

Unitary Unionism in the Transition: A general approach from Navarre

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Abstract: Confederación de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores (CSUT, Confederation of Unitary Workers' Unions) and Sindicato Unitario (SU, Unitary Union) were two unions promoted by the largest Maoists parties in the Spain of 1970s: Partido del Trabajo de España (PTE, Labor Party of Spain) and the Organizacion Revolucionaria de Trabajadores (ORT, Workers' Revolutionary Organisation), respectively. Both trade unions, if they had been presented together, would have been the third trade union force in Spain during the Transition to democracy. The following text presents two parts: In the first, a general approach to unitary unionism is set out, in order to understand its emergence, development, difficulties and disappearance. Through this text we will try to understand the unitary and assembly-based proposal of CSUT and SU in its context, considering the dynamics of the labor movement in the previous years, the change of cycle of the struggle of the revolutionary left, the transformations that were taking place in labor relations and the labor movement in the late 1970s. In the second part, however, we will focus on a specific case, that of Navarre, the region where these unions obtained the best results.

Key Words: Far-left Politics. Unionism. Spain. Navarre.

1. Introduction

In this article we will try to analyze the phenomenon of *unitary unionism* during the Spanish Transition. Under this denomination we will refer to the radical and assembly-based trade union bloc formed by the Confederación de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores (CSUT, Confederation of Unitary Workers' Unions) and Sindicato Unitario (SU, Unitary Union). These two unions were promoted by two parties belonging to the *revolutionary left*: the Partido del Trabajo de España (PTE, Labor Party of Spain) and the Organizacion Revolucionaria de Trabajadores (ORT, Workers' Revolutionary Organisation), respectively. The former, the PTE, emerged in 1967 from a Maoist split of the Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC, Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia) the Catalan branch of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) (Díaz Macías, 2021; Martín Ramos, 2011). The ORT,

on the other hand, emerged around 1969 from the radicalization of the Christian trade union *Acción Sindical de Trabajadores* (AST, Workers' Trade Union Action) and also ascribed to Mao Zedong Thought (Treglia, 2010; Treglia, 2013b). Both parties were the most important of the Spanish revolutionary left, both in terms of militancy and electoral results (Harman, 1988; Wilhelmi, 2016).

Unitary unionism developed at one of the key moments in the history of the Spanish labor movement; precisely during the Transition, that is, in the process of political change that led the country from the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco to the current parliamentary monarchy. That process of political change also coincided with the economic crisis of the late 1970s and the beginning of the new neoliberal and post-Fordist cycle of labor relations (Maluquer, 2014, 353-413; López & Rodríguez, 2010, 29-84). All this brought with it the end of a cycle of mobilization within the workers' movement: the unitary and assembly-based struggles that had articulated the workers' struggle until then began to decline and were gradually replaced by a model based on union delegation, concertation and moderation (Fishman, 1990).

The two unitary trade union confederations obtained, jointly, 4.6% of the delegates in the trade union elections of 1978, which would have placed them (if they had run together) as the third trade union force in the country after the *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO, Workers' Commissions) and the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT, General Union of Workers). Therefore, despite being a brief experience - since it only lasted between 1976 and 1980 - unitary unionism played an important role in the Transition, and as we shall see, it was one of the social agents that opposed the social pact, which, according to both central organizations, would place the cost of the crisis on the shoulders of the working class.

So far, few works have been published on unitary unionism. Among those of a general nature we would highlight the article by Emanuelle Treglia (2013a) on the SU, the book by Ernesto M. Díaz Macías (2021) on the PTE (where he dedicates a chapter to the CSUT) and the different sections that Gonzalo Wilhelmi (2016) dedicates to both unions in his reference book on the revolutionary left. In addition, there have also been published several works of local scope where unitary unionism in the province of Alicante (Moreno Sáez, 2012), Albacete (Molina García, 2017, 223-225), and especially, for the Andalusian *Sindicato de Obreros del Campo* (SOC, Farm Workers Union) (Ruiz Galacho, 2018; Studer Vilazan et al., 2018; Beltran Roca, 2015).

This text contains two distinct parts. In the first, a general approach to unitary unionism is set out, in order to understand its emergence, development, difficulties and disappearance. Through this text we will try to understand the unitary and assembly-based proposal of CSUT and SU in its context, considering the dynamics of the labor movement in the previous years, the change of cycle of the struggle of the revolutionary left and the transformations that were taking place in labor relations and the labor market in the late 1970s. In the second part, however, we will focus on a specific case, that

of Navarre (northern Spain).¹ Most local studies on unitary unionism, except for those on the Andalusian SOC, have focused on provinces where the SU and CSUT had little presence and therefore share a pessimistic view centered on their internal weaknesses or lack of roots. Navarre, on the other hand, was one of the few places where unitary and radical unionism had a specific weight. A local vision of this radical phenomenon can help to nuance the pessimistic views that affirm that unitary unionism had a limited role and to understand the importance of its unitary project and its legacies.

This article is based on the results of a PhD, defended in January 2021 under the title '*Beste mundu bat nahi genuen. Nafarroako ezker iraultzailea, 1970-1979*' ('We wanted another world'. Navarre revolutionary left, 1970-1979), which deals with the revolutionary left in Navarre in the 1970s (Satrustegi, 2022), and at the same time, it is complementary to the research work that we are developing in the Documentary Fund of Historical Memory in Navarre (Fondo Documental de la Memoria Histórica en Navarra, FDMHN <https://memoria-oroimena.unavarra.es/>). For this text, we have used the following sources: the various books and articles on unitary unionism published so far, internal documentation and press of the organizations studied (most of them coming from the portal <https://archivodelatransicion.es/>), press of the time (mainly *El País* and *Diario de Navarra*), as well as several interviews with various Navarrese members of the SU and the CSUT (from the doctoral thesis of a servant or from the FDMHN).

2. Origins of unitary unionism

During the last decade of Francoism, due to the class character of the regime and the identification of the employers with it, the labor movement was the backbone of the struggle against the dictatorship. Any labor or economic demand, no matter how small, was opposed to the vertical model of labor relations of Francoism and therefore could be subject to repression. Thus, the labor movement gradually became politicized (including new demands such as amnesty, the democratization of institutions or the dissolution of repressive bodies) and ended up articulating itself in opposition to the dictatorship and capitalism (Domenech Sampere, 2013; Domenech Sampere, 2022; Fishman, 1990).

In this context CCOO was the main reference point of the workers' movement. However, far from being a classic trade union, it was, rather, an assembly-based and unitary socio-political movement, in which different political and social forces participated and collaborated. The PCE was the main dynamizer of the CCOO and controlled the commissions and coordinators of most regions of the Spain. But, in addition, hundreds of militants of Christian origin, the different parties of the revolutionary left (such as the ORT and the PTE, already mentioned, or Movimiento Comunista de España -MCE, Communist Movement of Spain- or Liga Comunista Revolucionaria -LCR, Revolutionary Communist League-) and numerous independent workers without affiliation also participated. The far-left parties were in a minority with respect to the PCE, but during the last decade of the dictatorship they managed to influence the anti-Francoist struggle and the workers' movement. The revolutionary organizations had influence in numerous sectors, and wherever they had the capacity, they helped to radicalize, extend and broaden the struggles, often in spite of the PCE's policy of containment. Between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s there were years of international radicalization, after May '68 the revolution seemed possible, also in Spain, and the revolutionary left experienced its golden years (Pérez Serrano, 2013; Pérez Serrano, 2015).

The rest of the trade union forces, on the other hand, -the socialist UGT and the Christian Unión Sindical Obrera (USO, Workers' Trade Union)-, except in some regions or specific areas, had much less roots and it was CCOO who led the labor movement. However, the anti-Francoist workers' movement was much more than that, since in that whirlwind of mobilizations were intertwined a myriad of assembly-based and unitary grassroots dynamics, which often exceeded the control of parties and unions (Sans, 2017; Pérez Pérez, 2006; Rodríguez López, 2015, 45-55). As a worker militant of the time told us, 'the assemblies were everything'.²

Due the mobilizations led by CCOO, the workers' movement eroded the dictatorship and ended up making its continuity impossible. Faced with the end of the period of *developmentalist* growth and under the threat that the example of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal would spread to Spain, the Francoist elites opted to improvise the controlled demolition of the dictatorship in order

to provide Spanish capitalism with a new legal framework, which would have the acceptance of the opposition and sufficient legitimacy to undertake the necessary reforms (Domenech Sampere, 2022; Fisman, 1990). After the death of the dictator and the arrival of Suárez to the Government in 1976, it was possible to begin to glimpse the possibility that an opening could culminate in a possible democratization of the State. Uncertain political changes were in the offing and the political and social forces of the opposition were ready to face the new stage; the same happened with the workers' movement.

Within CCOO, the majority of militants and political groups were in favor of taking advantage of the hegemony that CCOO to convert that organization, through a Constituent Trade Union Congress in a Unitary Trade Union Central (CSU, Central Sindical Unitaria) that would group the entire working class, regardless of their political affiliation. This proposal was influenced by the unitary and assembly-based experience that had been CCOO until then, and at the same time, it drank from the inspiration of the unitary councils promoted by the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL, Italian General Confederation of Labour) and the example of the Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses - Intersindical Nacional (CGTP-IN, General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers) promoted by the Portuguese Communist Party (Molinero, 2012; Sabater, 2015; Soto, 1994).

However, the situation in labor field was changing. The other trade union centers, which had played a modest role during the last years of the dictatorship, were beginning to grow very rapidly, especially the UGT. The socialist central had the prestige of its historic acronym and the support of German social democracy, but it also took advantage of the facilities provided by the government. The latter was interested in increasing competition in the left-wing camp, to avoid the unity of the opposition and thus weakening the main anti-Francoist opposition party: the PCE. Therefore, he acted with more permissiveness and allowed the UGT to hold its 30th Congress in Madrid, in April 1976, while the PCE and CCOO were denied such a possibility repeatedly (Molinero & Ysas, 2008).

Furthermore, neither UGT nor USO were in favor of forming a unitary trade union center and preferred a plural trade union model similar to that of other European countries. Therefore, when CCOO proposed to them to promote unity, they were only able to agree on the creation of the Coordinator of Trade Union Organizations (COS, Coordinadora de Organizaciones Sindicales), a platform to put pressure on the Government, which acted for a few months between 1976 and 1977. The COS promoted the mobilization day of December 15, 1976, but in no way had the unitary vocation that the hypothetical Unitary Trade Union Central proposed.

In this context, in which it seemed that the nascent trade union freedom was going to bring, at the same time, division among the different trade union centers, the Barcelona Assembly was held in July 1976: the main milestone of the trade union transition of CCOO. At this assembly, which was

still held clandestinely, three sectors clashed. The differences lay in 'determining when and how' the CSU should be constituted.³ The so-called *majority* trend, formed by the militants and sympathizers of the PCE, defended that it was not yet the moment to set in motion the Constituent Union Congress, because previously it was necessary to constitute CCOO as a union and subsequently attract the rest of the union forces to unity. This position was formally supportive of the CSU, but meant accepting *de facto* the union division that was looming. The *minority* trend, on the other hand, was made up of ORT and PTE militants who believed that the construction of the CSU was still possible and should begin immediately. They rejected the construction of the CSU *from above* through agreements between the leadership of different unions and defended that it should be done through an 'ascensional assembly process', i.e. a process *from the bottom up* in which after the participation of the entire working class of all workplaces would culminate in the holding of the Constituent Trade Union Congress. This trend also recognized that the trade union division was a *fait accompli*, but believed that, although the CSU at first would not be entirely unitary, thanks to the great weight that CCOO had in the labor movement, they would manage to drag the rest of the working class and the trade union centers to unity.⁴ This trend represented approximately 10% of the delegates (Treglia, 2013a, 258-259). Finally, situated halfway between the previous positions was the so-called *unitary* current, supported by the MCE, the LCR, the Popular Socialist Party (PSP, Partido Socialista Popular) and the Carlist Party.⁵

In that assembly, the minority trend promoted by PTE and ORT was the loser. In the following months, its supporters maintained an ambiguous position, remaining within CCOO, but at the same time they began to take the first steps in the constitution of the CSU.⁶ The definitive break came in September of the same year. The general coordinating committee of CCOO (dominated by members of the PCE) took the decision to become definitively a Trade Union Confederation (i.e., a union in the usual sense) and began to hand out membership cards. Consequently, in a meeting held in November 1976 in a church in Coslada (Madrid), the members of PTE and ORT made official the beginning of the process of constituting a unitary trade union center. This meeting was a real breakthrough and was the founding moment of unitary unionism. It was attended by José Miguel Ibarrola, Jerónimo Lorente and Luis Royo, still members of the general coordination of CCOO, but supporters of the CSU. Almost all those attending the event were militants or sympathizers of the PTE and the ORT, who claimed to be the true continuers of the unitary spirit of CCOO.⁷

The press of both parties was enthusiastic and predicted a great participation and a wide success to the process of constitution of the CSU. However, there was internal resistance and many militants, and even the leadership of the PTE in Catalonia, opposed this decision and defended that remaining in the CCOO was the most unitary option (Campoy, 2011, 217-219). Despite the criticisms, they finally gave in and had to accept the proposal of the central committee.

Broadly speaking, both Díaz Macías (2021, 162-163) and Treglia (2013b, 259-260) coincide in explaining the factors that prompted both parties to provoke the split: 1) the boom in labor and social conflicts (1976 was one of the most conflictive years of the whole period), which helped to maintain an optimistic perspective around the possibility that the level of conflict could be maintained and prolonged; 2) the process of rapprochement in perspective of a possible merger that the PTE and the ORT were carrying out, which, as we will see, was frustrated a few months later; 3) the overwhelming majority that the PCE had and the important differences they had with the party of Santiago Carrillo, which made 'long-term cohabitation' impossible; and 4) the hopes placed in the unitary instinct of the masses, which made it seem that there was a real possibility of constituting a true unitary union.

3. CSUT and SU: Unitarians divided

3.1. The unitary paradox

After the Coslada meeting, both parties got down to work to set up the different branches and sectors of the future unitary union. They started with those places where PTE and ORT had more influence. Thus, assemblies were held in all the workplaces where these parties had influence with the aim of forming the unitary union. As the meetings were held, delegates were elected and unions were organized by branches and zones (such as the Construction Workers' Union -Sindicato Obrero de la Construcción- or the Metal Workers' Union -Sindicato Obrero del Metal-), which in turn created provincial promoters. The objective was that all of them would converge in the CSU at a Constituent Congress to be held in the near future.

In general, these initiatives were promoted by ORT and PTE militants, and obtained limited influence in those sectors or areas where other union options already existed. But in those sectors where both parties were more deeply rooted or where the trade union tradition was weaker, the process was very participatory and managed to attract many people who did not belong to either party.

One of the most outstanding successes was the constitution in August 1976 of the Sindicato de Obreros del Campo (SOC, Farm Workers Union) from the Comisiones de Jornaleros (Day Laborers' Commissions) promoted by members of the PTE, anarchist militants and Christian sectors. Although some authors (Roca, 2015; Wilhelmi, 2016, 66) have pointed out that more than a trade union center it was a day labor movement, the SOC managed to become the majority organization in the Andalusian countryside and its example drove the other branches that were already being constituted.

However, by February 1977 ORT was already recognizing that they had failed to build unitary unions, blaming part of the blame on the confusion created by the unions they considered 'reformist'.

However, it believed that they should continue with the initiative with the aim of constituting a 'class' union.⁸

As if that were not enough, the conflicts between the two driving parties were to further hinder the possibility of constituting a unitary trade union option. As we have already seen, the PTE and ORT took the decision to create the long-awaited CSU at a time of rapprochement between the two parties, during the talks for a possible merger. But these talks failed in the autumn of 1976, as a result of disagreements between the two parties on the reading of the political situation at the time. This rupture, and the competition between the two parties to take over the leadership of the union, caused the unitary initiative to fail and each party decided to create its own trade union center. On March 6, 1977, the supporters of the PTE formed in Vallecas (Madrid) the Confederación de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores (CSUT); the supporters of the ORT, for their part, met on the same day in Alcobendas (Madrid) to form the Sindicato Unitario (SU).⁹

That was the great paradox of unitary unionism; despite the fact that one of the main reasons put forward for forming the CSU was the need to maintain the unity of the working class above the control of the parties, the truth is that in the end partisan pressures caused the breakup of the unitary initiative into two different centrals. Instead of forming a union that would bring together the entire working class, two minority unions were formed that were unitary only in name.

After successive affiliation campaigns they managed to group together a not inconsiderable group of workers. According to their own data, the SU claimed to have 515,000 members throughout Spain and the CSUT, on the other hand, 480,000 (Treglia, 2013a, 268). But the results of the 1978 union elections showed the true capacity of influence of both unions: the CSUT obtained a total of 5583 delegates (2.9% of the representatives) and the SU, on the other hand, 3164 (1.6%). Unitary unionism, had it presented itself united, would have constituted the third union bloc, with 4.5% of the country's representatives. It was a minority considering the results of the majority trade union centers (CCOO 34.5% and UGT 21.6%), and even the non-affiliated and independent delegates (18.2% and 12.1% respectively) outnumbered the unitary trade unionism as a whole (Pérez Díaz, 1979).¹⁰

Trade Unions	Representatives	Percentage
CCOO	66.006	34,5
UGT	41.419	21,6
USO	7.203	3,7
CSUT	5.583	2,9
SU	3.164	1,6
ELA-STV	1.929	1
CNT	413	0,2
Non-affiliates	34.764	18,2
Independent	23.563	12,3
Others	6.995	3,2

Total	191.041
Table 1. Results of the 1978 union elections in Spain. Source: Pérez Díaz (1979, pp. 11-52).	

However, a more detailed regional analysis shows that they did manage to attract broad layers of the working class. Due to the roots of the PTE in Catalonia and Andalusia, these two regions were *a priori* the places where the greatest support for the CSUT could be expected. However, it obtained its best results in Navarre (9%), Aragon (7.9) and Galicia (7.3), although it also obtained good results in Extremadura, Leon and the two Castiles. It also stood out in the public company Correos and, through the SOC, in the Andalusian countryside. In the case of SU, on the other hand, there were fewer surprises. It was well established in Navarre (10.3%) and Extremadura (Mérida and Tierra de Barros, mainly) where it obtained 6%. Likewise, its influence in Aranjuez (Madrid), Torrelavega (Cantabria) or the chemical industry in Huelva (Andalusia) should also be considered (Wilhelmi, 2016, 65-66). Although they did not manage to forge the unity of the entire working class, at the local level, in certain sectors or regions, they did manage to become majority unions.

Regions	CSUT	SU
Catalonia	2,3	0,4
Valencian Country	1,2	0,7
Murcia	0,3	2,8
Balearic Islands	2,8	0,1
Aragon	7,9	1
Asturias	0,2	0,5
Galicia	7,3	0,2
Andalusia	2,7	1,6
New Castile	4	3,3
Old Castile	3,5	2,8
Leon	4,7	0,1
Extremadura	5,7	6
Canary Islands	0,2	0,1
Basque Country	0,9	2
Navarre	9	10,3
Total	2,9	1,6
Table 2. Results of unitary unionism in the 1978 union elections divided by region. Source: Pérez Díaz (1979, pp. 11-52).		

3.2. Opposition to the social pact

The process of political change in Spain coincided with the so-called Oil Crisis and the end of the post-war Keynesian-Fordist growth model. The increase in oil prices hit the weak and dependent Spanish economy, causing a decline in economic activity, disinvestment, unemployment and, above all, inflation, which reached 28.4% in August 1977 (INE). Faced with such a situation,

Spanish capitalism needed a new legal-political framework and new sources of legitimacy to find a solution to the crisis without touching the main bases of the economic system; so, the bourgeoisie took advantage of the situation to recover its profit rates and implement the first neoliberal measures (Etxezarreta, 1991; Maluquer, 2014, 353-413; López & Rodríguez, 2010, 29-84).

To this end, the Government and the elites needed the collaboration of the main left-wing parties and trade unions and that these would postpone *sine die* the expectations of a social change, in exchange for the democratization of the State and a space in the new political panorama. After the first elections of the post-Franco era, in June 1977, this proposal took shape in the so-called spirit of *consensus*, which in the social and labor aspect took the form of the Moncloa Pacts, signed in the autumn of the same year. In these pacts, the first economic measures against the crisis were agreed upon. Priority was given to the recovery of corporate profits, the liberalization of the economy and, above all, wage containment to reduce inflation (Wilhelmi, 2021; Rodríguez López, 2015, 163-197). These measures were going to negatively affect the conditions of the working class, but both PSOE and PCE, as well as their respective trade union organizations (CCOO and UGT), accepted these measures and committed themselves to limit workers' mobilization, in exchange for certain social and political counterparts, which were not always fulfilled. In practice, this meant accepting the nascent monarchical and capitalist regime. All this was justified by affirming that there was not a sufficient correlation of forces to provoke deeper social changes and that a new civil war or an involution towards dictatorship had to be avoided (Andrade, 2015).

The economic crisis and the reaction of the bourgeoisie closed the way to a possible revolution. It was the beginning of the general decline of the revolutionary left, at the international level, and in the following years the revolutionary perspectives which had encouraged the mobilizations up to that time gradually faded away.¹¹ Faced with such a situation, PTE, ORT and their respective unions, maintained a position that could be described as contradictory. After the end of the dictatorship, both Maoist parties tried to obtain institutional representation. This attempt was a resounding failure, since in the 1977 general elections each party barely obtained 0.67% and 0.42% of the votes. As a result, they were excluded from the major pacts of the Transition. PTE and ORT were still revolutionary parties that defended the socialist transformation of society, but they accepted the new legal and political framework and did not oppose the implementation of the new parliamentary regime. Despite the criticisms, they called for a vote in favor of the constitution in the referendum of December 1978 and supported the anti-terrorist policy of the Government.¹²

However, on the social and labor side of the consensus, both unions were fiercely opposed to what they called the *social* pact. In the opinion of the CSUT and the SU, the Moncloa Pacts and the Government's economic policies were aimed at ensuring that the costs of the economic crisis would fall on the working class and thus benefit the oligarchy. They also described this pact as anti-

democratic, because they believed that it limited some of the freedoms for which they had been fighting so hard, insofar as it limited the freedom of the trade unions to fight.¹³

Furthermore, they reproached the main parties and unions of the left (PCE, PSOE, CCOO and UGT) for having renounced the struggle, and therefore defending the interests of capital.¹⁴ Unitary unionism, while welcoming the new parliamentary regime, believed that it was still necessary to deepen freedoms and democracy. But for this, the most effective and adequate way was neither to stop the mobilizations nor to make pacts with the right wing and the Government; but rather the contrary, to mobilize and achieve new conquests through struggle.

When the PTE-CSUT and ORT-SU were left without parliamentary representation, they tried to gain influence in society and create their own political space by attracting the sectors that opposed the Moncloa Pact. To do so, they drew a line between what they called *reformist* unionism and combative or *class* unionism -that is, the organizations that supported the pact and those that rejected it- and tried to forge alliances with the latter. The aim was to promote mobilizations and try to attract the discontented rank and file of CCOO and UGT. At first, the SU believed that it could add the UGT to what it called the 'Frente Común Reivindicativo' (Common Front of Claims), since when it came to signing the pacts, the socialist central had been more reticent than the CCOO. However, in November 1977 UGT ended up accepting the Moncloa Pacts and that possibility vanished (Treglia, 2013a, 266-267). Therefore, the alliances with which CSUT and SU could find to oppose the social pact were limited to small sectoral unions, USO, the anarco-sindicalist National Confederation of Labor (CNT, Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) and some nationalist unions.¹⁵

In addition to the alliances against the social pact, both organizations tried to gain influence among other sectors. ORT, for example, organized a successful initiative to denounce the situation of the unemployed and demand solutions to the unemployment problem. The March of the Unemployed managed to group more than 15,000 people in a large event held in March 1978 at the Palacio de los Deportes in Madrid (Treglia, 2013a, 267-268).

To face the economic crisis, both unions proposed Keynesian or social democratic measures. Among other things, they advocated maintaining the purchasing power of the working class in order to stimulate demand, a tax reform that would tax the wealthy classes in order to increase public investment, an equitable distribution of the costs of the crisis and an increase in social benefits for the most disadvantaged.¹⁶ They also proposed measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises, trying to attract with their proposals the middle and lower sectors of the bourgeoisie harmed by the crisis and the monopolies of the oligarchy.¹⁷ However, despite the fact that an important part of society was dissatisfied with the country's economic situation, they did not achieve the expected echo.

3.3. Difficulties and disappearance

From the outset, unitary unionism had serious difficulties in prospering and sustaining itself over time. On the one hand, the idea of promoting the assembly-based and unitary struggle of the working class which had inspired the creation of unitary unionism turned out to be unrealizable almost from the very first moment. During the last decade of the dictatorship the revolutionary left had managed to influence the anti-Francoist struggle and the workers' movement and wherever they had the capacity. However, despite the experience of the anti-Franco struggle, as a result of the economic crisis, the culture of consensus and the offensive of the bourgeoisie, the direction of the cycle of the workers' movement was changing. Although social conflict still remained high (1979 was the year with the most strikes of the whole period), the workers' struggles of the following years took on a defensive character. As we have already seen, it was the beginning of the general decline of the revolutionary left and all this was detrimental to the unitary and assembly-based dynamics.

In addition, throughout the Transition, the new framework of labor relations took shape, in which negotiation through union delegates, concertation and contention took precedence (Fishman, 1990). Therefore, after the union elections of 1978, and even more so after the adoption of the Workers' Statute in 1980, the unions gradually replaced the assemblies. Temporarily, these coexisted with the representative and delegative model of negotiation, and in the most combative areas and sectors they were still maintained for some time, but finally they disappeared (Wilhelmi, 2021; Majuelo, 2000, 120-125; Rodríguez López, 2015, 163-189).

But apart from the ebb of the unitary and assembly-based struggles there were also other reasons. From the very moment of their foundation, the unitary unions were condemned to become mere transmission belts of their promoting parties. So much so that the labor policy of the ORT and the PTE in this period has been defined as 'union isolation and electoral subordination' (Díaz Macías, 2021, 156). Both unions were aware that the excessive identification of the union with the party limited its development and for this reason they repeatedly claimed their independence.¹⁸ Nevertheless, with some exceptions such as the Andalusian SOC, unitary unionism only brought together militants and sympathizers of the PTE and ORT. This is clear from some of the local-level work that has been carried out to date, such as in the provinces of Alicante (Moreno Sáez, 2012), Albacete (Molina García, 2017, 223-225) and Huelva (Roca, 2014, 452-453).

This dependence on PTE and ORT caused the unitary unionism to disappear together with the parties that had promoted it. As we have already mentioned, both parties prioritized achieving parliamentary representation, so they used all their human and militant resources for that purpose. In addition, their members had to take out large personal mortgage loans to finance their electoral campaigns. But finally, despite experiencing a slight increase in the general elections of March 1979 (1.07% and 0.71%), they were once again left out of parliament, which plunged the exasperated militancy into frustration. Faced with such a situation, the leaderships of both parties began an

accelerated process of unification, a flight forward, which in reality did not have the participation or understanding of the rank and file. The merger was formalized in July 1979, giving rise to the Workers' Party (PT). But the actual union never took place, and both parties ended up dissolving a few months later, beset by debts and internal division (Wilhelmi, 2016, 263-270).

The disappearance of the driving parties directly affected the unions. Following the announcement of the merger of the parties, the two unions began talks to explore a possible merger.¹⁹ But like that of the parties, this merger process failed: the formal union did not even become effective. In the 1980 union elections, both unions ran separately and obtained a poor result; the CSUT obtained 0.52% of the delegates and the SU 0.73%. By then some union sections had already been disappearing and their members either left trade unionism or were integrating into other centrals. In Treglia's opinion (2013a, 270) the electoral failure of ORT and PTE had deprived both unions of 'the logistical and political resources' enjoyed by a parliamentary party, and furthermore, they lacked 'the popularity and legitimacy derived from a previous history and tradition' that could help them perpetuate their existence.

Central	Delegates	Percentage	Difference 1978
CCOO	50.817	30,87	-3,63
UGT	48.194	29,28	7,68
USO	14.296	8,68	4,98
CSUT	857	0,52	-2,38
SU	1.204	0,73	-0,87
ELA	4.004	2,43	1,43
Intersindical Nacional Galega	1.672	1,02	
Others	43.553	26,46	-7,44
Total	16.4617		

Table 3. Results of the 1980 union elections in Spain. Source: BOE, 1981, 8127.

However, not all sections of the CSUT and the SU disappeared after the dissolution of the party. The SOC, for example, decided to split from the CSUT at the 2nd Congress in 1980 and remained active until 2007 when it participated in the creation of the Andalusian Workers Union (SAT) (Roca, 2015). Some sections of SU also remained active in Huelva, Almeria, Malaga, Madrid, Cantabria and the Barcelona subway.²⁰

4. The case of Navarre

4.1. A left-leaning trade union landscape

As we have already seen, Navarre was the region where unitary unionism obtained the best results. This exceptional circumstance was due to the fact that it was one of the European regions

where the revolutionary left had the greatest social and electoral roots. Due to the late industrialization of this province, at the end of the 1960s a particularly dynamic and radicalized workers' movement was articulated, in which the PCE had little roots and it was the parties and organizations to its left, especially ORT and MC-EMK, who dominated the workers' movement in the last decade of the dictatorship (Iriarte, 1995; Satrustegi, 2022; Pérez Ibarrola, 2016).²¹ As an example of this great capacity to take root, let us consider the results of the general elections of June 15, 1977: the four revolutionary candidacies obtained 45,000 votes and close to %17. If they had not run separately they would have obtained representation in the constituent courts (Azpilicueta, 2019; Chueca, 2018).

For all these reasons, when the process of trade union transition began, within the CCOO of Navarre the positions in favor of the CSU were in the majority. According to José Vicente Iriarte (1995, 262), a busload of 20 representatives from Navarre attended the Barcelona Assembly in July 1976, most of them in favor of the unitary central. When the rupture occurred, the members of PTE and ORT left CCOO and created the provincial promoter commission of the unitary union. As in the rest of the Spain, at the beginning the initiative was made in collaboration between the two parties, although with many doubts and debates, since, as in Catalonia, there were those who thought that staying in CCOO was the most unitary option. But the success of the affiliation campaign at the SEAT factory in Landaben, one of the largest plants in the province with more than 1,500 employees, pushed them to continue. In addition, between November and January, the so-called 'second construction strike' took place, led by the Sindicato Obrero de la Construcción de Navarra (SOCN), promoted by members of PTE and ORT and ultimately one of the foundations on which the unitary experience was based, together with the Sindicato Obrero del Metal de Navarra (Iriarte, 1995, 293-294; Majuelo, 2000, 58).²² The promoter commission of the unitary union of Navarre, formed by members of PTE, ORT and independents from different labor sectors, was presented on March 3, 1977.²³ However, as in the rest of the Spain, the failure of the talks for the merger between the two parties caused the initiative to break up. This split had negative effects on the organization of unitary unionism; in SEAT, for example, before the breakup, the unitary central managed to affiliate 700 workers, but after the split the SU was left with barely 70 members and the CSUT with just over 100 (De Miguel, 1986, 197-198).²⁴

Finally, the SU of Navarre was constituted on March 27, 1977 in a meeting which gathered 162 delegates (De Miguel, 1986, 197). Javier Colomo, a SEAT worker and member of the ORT was invested as provincial secretary, and as second secretary was elected Miguel Portillo, parish priest, worker of the Onena paper mill and independent.²⁵ The CSUT, on the other hand, in spite of the government prohibition, did the same in the church of Arellano and elected Cesar Osanz, also from SEAT, as provincial secretary.²⁶

Despite the rupture, due to the strong roots of the ORT and the PTE, the unitary unions managed to attract sectors outside the promoting parties. The clearest example was in the city of Tafalla. This city is located about 35 kilometers south of Pamplona and in the 1970s had about 9,000 inhabitants. Despite its relative smallness, the city had several factories, including the Victoriano Luzuriaga foundry and Armendáriz, in the footwear sector. Since the end of the 1960s, an active workers' movement had been developing, organized around the CCOO, but unlike in Pamplona, without the direct intervention of the workers' parties of the anti-Francoist opposition. Although ORT, MC-EMK and other parties repeatedly sent various cadres to try to energize the mobilizations in that city, they never achieved the roots they had hoped for and the CCOO in the city almost always acted autonomously, in a unitary and assembly-based manner (CU-LAB, 1995). During the Transition, when the process of forming unitary unions began, the Workers' Commissions of Tafalla joined the initiative, despite the fact that PTE and ORT had very little influence in the city. When the unitary initiative broke down, the labor movement in Tafalla opted for the ORT-sponsored SU. The fruits of that unitary impulse would be rewarded in the results obtained in the trade union elections of 1978, when the SU became the leading force in the *merindad* (county) of Tafalla with 31.33% of the delegates. The Navarre SU became one of the largest trade union organizations in the province with 9,800 members (De Miguel, 1986, 197-198), and in addition to Tafalla, it concentrated its forces in the industrial belt of Pamplona (very evenly matched with CCOO), especially in the metal sector and in the Potasas mine. In addition, it also obtained a large number of delegates in small companies with less than 50 employees.²⁷

The CSUT, on the other hand, reached 6,000 members and had its strongholds in the *merindad* of Tudela (mainly in the sectors of glass, ceramics, alabaster, and especially, construction), as well as in the industrial belt of the capital (highlighting the SEAT plant).²⁸

Merindades	SU		CSUT		Total
	Delegates	Percentage	Delegates	Percentage	
Pamplona and industrial belt	298	16,84	157	8,87	1770
Tudela	35	8,77	115	28,82	399
Pamplona rest (Mountain)	26	8,81	5	1,69	295
Tafalla	52	31,33	22	13,25	166
Estella	11	7,91	1	0,72	139
Sangüesa	10	14,71	5	7,35	68
Total	432	15,22	305	10,75	2837

Table 4. Results of unitary unionism in the 1978 union elections in Navarre by merindades (counties). Own elaboration based on *Diario de Navarra*, 31/V/1978, 21.

However, CSUT and SU were not the only radical options within the Navarrese trade union scene. In the UGT between 1976 and 1978 there was a large group of revolutionary militants, made up of Trotskyists of the Communist League (LC) and militants critical of the leadership of the PSOE

in Navarre. This trend was in the majority and controlled the union, until the minority in favor of the official line of the PSOE expelled them in 1978 (Bueno Urritzelki, 2021).

In addition, it should be noted the great weight that the pro-EMK trend of CCOO which controlled the leadership of the union between 1977 and 1979. As a result of this correlation of forces, in Navarre CCOO opposed the Constitution, the Moncloa Pacts, the Statute of Gernika and the anti-terrorist policy of the Government. The pro-EMK leadership controlled the union in Navarre and led it to form a 'common front with the most combative sectors of the left'.²⁹ These positions were in contradiction with the Spain-level decisions of the union, so that in December 1979 the Confederal Council of CCOO of Euskadi dismissed the provincial secretariat of Navarre and the EMK-related leadership was expelled (Bravo, 2021, 148-152).³⁰

Likewise, the nationalist union Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak (LAB, Nationalist Workers' Committees) was also present. Like CSUT and SU, it was also born with a unitary and assemblyist vocation, but in the face of the increasingly evident union division, it had to leave this perspective aside and become a union in May 1977 (Majuelo, 2000, 58-66).

This left-leaning trade union panorama allowed the opposition to the social pact to be greater and broader. Referring to Navarre, the ORT stated that 'where the SU is strong and enjoys the trust of the workers, the Common Front is forged and consolidated'.³¹ Thus, in the period 1978-1981, there were powerful mobilizations against the social pact and the consequences of the crisis in the province. Among others, we would highlight the general strike of February 7, 1978 against the wage ceilings of the Moncloa Pact, demanding increases of 30% for the next agreement; that of November 27, 1979 called by CSUT, SU and LAB against the Workers' Statute; and just a few days later, on December 7, 1979, for the same reason, although including other centrals in the call. In this context, the policy of anti-pact alliances of the unitary unionism was directed towards a collaboration with LAB and it was common to see the three unions participating jointly in various calls. In the ORT's Internal Bulletin, for example, it was stated that the Common Front in Euskadi should arise through collaboration 'between SU, CSUT, LAB and the entire sector of workers who reject reformism'.³² The PTE also underwent a similar shift and from its first and second National Conference -held in January 1978 and June 1979- the party moved closer to pro-independence and to Herri Batasuna (HB, Popular Unity).³³ The Navarre Executive Committee of the CSUT even proposed to the Confederal Council of Euskadi to 'initiate a process of unification' with LAB in October 1979, which in the end was not carried out.³⁴

4.2. Crisis, conflicts and disappearance

However, profound changes were taking place within the radical social base that came from the workers' struggles of the last decade of Francoism and between 1977 and 1979 mutations would

take place in the so-called *radical Basque mass movement*. If until then this had been led by the *Spanish revolutionary left*, in a relatively short period of time, the *nationalist left* took over the leadership of the social movements.³⁵

During the last decade of the dictatorship, the nationalist left, due to the harshness of the repression and the excessive weight of ETA's violent activity, had had a modest presence in the anti-Franco struggle, which meant that it had a limited capacity to influence mass mobilizations. However, throughout the Transition, the radical bloc was not satisfied with the social transformations and political changes of the new monarchical regime, and therefore opposed the post-Franco reform and the spirit of consensus. At the same time, from 1977 onwards, when the crisis of the Spanish revolutionary left became evident, the nationalist left was able to channel an important part of the discontent of that revolutionary social base. It became the refuge-space of the radical left and this transfer was reflected in the surprising results of HB in the different elections of 1979 (Satrustegi, 2022, 181-244; Pérez Ochoa & Satrustegi, 2020).

These mutations caught both the ORT and the PTE by surprise. As we have already seen, the Spanish leadership urged support for some of the main founding consensuses of the new parliamentary regime that was being born, supporting the yes to the constitutional referendum and the anti-terrorist policy of the Government, but rejecting at the same time the Moncloa pacts. These positions were especially polemic among the Basque militancy of the ORT and the PTE, since their social bases were very sensitive to the anti-repressive issue and the national question. Both parties were halfway between the radical bloc, which rejected the new constitutional monarchy, and the reformist parties, which accepted the culture of consensus. The two parties tried to maintain a certain coherence in a precarious balance. The Basque PTE, for example, decided to abstain in the referendum on the Constitution, unlike in the rest of the Spain where it called for a yes vote; it was a clear sign of the divergent path that the situation was taking in the Basque Country. However, these turns disoriented its traditional electorate and its sympathizers, who were increasingly attracted by the rise of the nationalist left.

All this had a negative effect on unitary trade unionism and the conflict which took place within the Tafalla SU at the end of 1978 is a clear example of this. As we said before, despite the fact that the ORT had a small number of militants in the locality, the majority union in the region was the SU, as a result of the unitary spirit that the union had from the beginning. However, it did not take long for contradictions to emerge between the union leadership, controlled by the ORT, and the independent militants, increasingly supporters of the nationalist left. Tension erupted when the majority of the Tafalla local SU committee accused the ORT of trying to impose its political line on the union. The differences lay in disagreements over the ORT's latest stances, especially support for the Constitution and rejection of terrorism, with the ORT's participation in the 'dove demonstration'

held in Bilbao in October 1978.³⁶ These decisions affected the union and ended up breaking it. There were mutual disavowals and expulsions, and even an assault and theft of material from the local headquarters.³⁷ However, the local committee broke away from the union and formed a new union platform: the Unitary Collective (CU, Colectivo Unitario). This collective maintained a radical and assemblyist attitude and collaborated repeatedly with LAB until 1989, when it was definitively absorbed by the nationalist union (CU-LAB, 1995). Therefore, as we have seen, although nominally the unitary unions were independent of the Maoist parties, the political line of the latter definitely influenced the former and made it impossible for them to maintain a certain degree of independence.

As ORT and PTE went into crisis, in Navarre as well, the decline affected unitary unionism and this decline was reflected in the results of the union elections of 1978 and 1980.³⁸

Trade union central	1978		1980		Difference
	Delegates	%	Delegates	%	
CCOO	488	17,2	205	8,87	-8,33
SU	432	15,22	25	1,08	-14,14
UGT	410	14,45	355	15,36	+0,91
CSUT	305	10,75	20	0,86	-9,89
USO	173	6,10	280	12,12	+6,02
ELA	120	4,22	193	8,35	+4,13
LAB	95	3,34	99	4,29	+0,95
CUI	-	-	131	5,67	+5,67
Others	62	2,19	247	10,69	+8,51
Independent	752	26,51	755	32,68	+6,18
Total	2837		2310		

Table 5. Results of union elections in Navarre 1978 and 1980. Own elaboration based on *Diario de Navarra*, 31/V/1978, 21 and 25/I/1981, 30-31.

As we can see, in the 1978 elections, CCOO won with 17.2% of the delegates. The SU, for its part, in 1978 obtained the second position with 15.22% of the delegates, and the CSUT, on the other hand, was the fourth union force with 10.75%.³⁹ However, the situation changed significantly in just two years. The SU and CSUT became practically irrelevant, as a result of the disappearance of ORT and PTE. CCOO on the other hand, as a result of the expulsion of the pro-EMK leadership, would lose practically half of its delegates, obtaining only 8.87%. The last public act of the CSUT and the SU in Navarre was probably the demonstration of May 1, 1981, in which they marched in the radical bloc together with LAB.

Despite the crisis of unitary unionism, the revolutionary left continued to have great social roots in Navarre, and therefore maintained an important weight in the trade union movement. Over and above the trade union centers, the assembly-based and unitary component of the labor movement in Navarre endured and during the 1980s maintained a certain capacity for influence.⁴⁰ Thus, the

remnants of the revolutionary left (former members of the SU and the CSUT, the people of EMK expelled in 1979 from CCOO and members of LKI and LAB) from the end of the 1970s promoted unity of action and acted jointly. For this purpose, independent and unitary platforms were often used, which, depending on the factory, took one name or another. These were the so-called *Candidaturas Unitarias de Izquierda* (CUI, Leftist Unitary Candidacies).⁴¹ In the Potasas mine, for example, in 1980 the 'Unidad de la Izquierda Sindical' (Unity of the Trade Union Left), composed of CCOO, LAB, SU, CSUT, ELA and non-affiliates, was presented and obtained 12 of the 23 delegates. In SEAT, on the other hand, the unitary candidacy was made up of CSUT, SU, LAB and independents and won the elections after obtaining 7 of the 25 delegates.⁴² The appearance of the CUI and the increase of the independents, compensated, in part, the fall suffered by CCOO, SU and CSUT in 1980.

Those candidacies of the trade union left in Navarre were coordinated, first in 1983 in the so-called *Coordinadora de Empresas de Izquierda Sindical* (CEIS, Intercompany Coordinator of Leftist Trade Unions), which was not a trade union as such but rather a coordinating body of several candidacies.⁴³ Later, in 1985, CEIS joined with other coordinators and unitary candidacies of Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa to form *Ezker Sindikalaren Koordinakundea-Coordinadora Unitaria de Izquierda Sindical* (ESK-CUIS, Coordination of Left Trade Unions) and in 1998, with the incorporation of the *Izquierda Sindical* (Trade Union Left) trend of CCOO (promoted by *Liga Komunista Iraultzailea -LKI-* Basque section of LCR) that coordinator became a union itself.⁴⁴ This union has been the reference point in the labor world for the *Batzarre* party (1987-present), with the participation of several former members of SU and CSUT.⁴⁵

This was not the only route taken by the former members of radical unionism, some militants took other routes and continued to act in other unions. Like the members of the CU of Tafalla mentioned above, numerous SU and CSUT militants joined LAB. In SEAT, for example, some members of the CSUT went to LAB and others to the *Confederación General del Trabajo* (CGT, General Confederation of Labor) after having previously passed through the *Izquierda Sindical* trend of CCOO.⁴⁶ In the following years, LAB began to occupy the space of radical and assembly-based unionism, although it was a slow take-off and did not make its presence felt until the union elections of 1986 (Majuelo, 2000, 125-131; Letamendia, 2004, 74-79).

In CCOO, on the other hand, there were also militants who came from the revolutionary left, among them two of the provincial secretaries who led the union: José María Solchaga (former member of LKI and *Euskadiko Ezkerra*) between 1984 and 1988, who was succeeded by Jesús Garatea (former member of PTE, supported by the PCE) between 1988 and 2000 (Bravo, 2021). In addition, the internal current promoted by LKI, *Ezker Sindikala-Izquierda Sindical*, remained within that union for several years, although it was always in a minority.

5. Conclusions

Despite being a brief experience in the history of the Spanish workers' movement, unitary unionism represented the most mobilized and numerous parts of the opposition to the so-called social pact in the process of the change of cycle of Spanish capitalism. As a general rule, it was a minority trade union bloc, although in certain areas and sectors of the country it gained specific weight and was capable of leading numerous workers' and social struggles.

Most of the works published so far on unitary unionism linked the emergence, development and disappearance of the CSUT and the SU with the fate of the Maoist parties that promoted them. However, in this paper we have tried to relate the whole process to the transformations that were taking place at the beginning of the neoliberal era in the world of work, labor relations and the workers' movement. The founding idea of unitary unionism was inspired by the experiences of the workers' movement during the last decade of the dictatorship and aimed at constituting a large trade union center of an assembly-based and unitary nature that would bring together the entire working class. But that project turned out to be unrealizable almost from the very first moment, for two main reasons. On the one hand, by the time the CSUT and the SU were created, the trade union division was already a reality, and the assembly-based and unitary dynamics had entered into decline. These dynamics seriously damaged the bargaining power of the government and the employers, and therefore, they institutionalized a model of labor relations based on delegation and not on participation in order to reduce the capacity of the assemblies to exert pressure. The main trade union confederations (CCOO and UGT) not only accepted the new framework of labor relations, but also collaborated with the Government and the employers to make the assemblies disappear.

Although the history of unitary unionism was closely linked to the PTE and the ORT, the failure of its unitary bet was closely related to the end of the assembly-based and unitary dynamics and the replacement of the militant workers' movement by a model based on delegation and union representation. In this sense, the proposal promoted by the PTE and the ORT was certainly swimming against the tide.

On the other hand, another of the great difficulties that the unitary unionism had was in its own constitution process. Under the argument of creating a unitary trade union center, they split from the largest labor organization in the country, and if that were not enough, they were not even able to create a single union and created two. It is ironic. So much so that it makes us suspicious about the true intentions of the PTE and the ORT. Did they really want to form a unitary trade union center or were they simply seeking to create a transmission belt for the labor world? In any case, CSUT and SU ended up as organizations dependent on the human and financial resources of the Maoist parties. As if that were not enough, at the end of the 1970s most of the parties of the European revolutionary left went into crisis, as a result of the general ebb of the workers' movement and the disappearance of

revolutionary perspectives in Europe. This crisis greatly affected the PTE and the ORT and when both parties disappeared, the unitary unions were incapable to maintain their activity in an autonomous manner.

Furthermore, having closely analyzed the case of Navarre, we believe that the main reflections made so far generally coincide. However, important nuances should be considered. The capacity of influence that the revolutionary parties had in Navarre caused SU and CSUT to be *something more* than ORT and PTE. As can be seen in the various sources we have analyzed, the idea of unitary, assembly-based, militant and class unionism had roots among the working class of Navarre and opposition to the social pact was greater than in other areas of Spain. However, it must be considered that Navarre is a relatively small territory, with a minor demographic and economic weight in comparison with the big urban areas. Therefore, its influence must be relativized and understood in the context *of the provinces*.

Moreover, despite the stronger roots they may have had in Navarre, the life of both unions was also closely linked to the parties. In both cases, the party leadership was held by members or sympathizers of the PTE and the ORT. Likewise, the political line of the parties influenced the unions and provoked conflicts such as the one in Tafalla. That is to say, CSUT and SU were something more than the ORT and the PTE, but they did not manage to detach themselves completely and were dependent on their politics. However, due to the strong roots of the trade union left, the unitary and radical currents (LAB and ESK-CUIS, among others) continued to have a prominent presence in the trade union scene in Navarre. These had a longer life than in other parts of Spain, some of them reaching the present day.

- 1 Navarre is a province located in northern Spain. It is currently a Chartered Community separated from the Basque Autonomous Community (formed by Alava, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa provinces), but many consider that it has historically been part of the Greater Basque Country (Euskadi or Euskal Herria). Most anti-Francoist organizations and parties of the revolutionary left at the time claimed that Navarre belonged to the Basque Country, and in fact, the regional committees were organized at the level of the four provinces.
- 2 Interview 7.
- 3 Quinta, A. Posible celebración de la asamblea de CCOO en Barcelona, *El País*, 11/VII/1976.
- 4 Díaz, F. Una Situación trascendente, *El Correo del Pueblo*, 51, 23/VII/1976, 4-5.
- 5 Fernández, J.J. Nace la corriente unitaria dentro de CCOO, *El País*, 25/IX/1976. Asamblea general de CCOO, *Servir al Pueblo*, 58, 25/VII/1976, 5. J.L. Asamblea de CCOO, *Combate*, 55-56, VI-VIII/1976, 6-8.
- 6 CC de ORT, Sobre nuestra táctica sindical, 20/VIII,1976, ORT, Archivo de la Transición. Secretaría Sindical del CC de la ORT, Nuestra táctica sindical, 18/II/1977, ORT, Archivo de la Transición.
- 7 Definitiva escisión en CCOO, *El País*, 9/XI/1976. Un gran paso para la clase obrera española, *El Correo del Pueblo*, 67, 11/XI/1976.
- 8 Secretaría Sindical del CC de la ORT, Nuestra táctica sindical, 18/II/1977, ORT, Archivo de la Transición.
- 9 Hacia la Confederación de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores, *El Correo del Pueblo*, 82, 11 de marzo de 1977. Promotora Estatal del SU, *Asamblea preparatoria*, 6/III/1977. Elegida la Promotora Estatal, *En Lucha*, 141, 12/III/1977, 1-2.
- 10 Pérez Díaz warns that the data he provides are not official, since the union elections were held in 'an extraordinary informative confusion'.
- 11 Two visions, one international and the other Spanish, on the crisis of the revolutionary left in Harman (1979) and Sans (2011).
- 12 Different readings on the issue in Treglia (2013b, 66-67) and Díaz Macías (2021, 104-113).
- 13 El funesto Pacto de la Moncloa tiene un caro precio en el terreno de la democracia, *El Unitario*, nº7 30/X/1977, 8. El Pacto de la Moncloa, *El Unitario*, número especial 17/XI/1977.
- 14 La CSUT es la única alternativa frente al reformismo sindical, *El Unitario*, nº9, 15/XII/1977, 3
- 15 Jerónimo Lorente, Un paso adelante en la formación de una intersindical de clase, *El País*, 16/XII/1978.
- 16 Secretaría Confederal de la CSUT, Informe sobre el Pacto de la Moncloa, XI/1977, CSUT, Archivo de la Transición.
- 17 *Sobre la alternativa económica. Informe sobre el Pacto de la Moncloa (extractos)*, I Congreso de la CSUT, XI/1977, Archivo de la Transición.
- 18 Secretaría Sindical del PTE, *El Partido y las centrales sindicales*, IX/1978, PTE, Archivo de la Transición. Jerónimo Lorente. La CSUT, independiente. *El País*, 5/IV/1980. El Sindicato Unitario no es elemento divisor de la actividad sindical. *El País*, 30/V/1978.
- 19 Hacia la fusión entre CSUT y SU, *El País*, 9/III/1979. Ibarrola, J.M., Lorente, J. Comisión de enlace. Comunicado nº 3, CSUT-SU, 1979/VII/30, Archivo de la Transición.
- 20 <http://www.sindicatounitariodecantabria.org/> , <https://www.sindicatounitario.net/> y <https://sindicatounitario.es/> (Accessed April 2022)
- 21 In 1976 the Basque branch of the MCE acquired the name of Euskadiko Mugimendu Komunista (EMK).
- 22 Bases para la construcción de la promotora del Sindicato Unitario de Navarra, *Diario de Navarra*, 19/II/1977, 14. Sobre la promotora del Sindicato Unitario de Navarra, *Diario de Navarra*, 11/II/1977, 12.
- 23 Presentación de la Promotora del Sindicato Unitario de Navarra, *Diario de Navarra*, 4/III/1977, 11.
- 24 Interview 6.
- 25 Avanza la preparación del Congreso Constituyente del Sindicato Unitario, *En Lucha*, 3/IV/1977, 1 y 8.
- 26 Constituida la Federación de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores de Navarra (FSUTN), *Diario de Navarra*, 30/III/1977, 8.
- 27 Resultados de las elecciones sindicales, *Diario de Navarra*, 31/V/1978, 21.
- 28 Resultados de las elecciones sindicales, *Diario de Navarra*, 31/V/1978, 21. Interview 2.
- 29 Goñi, F. El Partido Comunista lucha por el liderazgo en Comisiones Obreras de Navarra, *El País*, 5/XII/1979.
- 30 Goñi, F. Fuerte contestación al PCE en Comisiones Obreras de Navarra, *El País*, 1979/XI/17.
- 31 El Sindicato Unitario primera fuerza sindical, *En lucha*, 285, 16/II/1978, 16.
- 32 A. Lejona, 'Sobre el sindicalismo de clase en Euskadi', *Boletín Interno*, 13/V/1979, Comité Nacional de la ORT, 10-12, Archivo de la Transición.
- 33 Llamamiento a la unidad de la izquierda vasca, *La Unión del Pueblo*, 36, 12-18/I/1978, 12. Conferencia Nacional de Euskadi, *La Unión del Pueblo*, V/1979, 11. *Aportación a la Revolución Vasca*, 5/III/1980, Archivo de la Transición.
- 34 CSUT propone el inicio de un proceso de unificación con LAB, *Diario de Navarra*, 13/X/1979, 14.
- 35 In the Basque Country at that time, within the far-left politics there were two political cultures. On the one hand there was the nationalist left (patriotic left or abertzale left, as well), agglutinated around ETA and whose objective was the independence of the Basque Country and the socialist revolution. This political culture included, among others, LAB, HB and ETA itself. On the other hand, there was the Spanish revolutionary left, that is, the Basque branches of the parties of the Spanish revolutionary left, among which were the revolutionary parties mentioned so far: ORT, PTE,

MC-EMK, LCR-LKI ... Unlike the nationalist left, they understood that the task of the Basque revolutionaries was to fight together with the rest of the Spanish working class. Despite conflicts and differences, both political cultures were borderline and were part of *the radical Basque mass movement*, which meant that they shared spaces and strategies of struggle.

- 36 Combatir el terrorismo: una batalla en varios frentes, *En Lucha*, 220, 19-25/X/1978, 1-3. Interview 4. Interview 5.
- 37 Koldo Arriaga fue revocado del Comité Local del SU de Tafalla, *Diario de Navarra*, 23/XII/1978, 18. La asamblea de afiliados del SU de Tafalla reafirma la línea del depuesto comité local, *Diario de Navarra*, 10/I/1979, 12. Asamblea del SU de Tafalla, *Diario de Navarra*, 30/XII/1978, 4. Goñi, F., Divergencias entre el SU y la ORT, *El País*, 26/XII/1978. El Comité Local del SU de Tafalla denuncia la conducta de la ORT, *Diario de Navarra*, 22/XII/1978, 18.
- 38 The data obtained by *Diario de Navarra* differ slightly from those of Pérez Díaz.
- 39 There is some confusion about the results of the SU. In some sources (*Diario de Navarra*, 25/I/1/1981, 30-31) it is said that it was the first force. This may be due to the fact that some of its members contested in unitary candidacies counted as 'independents'. In addition, Treglia (2013b, 63) states that it obtained 274 delegates, but the figure provided by *Diario de Navarra*, 432 delegates, seems more accurate to us.
- 40 Interview 9.
- 41 Unir al sindicalismo de clase, programa de las CUI, *Diario de Navarra*, 29/X/1980, 16.
- 42 Reacciones sindicales ante el posible cierre de Potasas, *Diario de Navarra*, 29/X/1980, 16. Resultados de las elecciones sindicales, *Diario de Navarra*, 8/XI/1980, 18. Goñi, F., Los independientes ganan en Navarra, *El País*, 1980/XI/22. Results of the union elections, *Diario de Navarra*, 22/XI/1980, 18.
- 43 Proceso de coordinación de las candidaturas y colectivos unitarios de izquierda, *Diario de Navarra*, 30/III/1983, 30.
- 44 La CEIS cambia su nombre por el de ESK-CUIS, *Diario de Navarra*, 30/IV/1985, 23. Angulo, C. ESK-CUIS y Ezker Sindikala, escisiones de Comisiones, ratifican hoy su unión, *El País*, 17/X/1998.
- 45 Interview 3.
- 46 Interview 1. Interview 6. Izquierda Sindical de Seat-Landaben abandona CCOO y pasa a CGT, *Diario de Navarra*, 20 de diciembre de 1991, 89.

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Interviews

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- Interview 1: Pablo Ibañez and Isabel Noguera: Pamplona-Iruñea, 11/III/2019.

Documentary Fund of the Historical Memory in Navarre (FDMHN).

- Interview 2: Jesús Garatea Idoate and Rafael Otermin Sengariz: Pamplona-Iruñea, 10/XII/2020.
- Interview 3: Javier Urroz Domínguez: Pamplona-Iruñea, 3/IV/2021.
- Interview 4: Jose Mari Esparza Zabalegi: Tafalla, 22/X/2021.
- Interview 5: Koldo Arriaga Sarriguren: Tafalla, 22/X/2021.
- Interview 6: Tote Fernández Garayale: Ansoain, 3/V/2022.
- Interview 7: José Vicente Azpilicueta Caspe: Ansoain, 7/V/2022.
- Interview 8: Tomás Fernández Garayalde: Ansoain, 9/V/2022.
- Interview 9: Gurutz Gorraiz Armendariz: Ansoain, 31/V/2022.
- Interview 10: Cesar Osanz Cebrian: Ansoain, 17/VI/2022.

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