch of economic activity (May 1978)**

Branch of activity	Census workers	of % of the total census (A)	Members affiliated	% of the total members affiliated (B)	Representative Index (*)
<b>Over-represented branches of activity</b>					
Agriculture	373,417	33,39	89,586	38,9	+ 12,988
Metal and Mining	127,311	11,38	30,509	13,3	+ 1,513
Construction, Glass and Ceramics	130,304	11,65	29,731	12,9	+ 1,502
Varied activities	59,359	5,31	15,497	6,7	+ 0,355
Transport	55,299	4,94	13,086	5,7	+ 0,281
Clothing	38,580	3,45	8,483	3,7	+ 0,127

<sup>25</sup> “Libertad y socialismo”. Text delivered by comrade Santiago Carrillo on behalf of the Executive Committee at the Central Committee's Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the PCE (September 1970). AHPCE Documentos, Documentos sueltos por años, Carpeta 51, 1970.

Chemical industries	24,852	2,22	5,717	2,5	+ 0,055
<b>Under-represented branches of activity</b>					
Alimentación	91,867	8,21	12,425	5,4	- 0,443
Hostelería	37,462	3,35	5,924	2,6	- 0,087
Sanidad	34,857	3,12	4,921	2,1	- 0,065
Banca y Seguros	26,920	2,41	2,560	1,1	- 0,026
Madera y Corcho	17,260	1,54	3,459	1,5	- 0,023
Enseñanza	20,069	1,79	2,056	0,9	- 0,016
Federación del Mar	30,930	2,76	1,474	0,6	- 0,016
Información, Papel, Artes Gráficas	14,606	1,31	1,884	0,8	- 0,010
Agua, Gas y Electricidad	11,159	0,99	914	0,4	- 0,003
Combustible	7,335	0,65	1,032	0,4	- 0,002
Espectáculos	10,386	0,93	497	0,2	- 0,001
Piel y Calzado	6,312	0,56	300	0,1	- 0,0005
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,118,313</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>230,053</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>100,00</b>

SOURCE: Comisiones Obreras de Andalucía's First Congress (May 20 and 21, 1978); Archivo Histórico de las Comisiones Obreras de Sevilla (Seville's Historical Archive of Comisiones Obreras). (\*) A × B : 100. Compilation by the author.

**Table 2. Communist vote in rural Andalusia.  
Local Elections, 1979-1983\*.**

Commune	RURAL AREAS WITH A PREDOMINANCE OF PEASANTS AND/OR SMALL FAMILY-RUN FARMS											
	1979						1983					
	CD	UCD	PSOE	PCE	PSA	Indep. & others	AP	CDS	PSOE	PCE-PCA	PA	Indep. & others
Sierra Sur (Jaén)	2,31	47,74	35,52	8,93	-	5,50	36,18	1,36	50,79	6,59	-	5,08
Sierra de Segura (Jaén)	-	53,41	35,00	4,73	-	6,86	41,00	-	56,64	2,11	0,25	-
La Costa (Granada)	0,12	55,56	28,10	6,46	0,27	9,49	31,75	2,26	50,88	2,68	-	12,43
Alto Andarax (Almería)	0,77	55,45	26,74	3,44	-	13,60	23,25	1,07	47,13	0,63	-	27,92
Commune	RURAL AREAS WITH A PREDOMINANCE OF DAY LABOURERS AND/OR LARGE LAND PROPERTIES											
	1979						1983					
	CD	UCD	PSOE	PCE	PSA	Indep. y otros	AP	CDS	PSOE	PCE-PCA	PA	Indep. y otros
La Campiña (Sevilla)	1,54	29,02	24,17	20,38	9,96	14,93	16,57	1,13	48,85	20,42	7,3	5,73
Campiña Baja (Córdoba)	1,52	25,12	26,63	35,80	-	10,93	18,65	-	34,95	28,77	3,68	13,95

SOURCE: Anuarios Estadísticos de Andalucía (Annual Statistical Documents in Andalusia), Anuario "El País" and Instituto de Estadística de Andalucía (Andalusia's Statistical Institute): *Elecciones Locales en Andalucía*. (\*) Percentages over the total of valid ballots. *Acronyms used*: CD. Coalición Democrática; AP. Alianza Popular; UCD. Unión de Centro Democrático; CDS. Centro Democrático y Social; PSOE. Partido Socialista Obrero Español; PCE-PCA. Partido Comunista de España/Partido Comunista de Andalucía; PSA-PA. Partido Socialista Andaluz/Partido Andalucista; Indep. Independents. Compilation by the author.