



LABOR AND THE RETURN OF DEMOCRACY TO SPAIN

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ABSTRACT

During the late years of the Franco regime, the Spanish labor movement demonstrated an impressive ability to maintain a high level of industrial conflict despite considerable repression. The labor movement hoped for a transition through a rupture imposed by popular mobilization; instead, the transition period led to the Moncloa pacts; a decline in union membership and a series of failed strikes; an eclipse of union in favor of political party leadership; and a change in union policy from mobilization to restraint. One explanation advanced for this turn of events is that the labor movement was demobilized from above. This paper concedes that the close ties between unions and political parties contributed to greater union restraint, but argues that parties did not play much of a role in limiting labor demands. On the basis of a survey of plant-level labor leaders conducted in 1981, the author rejects the "demobilization-from-above" thesis. He claims that the most significant pressures for restraint came from below given the plant-level leaders' concern for the consolidation of democracy and their acceptance of the legitimacy of the new state, and the unwillingness of most workers to undertake aggressive mobilizations in the context of a growing economic crisis, plant closings and a rapid increase in unemployment. Labor's general organizational weakness is also not a product of a deliberate policy of demobilization. Rather, it is a legacy of the Franco regime—labor entered the democratic transition with a recent history of mobilization but little experience in building stable, strong, and autonomous organizations.

In 1987 there has been a resurgence of labor conflict and worker militancy, which also runs counter to the demobilization-from-above thesis. The author contends that plant-level leaders have retained throughout their capacity for judgments autonomous from both the national confederations and the political parties. Democracy is now perceived to be safely consolidated. The economy has stabilized with a resumption of significant growth. Thus, there is a readiness among rank and file workers and plant-level leaders to reject restraint. The Spanish labor movement remains organizationally weak and the level of formal union membership is still comparatively low, but this does not preclude large-scale worker mobilization.

RESUMEN

Durante los últimos años del régimen de Franco, el movimiento laboral español demostró una capacidad notable para sostener un alto nivel de conflicto industrial a pesar de una considerable represión. El movimiento laboral hubiera deseado una transición mediante ruptura impuesta por movilización popular: pero el período de transición condujo a los pactos de Moncloa; al descenso en la afiliación sindical y a una serie de huelgas infructuosas; al eclipse de dirigentes sindicales por los políticos; y a un cambio en la política sindical, de la movilización a la limitación de las reivindicaciones. Se dice que el movimiento laboral fue desmovilizado desde arriba. Sin embargo, aunque los lazos estrechos entre sindicatos y partidos políticos contribuyeron a limitar las demandas sindicales, los partidos no jugaron un papel directo en dicha restricción. Basando su análisis en una encuesta de líderes laborales a nivel de fábrica realizada en 1981, el autor rechaza la tesis de la "desmovilización-desde-arriba". Afirma que las presiones más significativas para la restricción vinieron de abajo, del interés de los líderes a nivel de fábrica por la consolidación de la democracia y su aceptación de la legitimidad del nuevo orden político, y de la renuencia de la mayoría de los trabajadores en movilizarse en torno a nuevas demandas en el contexto de una crisis económica con cierre de fábricas y un rápido aumento del desempleo. La debilidad organizacional de la clase obrera tampoco se debe a una desmovilización impuesta desde arriba, sino al legado del régimen de Franco. A pesar de sus altos niveles de movilización en los años anteriores a la transición, los obreros españoles no tuvieron la posibilidad de construir organizaciones estables, fuertes y autónomas.

En 1987 han resurgido los conflictos laborales y la militancia de los trabajadores, lo cual también contradice la tesis de la desmovilización-desde-arriba. Los líderes a nivel de fábrica han retenido su autonomía de las confederaciones nacionales y de los partidos políticos. La democracia se percibe ahora como algo consolidado. La economía se ha estabilizado con la reanudación de un crecimiento significativo. Por lo tanto, los trabajadores no quieren seguir limitando sus demandas en este nuevo contexto. El movimiento laboral continúa siendo débil organizacionalmente y el nivel de la afiliación sindical formal sigue siendo comparativamente bajo, pero esto no imposibilita niveles altos de movilización.

In the ten plus years since the return of democratic freedoms to Spain in 1977, the union movement and collective worker action appear to have come nearly full circle.ⁱ The reemergence of democratic unionism following the death of Franco was accompanied by a great surge of enthusiasm and optimism on the part of labor militants. The union movement began the new democratic period with the hope of contributing to fundamental social change and with the conviction of its own considerable—and growing—strength. These sentiments, along with the high level of visible and vociferous worker mobilizations characteristic of the transition years (at least until 1977), contributed to a broadly shared perception that the unions were a major public actor with a significant role to play in determining the course and the potential for survival of democratic politics. In fact, strikes led by the illegal opposition labor movement had contributed centrally to the rebirth of public contestation in the late Franco years despite continuing repression from the authoritarian regime. Labor, in short, faced the prospect of redemocratization with the expectation that it would help shape the development of political and social life well beyond the walls of specific factories and workplaces.

The first tangible political evidence that these expectations were not to be fulfilled and that the real opportunities of the moment would fall far short of them came with the inability of the opposition to attain a transition by *ruptura*. Furthermore, as the transition process advanced, the direct role of the unions was to be eclipsed by the leaders of the political parties who formulated and negotiated among themselves the agenda of the democratization. This protagonism of the leadership of the parties—and its impact on matters of direct relevance to union activity—would take its clearest form in the famous Moncloa Pacts signed in the fall of 1977 several months after the democratic election of a new parliament.

Roughly one year later, in late 1978 or early 1979—the exact timing is impossible to ascertain given the nature of the data and records available—actual membership in unions began a decline that was to continue for several years. By late 1979 labor's efforts at worker mobilizations and strikes met with less support than the union leadership had anticipated and in 1980 the strike rate began to decline. These developments led to a growing perception, in fact a consensus on the part of observers, that the union movement was, in the end, only a weak participant in the social and political life of democratic Spain. Paradoxically, a labor movement that had been widely seen as strong under the difficult conditions of authoritarian repression proved, by contrast, to be organizationally quite weak under democracy. However, these disappointing fortunes in no sense signified a complete failure of labor to attain the objectives it had contemplated in 1975 upon the death of Franco. The most fundamental political objectives of labor—to contribute to the establishment and consolidation of democratic rule—had appeared in

1975 to represent a more difficult challenge than the organizational goal of building a strong union movement. And as late as 1981, in the wake of the coup attempt of February 23, the democratic political system was widely seen as extremely fragile. Yet in the end the new regime proved to be solid; the consolidation of democratic rule represented an enormous achievement for labor and all the other social and political actors who had contributed to the transition process. Labor's organizational expectations met with disappointment, but its broader political hopes were in many respects fulfilled, albeit through a process of moderate accommodation rather than popular mobilization and *ruptura*.

This apparent disjunction between the political and organizational fortunes of labor partially accounts for the emergence among many observers of the demobilization-from-above interpretation, which argues, roughly, that labor's weakness was the product of a deactivation of workers deliberately orchestrated by the political parties.ⁱⁱ In the broadest terms this viewpoint suggested that the leadership of the parties came to see the high level of worker mobilization in 1976 and 1977 as endangering the broad socio-political consensus underlying the Spanish model of transition, and therefore as a threat to the consolidation of democracy. For these reasons—or so the interpretation ran—the parties and their national political leaders took steps to 'deactivate' worker protest without concern for the debilitating impact this policy could have on the unions and on their capacity to represent workers. The demobilization interpretation is clearly empirical in the content of its assertions but at the same time it resonates with theoretical approaches that seek to causally link popular mobilizations with the collapse of democratic rule and its replacement by authoritarianism.ⁱⁱⁱ

In fact, the demobilization argument will be largely refuted by much of the evidence presented in this paper. However, it will be useful to first complete this brief sketch of the course taken by labor in ten plus years of democratic rule.

The decline in union membership which began, most likely, in late 1978, continued through the early 1980s leaving the union confederations with relatively few formal members and serious financial problems. The mobilization of workers—whether in industrial disputes or in public demonstrations—also waned during much of this period amid signs of the relative moderation of workers in their attitudes and their political loyalties.^{iv} The Communist-led union confederation, *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO), a historical product of the worker opposition to the Franco regime,^v emerged as the clearly dominant force in the union movement in the workplace committee elections of 1978, the first representational test of strength of the new democratic period.^{vi} However, the socialist and generally more moderate *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) steadily improved its relative position, and was able to surpass CCOO in the union elections of late 1982. The severe internal crisis and decline of the Communist Party (PCE)

beginning in late 1980 contributed to the less pronounced weakening of the allied union confederation, but under the able and unifying leadership of Marcelino Camacho, CCOO was able to avoid the overwhelming organizational collapse of the Communist Party. The Socialist government elected in 1982 thus faced a weakened and divided union movement in which the politically friendly UGT had apparently overtaken its more radical opposition.

An observer of the political experiences of a number of other West European polities might have anticipated that government by a Socialist party would lead to a strengthening of the union movement and policies clearly designed to improve the collective interests of workers.^{vii} For whatever reason—and many explanations have been advanced^{viii}—this was not to be the case. Instead, the economic policies of the government centered on the goals of improving the competitiveness of the Spanish economy and the “rationalization” of state industries and social services. Industrial jobs, social security pensions, and the real level of wages were all seen by the PSOE government as less important than the overall “modernization” of the Spanish economy and state. Union membership continued to decline in the first years of government by Socialists, reaching a level perhaps as low as 10% of the labor force by 1984. The atmosphere created by these policies and by the statements of a number of government ministers led to growing tensions between the PSOE government and both union confederations. By 1985 even the UGT would be openly critical of government policy; notwithstanding the statutory linkage between the Socialist union and party, the UGT complained repeatedly of the failure of the government to consult with the labor leadership or adequately take worker interests into account.

In a parallel if less consciously orchestrated development, intellectuals and academicians of the left, with few exceptions, severed the close ties many of them had maintained with the union movement during the late Franco years and the period of political transition.^{ix} Many intellectuals simply lost interest—both in their theoretical pronouncements and their practical political activity—in the working class and in labor organizations. Others actually became critical of worker organizations. Union activists, once the object of a perhaps exaggerated interest on the part of left intellectuals, found themselves increasingly ignored or actually condemned by their former allies. Those voices who had once encouraged the union movement to assume a vital role in public life no longer did so.

The union movement, in short, appeared a good deal weaker, more moderate and less politically relevant than it had seemed in 1977. Nevertheless, some signs suggested that the activist labor movement of the transition years remained a force of some magnitude. In June 1985 CCOO waged a one day general strike in opposition to the government’s plan to adjust Social Security retirement pensions. Although the UGT refrained from supporting the call for a general strike, the Socialist union confederation did join Comisiones in criticizing the government plan. The general strike raised an issue of broadly shared public concern and was more widely supported than even its organizers had anticipated. CCOO claimed that over four million workers participated in the June 20 action, and although the government officially placed the number of strikers at under one million, unofficial estimates by employers’ associations placed the real figure somewhere between two and a half and three million.^x The strike was almost without doubt^{xi} the

most widely observed industrial stoppage since the Republic of the 1930s. Despite several years of disappointing achievements, the union movement—and especially CCOO—proved that it was able to carry out a mobilization of considerable dimensions.

The union elections of 1986 were again won by the UGT, but the Socialist victory rested on a large majority attained in generally uncontested elections of questionable authenticity in small workplaces. In larger firms where an electoral choice among unions was the norm, CCOO improved its performance and won rather convincingly. The long trend toward the UGT had been reversed, at least for the moment. These elections formed the backdrop for a new surge of labor conflict in 1987.

In the winter and spring of 1987 labor conflict increased dramatically with CCOO and UGT frequently joining forces to overcome the wage guidelines suggested by the government. Although CCOO most often took the lead in this resurgence of conflict, the UGT frequently joined in rather severe criticism of the government with Secretary General Nicolas Redondo actually declaring, “Relations of the UGT with the PSOE do not exist.”^{xii} The spring of conflict helped set the stage for the June elections covering local offices as well as representatives to the European parliament. The elections produced a significant, if not overwhelming, setback for the Socialists, and the commentary of the moment focused on—among other matters—the role of renewed industrial conflict in contributing to this electoral outcome.^{xiii}

This resurgence of labor conflict ten years after the restoration of democratic rights has been as much of a surprise to many observers of union affairs as was the earlier weakening of the confederations. New interpretations will doubtless emerge to account for this reversal. Yet to the extent that academic analysts focus only on the most readily observable phenomena—and fail to examine the mechanisms underlying them—such developments will be misunderstood and will frequently come as a surprise.

In this chapter we shall examine the mechanisms which account for the decline of labor conflict and membership. Far from confirming the demobilization interpretation, the evidence we shall review sets out a much more complex picture. Most importantly, however, the resurgence of conflict beginning in 1987 becomes quite comprehensible once we have understood the causes and contours of the earlier decline.

Labor in the Transition: Goals and Achievements

With the death of Franco in 1975 the labor movement faced two basic tasks: to contribute to the establishment of a new and lasting democratic regime, and to make use of the restoration of democratic rights to build the organizational basis for collective worker action, namely a strong union movement. The first task came to be seen by most political forces as

attainable only through a broad socio-political consensus requiring moderation and, at times, restraint on the part of the major social and political forces. The organizational task, in contrast, appeared to require mobilizational activity by labor, for only through concrete gains could the union movement secure the support of workers. In this context at least the possibility appeared to emerge of serious tension between the political and organizational objectives of labor. In the view of the demobilization theorists this tension was resolved by the political party leadership in favor of the political objectives at the expense of the organizational ones, thereby severely weakening labor, perhaps permanently.

The analysis in this essay will focus on evidence from a survey of plant-level labor leaders I conducted in 1981 in the provinces of Barcelona and Madrid.^{xiv} This survey of 324 labor leaders covered a number of aspects of the political, organizational and industrial activity of the leaders under democracy and during the Franco period as well. This research focus on the plant-level leaders reflects much more than an operational convenience; rather, it rests on my understanding of the crucial role of these middle-level figures in the processes of organization building and political mobilization or demobilization. Yet despite the crucial and partially autonomous role played by these middle-level leaders in collective worker action and organization, their contribution and their perspective remain absent from many analyses which focus exclusively on mass-level worker attitudes or on public pronouncements and writings by labor's national leadership.^{xv} The plant-level leaders, far from being a subordinate reflection of the national strategies of labor as many assume, instead represent a vital and at times problematic mechanism underlying the aggregate trends of organization, conflict, and accommodation, of which so much is made.

Workplace labor leaders are essential if there is to be formal union activity—an organizational presence—on the shop floor level. Moreover, such leaders are normally necessary for collective worker action of any sort to take place at the firm level, although in exceptional circumstances informal leadership may emerge unexpectedly in conjunction with collective worker action in firms where the official union movement enjoys no organizational presence. These two observations are relatively non-controversial. What is much less widely appreciated is the *chronic shortage* of those willing to assume the special costs and responsibilities of the workplace leadership role. The plant-level leaders, far from representing an assured by-product of union organization and nationally formulated labor strategies, instead constitute—by their very existence and efforts—a yardstick of the advance of organization-building and an essential active component in any nationally coordinated strategy of mobilization or demobilization.

Although plant-level leaders are a relatively little researched group, the available data suggest clearly that the leadership supply problem affects even such bastions of unionism as the

large British factories where much labor research is carried out.^{xvi} The problem is far worse in the frontiers and backwaters of unionism where the nationally framed objectives and strategies of labor may be only faintly visible. Thus, cleavages that help define the options available to labor at the national level are often completely absent at the factory level. This shortage gained special relevance in the Spanish context where labor faced the simultaneous challenge of organization-building and political mobilization or demobilization.

In the union elections of 1978 CCOO, UGT and several smaller union confederations competed with one another in the first test of strength following the return of democratic freedoms. In the elections for representatives to firm-level works committees (comités de empresa), all workers were eligible to vote regardless of whether they belonged to any union. The campaign and the elections were widely publicized in the press, given the broad political interest in the outcome. The national visibility of the campaign made it appear that workers faced the same clear range of choices in workplaces throughout the economy, with the obvious and important exception of the regional national unions present in the Basque Country.^{xvii} However, this appearance was a highly inaccurate reflection of the reality inside workplaces.

In my 1981 survey I asked the respondents—the chairman or another delegate on the works committee—which unions had presented candidates in the elections in their firm. It should be kept in mind that the survey sample was based on the list of firms where union elections were held, a subset of firms covering somewhere between 50% and 60% of the eligible labor force.^{xviii} Where no union activists or leaders were present to initiate the election process no elections took place. Thus, nearly half of the eligible labor force remained without formal union representation as a result of the organizational weakness or, more specifically, the leadership supply problem of the unions. But even limiting ourselves to the firms where elections actually took place (as was necessary for the survey), union confederations with a great national visibility frequently failed to attain any presence at all at the firm level. (See Table 1.) Thus, CCOO, the confederation with the least severe leadership shortage, was present in 86.4% of the firms where elections took place; in the remaining 13.6% of the firms no worker was willing to stand as a Comisiones candidate and the union's cause was unrepresented.

TABLE 1

Presence of Plant-Level Labor Leadership: % of Workplaces in which the Union Presented Candidates for the Works Committee

By Province		By Size*			Total
<u>Barcelona</u>	<u>Madrid</u>	<u>Smaller</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	

CCOO	85.7	87.1	75.7	87.9	100.0	86.4**
UGT	68.2	77.1	58.6	72.9	94.4	72.8**
USO	12.3	10.6	9.0	6.4	25.0	11.4
CSUT	9.1	4.1	2.7	6.4	12.5	6.5
SU	1.9	12.9	3.6	7.1	15.3	7.7
(N)	(154)	(170)	(111)	(140)	(72)	(324)

*Size categories are as follows:

Smaller = 51 - 250 workers.

Medium = 251 - 1000 workers.

Large = 1001+ workers.

One firm remained unclassified as to size.

Small firms with fewer than 50 workers were excluded from the sample.

**In one firm unclassified by size CCOO and UGT were both present.

The leadership supply problem was considerably more severe for the UGT. The Socialist union confederation, despite its linkage with the PSOE, could present its option to workers in only 72.8% of the firms where elections took place. In the remaining workplaces, no matter how attractive the UGT option might have been, in principle, to the workforce, no one was willing to assume the costs and responsibilities of leadership on behalf of the Socialist confederation. The shortage was especially severe in smaller firms and in Catalonia. Despite the electoral successes of the Socialist Party in Catalonia, in smaller firms (51-250 workers) in Barcelona province the UGT was present in just under 50% of those companies where elections took place.^{xix}

For the small confederations of the far left and the center the leadership supply problem represented an enormous barrier to success. Their electoral achievements—limited as they were—rested not so much on their public challenge to the policies of the leading confederations as on the infrequent instances of local plant-level leadership dedicated to their cause.

The advance of union organization, thus, would require a level of dedication and a pool of leadership which remained in short supply in most workplaces. The severity of the leadership supply problem coincided in democratic Spain with a broader crisis of political party membership and activism.^{xx} The specific reasons for the leadership shortage in the union movement cannot be discussed at length here,^{xxi} but it is worth mentioning several important considerations. The work of a plant-level leader involves considerable costs in terms of time and tension. And yet the work is fully voluntary; the leaders earn no pay from the unions for their efforts. Even more importantly, the activities of the plant-level leaders require considerable political skill but, unlike lawyers, academics, or many other professionals, most workers are not encouraged to develop such skills in their work. A political party requires relatively few leaders and activists to organize a municipality and can rely on members of any social class to do so; a union, in contrast, requires an enormous supply of leadership to reach workers throughout the economy and for its workplace leaders it must rely largely on members of what remains the subordinate social class of the capitalist economy. Furthermore, the threat of employer repression continues to dissuade some workers from assuming positions of labor leadership; even under democracy many workers have been illegally dismissed for union activities.^{xxii}

The differences between plant-level leaders and ordinary rank and file workers extend beyond the greater willingness of the leaders to undertake special responsibilities. On the whole, the leaders are somewhat more radical than the workers they represent. In order to systematically compare their attitudes, I repeated in the leadership survey a major attitudinal question used by Víctor Pérez Díaz in his studies of rank and file workers. (See Table 2.) The question asks whether the firm should be seen more as a team with common interests between

workers and employers or rather as an arena of fundamental conflict between the two groups. The leaders are considerably more likely to perceive the firm in conflictual terms than the rank and file workers. It is, moreover, interesting to note that the differences among the union confederations are minimal on this point. Only the independent (non-union) delegates on the works committees are significantly

less likely to view the firm in conflictual terms. Despite the political tensions which, at times, separate the unions, the workplace leaders upon whom they all must rely in some respects form a fairly coherent group facing similar problems and challenges irrespective of their union affiliation.

It is important to note parenthetically that this greater radicalization of the leaders in no sense reduces their democratic legitimacy. The leaders have, after all, been chosen as representatives by their fellow workers in order to help lead and coordinate the collective defense of their interests. If the workers have chosen more radical leaders despite the presence of attitudinal differences, it is either because there are no more moderate leaders willing to offer themselves as representatives or because the workers feel that the more radical leaders will be more effective in the defense of their interests.

The leaders, moreover, are cognizant of these attitudinal differences. (See Table 3.) Nearly 60% of the leaders see the workers in their plant as more moderate than the leadership. As was the case with the perception of the firm, the differences among the confederations are minimal on this point. At least with respect to their own firms, the ideology of the leaders does not act as much of a filter on their perceptions of the workers. In order to do their job well, the leaders must maintain a realistic view of the workers and the employers they face. Only when the topic shifts to the working class in Spain as a whole does a significant, if still small, radical minority (13.9%) engage in wishful thinking, choosing to believe that a radical working class has been misled by moderate leaders.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

The plant-level leaders are, then, no automatic reflection of the workers they represent. They also differ at times with the official policy of their own confederations.^{xxiii} The workplace leaders are fully capable of thinking for themselves on small practical matters and on large national issues. Moreover, they speak and understand two rather distinct languages: that of workplace unionism with its emphasis on a diversity of relatively mundane concerns, and that of the national labor movement with its frequent focus on macro-level politics and strategies. The plant-level leaders form the crucial organizational mechanism linking these two worlds of union activity. If any nationally coordinated campaign of mobilization or demobilization is to succeed it must enjoy the active participation of the workplace leaders. And if union organization is to advance, it requires a large pool of such leaders to initiate and coordinate collective worker action.

The workplace leaders unquestionably do at times attempt to mobilize workers for causes that are, at least in some measure, political. Nevertheless, the leaders do not always act on the basis of their broadest political commitments, and even when they do there is no guarantee that they will be able to move the workers.^{xxiv} The plant-level union officials—despite the significance

of their contribution and their relative independence—are not in any sense voluntaristic leaders with a capacity to fully shape the labor movement and collective worker actions on the basis of their own sheer will. Rather, the workplace leaders encounter numerous constraints including the attitudes and conditions of the workers, the disposition of the employers, and the behavior of other political actors including the union confederations at the national level. The workplace leaders—through their actions and inactions—have helped shape the course of labor and political development since 1977, but the nature of their contributions could not have been predicted simply on the basis of their social structural position or their broadest ideological commitments.

Labor and Political Transition: From Mobilization to Restraint in the Service of Democracy

In the long years of resistance to the Franco regime, the strategy of the left opposition shifted from guerilla war to mass mobilization, political organizing, and ultimately dialogue. Yet even during the crucial transition year of 1976, the fundamental hope and the official goal of the labor movement and its political allies remained one of *ruptura*, a clear break in regime imposed by the opposition. However, the *de facto* solution which emerged in the course of 1976 and early 1977 would be labeled a *reforma* (or *reforma pactada*) by some, and in fact lay somewhere between a reform arranged from inside the regime and a *ruptura* imposed from below. The leadership of the major opposition parties participated in this intermediate solution, and in the case of the PCE a rationale was presented in internal party debates for the abandonment of the more ambitious *ruptura* model.^{xxv} Nevertheless, the abandonment of the *ruptura* option by the opposition was to become a matter of some controversy within the organizations of the left and among observers of Spanish politics. Debate over the course taken by the transition was to continue for several years, and although it did not long remain the issue of primary importance for most political activists, some sectors did attempt to diffuse the notion of the missed historical opportunity—in this case an opportunity for a more “progressive” democracy based on mass mobilization in the foundation period. This image (or mirage) of a “missed historical opportunity” can actually be evaluated on the basis of evidence, and the indications clearly suggest that a *ruptura* would not have been possible.

The reasons why a *ruptura* would not be possible can be found within the regime (or more broadly, the state)^{xxvi} as well as the opposition: the regime continued to enjoy the virtually undivided loyalty of the state’s forces of coercion. However, the regime itself was internally divided and the genuinely reformist tendency could count on the crucial support of the King. The opposition, on the other hand, was unable to carry out mass mobilizations of sufficient magnitude and endurance to dislodge the reformistas inside the regime. And finally, the opposition proved

ultimately willing to modify its strategy given the above considerations.

Clearly, for a *ruptura* to have been possible in the Spanish context, the plant-level leaders would have required the resolve and the capacity to mobilize workers in pursuit of that objective. In the survey I asked the workplace leaders to choose between two views of the transition: a) that the opposition leadership had done well to change strategies, facilitating the *reforma*; or b) that by changing strategy the leadership of the opposition lost a historical opportunity to build a more progressive democracy on the basis of popular mobilizations. The retrospective judgment of the workplace leaders as expressed in 1981 clearly cannot prove, standing alone, whether or not a *ruptura* would have been possible but their views are relevant, for as expressed earlier their resolve would have been required as part of a successful strategy of *ruptura*-through-mobilizations. In fact, a clear majority, 57%, believes that a *ruptura* was not possible and that the opposition's change in strategy was wise. (See Table 4.) It is important to note that the plant-level leaders are divided on this point and that a significant minority, 39%, believes that a historical opportunity was missed. However, those pockets of radicalism that express their disappointment with the course taken by the transition could not have successfully achieved a *ruptura* by themselves. Pressure from below strong enough to achieve a *ruptura* would have necessitated extensive and deep support from the workplace leaders. The survey data demonstrate that such support was not extensive and that a majority of plant-level leaders shared the perception of the national leadership of labor that a clear break was not possible given the various constraints. In other words, the division of the respondents on this point suggests that the *reforma pactada* was, in fact, the only solution possible.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The *reforma pactada* was to entail much more than a temporary change in strategy. The new democracy was to rest on a broad socio-political consensus, or in the language of political science, a broad regime-founding coalition.^{xxvii} Thus, the new strategy would lead to a logic of restraint to safeguard the consensus underlying the transition and the hoped for consolidation of democracy. Restraint rather than mobilization would emerge as a major political goal of dominant sectors within the labor movement, at least for a time. The concern for restraint in the service of democracy was, moreover, to be found far beyond the centers of power in the national labor confederations and the parties of the left. Among the workplace leaders a very large majority believed that, to one degree or another, the consequences of union demands for the stability and consolidation of democracy should be taken into account at the time of making those demands. (See Table 5.) And nearly half, 46% of the respondents, reserved the highest priority for this consideration. It is certainly true that national labor leaders at times felt the need to caution activists about the impact that some types of mobilizations might have on the stability of democracy.^{xxviii} These data are significant because they demonstrate that sensitivity on this point

reached within the workplace, an impressive reflection of the labor movement's commitment to democracy.

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

This commitment to democracy, and at times to restraint, helps explain the popularity of the demobilization thesis. However, as we shall see, the restraint was not *imposed* from above and it does not represent the primary explanation for labor's weakness.

As the above discussion suggests, the efforts of labor and other political actors to build a broad socio-political consensus reflected, in part, the widely shared perception that the existing balance of forces afforded no other viable route to a stable democracy. Another motivation, which merits more attention than is possible here, concerns the delegitimation of the Franco regime and the legitimization of the new democratic system.^{xxix} At the time of the transition the Franco system had suffered no specific crisis (apart from the death of the dictator) severe enough to significantly erode the legitimacy of the regime among its remaining supporters. Yet even in the absence of an extraordinary delegitimizing crisis, the democratic opposition could still undercut the legitimacy of authoritarian rule by claiming and demonstrating repeatedly that Spanish society had overcome the divisions and polarization of the 1930s. The legitimacy formula of the Franco system had rested to a significant degree on a specific historical claim—that the Francoist victory in civil war had saved Spain from a variety of threats and provided for civic peace after a period of bloody conflict. Public manifestations of dialogue and consensus thus undermined a central legitimating claim of authoritarian rule in Spain. Given the absence of any specific dramatic failure to thoroughly discredit the Franco system, the forging of a broad consensus contributed powerfully to the legitimization of the transition process even for many former supporters of authoritarian rule. Thus the political impetus for restraint in the Spanish case must be linked, in part, to the dynamics of legitimation and delegitimation.

Political Mechanisms: Parties and the Legitimacy of the State

The linkages between the main union confederations and the principal parties of the left have formed an undeniable feature of Spanish labor politics, despite the insistence of the unions on their operational autonomy. The strongest links, historically, tied the UGT and the PSOE to one another. Party statutes require PSOE members to join the UGT. Still, the UGT has insisted strongly on its freedom to disagree with the PSOE or a Socialist government and considerable historical precedent legitimizes wide differences between the two organizations on issues of the greatest consequence.^{xxx} The union, moreover, has attempted to create a space within its ranks for relatively non-ideological workers, beginning in 1980 with the slogan, "A Union for All" (Un Sindicato para Todos). On the left, Trotskyists and maximalist Socialists have continued to

operate within the UGT but have not succeeded in winning leadership positions at the national confederal level. Perhaps the most fundamental determinant of the relationship between the two organizations is the very low level of membership enjoyed by the party. The PSOE has no more than 200,000 members, leaving it with a much more limited organizational presence in society than most West European Socialist parties.^{xxxii} This, in turn, leaves union activists and leaders with relatively little power inside the PSOE in comparison with party functionaries and elected officials. Leading members of the union's national executive have often been able to attend party congresses only as invited guests without voting rights. In short, the historical formal ties between the two organizations has not been reflected in a tight interpenetration of union and party. The labor confederation has enjoyed only limited influence within the party and has insisted on its right to autonomy.

The relations between CCOO and the Communist Party have also been quite complex, especially following the splintering of the PCE in the mid-1980s. Unlike its Socialist counterpart, *Comisiones Obreras* is not linked to its political allies, in this case on the Communist Party(ies), by statute nor by a long history. CCOO emerged during the Franco years as an ostensibly unitary and partially spontaneous vehicle for workers' opposition. Left Catholics, left Falangists, and independent Socialists participated together with Communists in the founding of the movement. Nevertheless, the Communist role in Comisiones grew considerably during the 1960s and by the time of the return of democratic freedoms the union leadership was clearly identified with the PCE. Nevertheless, the union retained its "unitary" and politically autonomous ideology thereby encouraging continuing participation of minority currents of opinion, which gain representation on the confederation's confederal council in proportion to their presence in the tri-annual union congresses. Trotskyists, independent Socialists and dissident Communists have all continued to participate in CCOO along with the PCE members who have retained the central leadership positions in the union. Given the serious internal debates within the Spanish Communist movement in recent years, this linkage to the Communist Party(ies) has not discouraged internal discussion and opposition. Marcelino Camacho, Secretary General until his planned retirement at a union congress late in 1987, has distinguished himself in his efforts to provide a place within the union for all those—whether on his right or his left, in the majority or in the minority—willing to work together. Thus, the union has not been "dominated" by the party. Nevertheless, the two organizations have been somewhat more strongly interwoven in membership and leadership than their Socialist counterparts. Party initiatives have been guaranteed, at a minimum, a hearing within the union.

These close, if complex, ties between unions and parties have been seen by some observers as the central mechanism behind the restraint exercised by the union confederations in wage claims and other demands. In fact, the political parties, rather than unions and employers,

did sign the first negotiated ceiling on wage increases in the fall of 1977 as part of the broad Moncloa Pacts which crystallized the consensus politics of the transition period. CCOO quickly followed the lead of the PCE and formally accepted the pact at the cost of persistent internal debate over that policy. The UGT, in contrast, never formally accepted the pact, but the confederation's policy was one of *de facto* acceptance. The smaller rival confederations vigorously criticized the Moncloa Pacts but failed to gain any apparent advantage in worker support as a result. Even if the parties did play the central role in the Moncloa Pacts, the efforts and objectives of unionists would play a crucial role in determining their success or failure: the vigorous opponents of the policy of accommodation and restraint—some of whom were to be found within the two leading confederations— failed to rally a majority of workers to the cause of breaking the pacts.

Following the expiration of the Moncloa accords at the end of 1978 the formal role of political parties in the formulation of wage restraints ended; wage ceilings were negotiated among unions, employers' associations, and the government or—in some instances—simply imposed by the government. Still, this formal change in the mechanism of determining wage limits would not stop some observers from attributing the willingness of the unions to accept restraints to the influence of the parties within the union movement. The issue at stake concerns the ability of the parties to orchestrate—in the pursuit of their political objectives—a change in union strategy without reference to the needs and opinions of the union rank and file. Or, to put it another way, the continuation of the policy of restraint even after the expiration of the Moncloa Pacts poses the question of just how autonomous the unions really were.

From my own perspective the parties should be seen as important in the initial formulation of the policy of restraint, but their initiative was not alone sufficient to guarantee the success of the policy. Rather, other factors coincided to assure a limitation in demands. Still, from the standpoint of our concern for mechanisms, it is important to ask how the plant-level leaders—whose support, as we have seen, is essential for the success of any coordinated policy—would respond to the influence of the parties in the unions.

A substantial minority of the workplace leaders were political party members at the time of the 1981 survey, and many others sympathized with one or another party.^{xxxii} Nevertheless, the allegations of political party responsibility for restraint do not focus on the behavior of the workplace leaders but rather on the interpenetration of the national leaderships of the unions and parties. In the survey I asked the plant-level leaders which, among a list of alternative phrases, best described the current state of union-party relations in the union movement as a whole.^{xxxiii} (See Table 6.) Over one quarter of the respondents, 26.2%, actually saw the situation as one of control by the parties over the unions. This judgment, however, was considerably less common among CCOO or UGT leaders than among those belonging to other

unions or among independents. The largest group, 44.4%, saw the situation as one of influence by the parties over the unions without reaching a level of total control. A smaller group, 20.1% accepted the somewhat dubious official position of the confederations that the parties and the unions exercise mutual influence with full autonomy for each side of the relationship. Thus, a clear majority of the workplace leaders, even in the two leading confederations, saw the relationship between unions and parties as relatively asymmetric. This assessment of the current reality, nevertheless, does not translate into unreserved support for these asymmetric relations.

TABLE 6
Image of Union-Party Relations in the Union Movement as a Whole

	By Union				By Province		Entire Sample
	CCOO	UGT	Other Unions	Independents	Barcelona	Madrid	Total
Control by the parties*	14.2	17.1	71.0	41.4	30.5	22.4	26.2
Influence by the parties	49.6	50.0	22.6	37.1	46.8	42.4	44.4
Mutual influence with autonomy for each	27.0	22.0	3.2	11.4	17.5	22.4	20.1
No relation between parties and unions	2.1	1.2	3.2	2.9	1.3	2.9	1.9
Influence by the unions	1.4	4.9	----	----	0.6	2.9	1.9
Control by the unions	----	1.2	----	1.4	----	1.2	0.6
No Answer	5.7	3.7	----	5.7	3.2	5.9	4.6
(N)	(141)	(82)	(31)	(70)	(154)	(170)	(324)

Control by the parties	2.8	—	—	—	—	2.4	1.2
Influence by the parties	5.7	3.7	—	—	3.2	3.5	3.4
Mutual influence with autonomy for each	60.3	64.3	45.2	45.7	57.8	55.9	56.8
No relation between parties and unions	21.3	15.9	48.4	45.7	27.3	28.2	27.8
Influence by the unions	6.4	9.8	6.5	2.9	8.4	4.7	6.5
Control by the unions	2.8	6.1	—	—	2.6	2.9	2.8
(N)	(141)	(82)	(31)	(70)	(154)	(170)	(324)

The concept of legitimacy, in the Weberian sense, refers not to some diffuse notion of support for the regime but to the belief that the political order is binding, that the state is entitled (unlike private citizens and groups) to enforce its decisions even when they run counter to the goals or interests of individuals or key groups. This need not mean that the acceptance of the legitimacy of the state leads individuals to feel always constrained to obey the law and legal authorities. All that is required, in the Weberian formulation, is that even in breaking the law those who do so accept at some level the binding character of the order—that the state is justified in enforcing it. In the case of the labor movement some illegal activity is normal and perhaps inevitable given the inherent difficulty of resisting the dominance of the employers. For our purposes the crucial question is whether infractions of the law by labor activists 1) are actually intended to directly *challenge* the structure of legitimacy, 2) simply represent *indifference* to that structure, or 3) reflect the desire to *pressure* employers and the state while *accepting the validity* of the legal structure, the democratic state.

In the workplace leader survey I operationalized this conception of legitimacy by asking the following question concerning the extent to which the respondents accept the principle of the enforcement of the law by the authorities when labor activists have broken it:

Many times in the labor movement—just as in other social sectors, such as the employers for example—actions which to some extent are illegal are considered and carried out. These actions can include unauthorized demonstrations, the non-observance of legislation on labor matters, *encierros* (shut-ins), etc., and may at times include holding a boss hostage. I would like to ask you about your opinions on what the state can do to respond to illegal actions of the labor movement. If the state arrests those involved and places them on trial, does this seem reasonable to you?

The answers offered to the respondents included the following alternatives:

- 1) Yes it is reasonable because the state has the right and the duty to do so; if not the laws make no sense.
- 2) As long as we are talking about a democracy it is reasonable.
- 3) In theory it is reasonable, but in reality many times the state enforces the law when it runs against our interests and does not enforce it when it runs against the interests of capital. So we have the right to insist that the law is enforced in a just manner.
- 4) It is reasonable only if we are talking about something very serious, such as holding a boss hostage, for example.
- 5) It may be that the state has the right to do so, but I am not interested in the rights of the state but rather in the interests of the workers.
- 6) It is not reasonable. What the state ought to do is respond to the needs and interests of the workers and not arrest them.

The first two responses—implying as they do the absolute acceptance of the principle of the legitimacy of the state—are so legalistic that they may well be incompatible with the normal exercise of unionism with its great stress on organized pressure. The next two responses are the “normal” choices for dedicated unionists who accept the legitimacy of the democratic state. These two alternatives reflect a recognition of the *principle* of the authority of the democratic state combined with a reluctance to see that authority exercised against the labor movement. The final two responses reflect different paths to the rejection of the legitimacy of the democratic state: the fifth alternative suggests a belief in one segment of civil society, namely the organized working class, and a lack of interest in the state or even an antagonism toward it. This position might be termed a semi-anarcho-syndicalist view, which rejects the relevance of the claims of the state or by extension the perceived requirements of the transition and consolidation process. The final response represents a complete denial of the legitimacy of the current state; for those who hold this view only a “workers’ state” can be legitimate.

A clear majority of the workplace leaders accept, in one way or another, the legitimacy of the democratic state. The largest single segment, just 50%, chooses one of the two “normal” responses reflecting a somewhat reluctant acceptance of the legitimacy of the state.^{xxxiv} A smaller, but still significant, group, 14.2%, of the total sample, chooses one or the other of the legalistic alternatives reflecting a surprising respect for authority even when it acts against organized workers. A considerably larger minority, 29%, rejects the legitimacy of the state, choosing one of the last two alternatives. Thus, by a greater than two to one margin the plant-level leaders accept, in principle, the legitimacy of the democratic state. This datum, by itself, helps account for the absence of any serious revolutionary challenge on the part of labor against

the emergent democratic political order. Moreover, the profound disagreement among the workplace leaders on this fundamental issue points to a serious underlying basis for political conflict within the labor movement during the transition years.

A critical reader might wonder, at this point, if the acceptance of the state's legitimacy might not represent a manifestation of the power of party discipline or the persuasion exercised by national political leaders. Although it is impossible in this context to review the evidence in detail, it is worth noting that those respondents who *uncritically* accepted the leadership of PCE Secretary General Santiago Carrillo—perhaps the leading exponent of worker restraint after a certain point in the transition process—were actually most likely to *reject* the legitimacy of the democratic state.^{xxxv} The views of the respondents on the legitimacy question, far from reflecting a pervasive influence of party discipline, instead stand as evidence of the independence of the views of the workplace leaders on a crucial issue.

The workplace leaders' attitudes regarding the legitimacy of the democratic state do, in fact, exert a powerful influence on their willingness to accept the policy of restraint through negotiated pacts. (See Table 8.) Among those unionists who unambiguously reject the legitimacy of the democratic state (response #6) nearly half, 49.3%, are unconditionally opposed to all pacts or limitations on labor demands. And among those who profess a hostile lack of interest in the state's claim to legitimacy (response #5) the unconditional opposition to all pacts or limitations in demands is virtually the same: 47.8%. For those who accept—in one fashion or another—the legitimacy of the democratic state, the unconditional opposition to any restraint by labor is much lower, ranging from 8.1% (response #4) to 15.8% (response #1). This significant impact of the workplace leaders' stance regarding the state's claim to legitimacy on their predisposition toward the policy of negotiated restraint stands out as the strongest relationship between political attitudes and views toward restraint.

INSERT TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE

Surprisingly, the respondents' position on the *reforma/ruptura* question made less of an impact on their attitudes towards restraint. Although the internal debate within the labor movement over the course to be taken by the transition played a much larger role in the visible politics of the union movement than the much less debated issue of legitimacy, this prominence of the debate over the transition did not translate into an underlying cleavage capable of explaining all conflict within the labor movement. Thus, among the *rupturistas* who believe that a historic opportunity for *ruptura* was lost, just 40.5% reject all labor restraint, a level noticeably lower than that observed for the opponents of the legitimacy of the democratic state.^{xxxvi}

This raises the issue of why a well-defined political debate like the *reforma/ruptura* controversy would exert less influence over the conduct of labor conflict than an enduring but infrequently debated problem, namely that of legitimacy. Perhaps the explanation is that the

question of legitimacy addresses the broader willingness of labor to subordinate the unrestrained pursuit of its own interests to the principle of the democratic self-regulation of society as a whole. And negotiated restraint through pacts is precisely that: the (more or less) democratic self-regulation of society. These findings illustrate how broadly shared political beliefs among the plant-level leaders formed a crucial supporting condition allowing the national leadership to carry out a policy of negotiated restraint through peak-level pacts. More specifically, the belief in the legitimacy of the democratic state has served as an even more important contribution than the action of the political parties in securing support for negotiated restraint from the workplace leaders. The political basis for restraint—at least from the perspective of unionism inside the workplace—rests on widely shared, autonomously held, and diffuse beliefs more than on the decisions of a few top leaders at the national level. This is not to imply that the legitimacy of the state is an ahistorical phenomenon unrelated to the conduct of political life and state power. However, the attitudes we have been examining are not likely the specific product of strategic decisions by party leaders in the transition years.

Rank and File Sentiments and Labor Restraint

Our review of the political considerations underpinning the policy of restraint has already seriously undercut the demobilization interpretation by minimizing the direct role of the parties in the limitations on labor demands. However, as we shall see, political considerations—even those of the broadly shared variety we have emphasized—have played a secondary, albeit important, role in leading the union movement to limit its demands. The most important consideration has come not from above but from below. The unwillingness of most workers to support an aggressive policy of mobilizations and demands dates from 1979 and profoundly altered the parameters of union activity.

The 1981 survey of plant-level leaders included a question asking the leaders to specify those motives that they considered justified reasons to limit demands in the current context. The respondents were presented with a list of seven frequently discussed motives, and they were also afforded the opportunity to state that no motive justified limiting labor demands. The most widely cited motive, chosen by 72% of the respondents, was “the lack of a willingness of the workers to support strikes with the determination which would be necessary.” (See Table 9.) It is noteworthy that the reliance on this consideration was especially high among the CCOO respondents (80%), the group with the greatest predisposition towards conflict. Other motivations, such as “the importance of creating a situation favorable to the consolidation and stability of democracy” (65%) and “the danger of plant closings” (70%), were also frequently cited. However, the greatest consensus lies behind the most undeniable constraint: the reluctance of

the workers to support strikes. This reluctance, in turn, is strongly linked to the danger of plant closings and the economic crisis. With the rapid increase in unemployment during the transition period and the early years of democratic government, Spanish workers grew cautious in their attitude toward labor conflict and confrontations with employers. Economic concerns broadly experienced by rank and file workers led them towards caution and this worker caution coincided with the political considerations of labor activists and leaders. The policy of restraint rested on a firm basis, not just on a decision imposed “from above.”

INSERT TABLE 9 ABOUT HERE

Further evidence that the impetus for restraint came, in large measure, “from below” can be found in the attitude of the workplace leaders toward labor conflict. In the survey I asked the leaders if, in their view, the level of strike activity in their own firm had been too high, too low, or appropriate. If the leaders had been actively engaged in restraining conflict, they would presumably indicate that the level of conflict had been too high. Instead, the largest group, 47.7%, offered the opinion that there had not been as many strikes as there should have been.^{xxxvii} Only 6.2% stated that there had been too many strikes in their firm. The plant-level leaders, crucial to any strategy of mobilization or demobilization, do not stand out as critics of mobilization.

Thus, the weight of evidence collected from the workplace leaders clearly supports the view that the decline of labor conflict and worker militancy cannot be understood as the consequence of a demobilization orchestrated and imposed from above. Instead, the mechanisms accounting for restraint include the role of the parties in the union movement, the largely independent judgments and political attitudes of the plant-level leaders—especially their acceptance of the legitimacy of the democratic state, the growing economic crisis during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and—in part as a result of the economic constraints—the caution and moderation of the rank and file. Yet this leaves unanswered several important questions: how can we account for the weakness of the union movement, if not by reference to elite-level decisions? And, how should we date the beginning of the decline in labor combativeness and strength; did it not directly follow the signing of the Moncloa Pacts?

Dating the Decline of Union Combativeness and Strength

The notion that the Moncloa Pacts represented a full-fledged demobilization of labor by the parties with lasting consequences for the strength of the unions clearly implies that the level of labor conflict was permanently muted by the accord. Yet the available data on strikes paint a very different picture. The high level of strikes experienced in the crucial transition year of 1976 did, apparently,^{xxxviii} decline somewhat in 1977, the year in which the Moncloa agreement was

signed. But the highest level of strikes was actually experienced in 1979, *the year after the expiration of the Moncloa Pact*. While the agreement may well have temporarily lowered the level of industrial conflict, the accord clearly held no lasting effect. Instead, the mobilizational capacities of labor reached their highest point after the supposed demobilization had already taken place. The strikes of 1979 represented an attempt by the unions to break the unilateral wage guidelines announced by the government in the context of the expiration of the Moncloa limitations. However, these strikes, by and large, failed. The failure of the 1979 strikes reflected economic rather than political realities. The increasing market-imposed constraints faced by employers made it difficult for the unions to attain their objectives. These failed strikes probably contributed more than any political decision to the disillusionment of Spanish workers with collective worker action. Persuasive evidence on this point has been presented by Pérez Díaz following his excellent survey research on worker attitudes and experiences. In his 1980 survey he found that among those who had participated in strikes only 23.2% characterized the results as “good,” and just 39.9% “would do so again or would advise that it be done again in the same circumstances.”^{xxxix} Unsuccessful attempts at mobilization, more than peak-level accords, account for the weakening of collective worker action following the high point attained in 1979.

This analysis may leave many readers with the question of why the mobilizational capacities of labor continued to increase after the signing of the Moncloa Pact. The answer, once again, lies in the mechanisms underlying labor conflict. Union organization, and above all that presence inside workplaces provided only by plant-level leaders, advanced steadily in the first year or two following the return in April 1977 of democratic freedoms for unions. The growth of union organizations—both in aggregate membership and in their simple presence inside workplaces—made possible by democracy, increased the mobilizational capacities of labor, for organization normally increases the possibilities for collective action.^{xi} In the 1981 survey of plant-level leaders the respondents were asked about the organizational situation of their union in their own firm at the time of the 1978 union elections.^{xii} Only 45.5% of the leaders reported that “It was already well established for some time,” while 21.3% stated that, “It had just become well established,” and the rest saw their union’s organizational presence as not yet well established inside the workplace at the time of the 1978 elections. Thus, union organization continued to spread during the period of the supposed demobilization in 1977. Union membership claims continued to grow through mid-1978. Democratic freedoms afforded the unions increased organizational possibilities. But why, then, did the unions lose strength rapidly beginning in 1979, leaving them with only a weak role in public life?

The Weakness of the Unions

One of the reasons for the weakness of the unions has already been introduced, namely the growing economic crisis of the transition years. The economic constraints posed serious limits on the demands labor could successfully advance, and left most workers preoccupied with the effort to retain their own jobs. By the end of 1979 the experiences of failed strikes and plant closings were common enough to discourage many workers from engaging in collective worker action. A historical context in which unions could only rarely win new gains for workers made it quite difficult for labor organizations to make a case for the benefits of membership and collective action. The caution and discouragement imposed on workers by the economic situation provided an increasingly grim backdrop for the effort to build a democratic union movement. Once the enthusiasm generated by the initial return of democratic freedoms had faded, the unions were left with great difficulty in their attempt to attract and retain members.

However, the timing and depth of the economic crisis, by themselves, do not account for the extraordinary organizational weakness of the unions from late 1979 onward. In fact, even in 1978 at the height of the post-Franco surge of enthusiasm for collective action and political expression, actual union membership probably never exceeded 40% of the labor force—and this at a time when union cards were distributed freely and carried little significance. Thus, the ceiling of union membership fell short of that attained *and sustained* in a number of other national settings.^{xliii} This relative weakness, especially after 1979, proved surprising to virtually all observers in light of the impressive ability of the opposition labor movement to sustain a high level of industrial conflict in late Franco Spain, despite the repression characteristic of the authoritarian period. The Franco regime failed completely in its goal of creating the institutional basis for non-conflictual relations between workers and employers, but this failure, contrary to expectations, would not build the foundation for a powerful union movement under democracy.

The explanation for this apparent paradox lies, in large measure, in the pattern of worker mobilizations and representation characteristic of the late Franco years.^{xliiii} The large and frequent strikes of the late 1960s and early 1970s in no sense reflected the existence of a

powerful mass membership organization. Instead, opposition activists and leaders coalesced in a semi-clandestine movement with a participatory ideology, ill-defined organizational boundaries, and an imperfect understanding of its own reach. *Comisiones Obreras*, the core of the opposition labor movement, thought of itself as a phenomenon of spontaneous origins, open to all workers, and capable of making use of the legal spaces for union activity provided by the Franco system. CCOO activists participated with great success in the elections for worker representatives at the factory level inside the structure of the regime union. Opposition activists used these official posts to represent workers in legal collective bargaining and, in many instances, to lead illegal strikes. Participatory worker assemblies, an integral part of the mobilization process prior to and during strikes, were frequently held in the halls of the official regime union if not inside the factories themselves. Nicolás Sartorius, the leading intellectual theorist of the movement, has written of this period that the clandestine leadership group served as a sort of conductor of a large symphony orchestra, respectful of the autonomy and capacities of the participating “musicians.”^{xliiv} Yet in retrospect it is clear that many of the “musicians” did not think of themselves as part of a larger “orchestra” and may have been unaware of or uninterested in the symphonic “conductor.”

My own research on workplace unionism has provided considerable evidence of a disjunction between opposition organization and instances of collective worker action or representation.^{xliv} Even in the best case the opposition movement mobilized workers without collecting any dues or maintaining a formal organizational link with them. Opposition activists and leaders reached workers through several mutually reinforcing channels: the elective posts and the meeting rooms of the official regime union, protests of various sorts in public places, and irregular mass assemblies inside (or in the immediate vicinity of) the workplace. Thus, ordinary workers, along with leaders and activists, learned the lesson that mass mobilizations were possible without large-scale autonomous organization. However, leaving behind this best case scenario, in many local contexts the disjunction between opposition organization and collective worker action was much more stark. Many of those who thought of themselves as part of the

opposition movement nevertheless never led or participated in strikes and took no role in the representation of worker interests through the official regime union. At the same time, many workers—representing, we must remember, an exception to the most common pattern—participated in or even led strikes and/or served with genuine interest and dedication as worker representatives within the official regime union without ever thinking of themselves as part of the opposition labor movement. As my survey data from the workplace level show, during the Franco period the fit between opposition organization and authentic instances of collective worker action or representation was far from perfect. Many small or even medium sized firms actually participated in strike waves without the benefit of any organizational linkage to the opposition movement. In other instances firms with an opposition presence never managed to carry out strikes.

The most common pattern remains one of the linkage between strike activity and the presence of a relatively small nucleus of opposition activists capable of leading the mobilization within their firm. The widespread exceptions to the general rule rest on two mechanisms—one organizational and the other non-organizational—fundamental to collective worker life in the authoritarian context. The organizational mechanism consisted of the limited but real possibilities for worker representation within the framework of the official regime union, the OSE or “vertical union.” Worker delegates were charged with the conduct of collective bargaining without the right to strike. As I have emphasized, the OSE frequently facilitated the efforts of opposition labor activists by providing them with the physical and institutional location from which to mobilize workers in defense of their interests. And popular mythologies aside, even those elected worker delegates who failed to associate themselves with the opposition did, in many instances, take seriously their representative work on behalf of workers, and even participated in strikes in some cases. Moreover, given the obligatory nature of membership in the OSE, this fundamental if highly limited tool for collective worker action enjoyed a universal reach unattainable by democratic unions. Thus, the impact of the official regime union was highly complex: the OSE provided an organizational shell conducive, within certain limits, to the representation of workers

at the cost of preventing the *independent* organization and coordination of labor movement activity at the national level. In short, the Franco labor policy failed completely in its attempt to eliminate industrial conflict but it did grossly distort the normal relationship between autonomous labor organization and the collective defense of worker interests. Workers and activists at best learned that collective bargaining and strikes were possible without a mass-membership dues-collecting organization and at worst they learned to completely dissociate collective worker action from the organization of labor into stable autonomous associations.

The reader may question—as I did when first reviewing the data^{xlvi}—just how genuine the disjunction between organization and action really was. Is it not possible that the “real” opposition activists, in contrast to mere self-proclaimed activists, all took part in strikes? In the survey of workplace leaders I found that those who identify themselves as participants in the opposition labor movement are just as likely to have suffered arrest for their activities regardless of whether or not they actually participated in strikes. In both cases roughly one in three suffered arrest for participating in the illegal opposition. The explanation for this surprising similarity of fates among the strikers and non-strikers in the labor opposition lies in another fundamental mechanism of labor mobilization in a repressive context: the reliance on protests in public places.^{xlvii} For current purposes it must suffice to say that the non-strikers in the opposition contributed to the broader cause of labor by participating in a variety of forms of public protest. These public forms of protest—including demonstrations, the painting of political murals, handing out informational leaflets and the like—were as likely to lead to arrest as strike participation and, more importantly for our purposes, they helped extend strike waves beyond the initial nucleus of factories where they originated. Thus, the creative use of public space helped the labor movement reach and mobilize workers in factories with no organizational link to the labor opposition. The mobilizations stood as a great victory for workers over the forces of repression, but they also helped teach the lesson that organization was not necessarily the central mechanism underpinning broad mobilizations. Labor’s legacy from the period of opposition to authoritarianism consisted of high expectations but few lessons or practices actually useful for the building of stable and

independent union organizations under democracy. The long-term legacy of Francoism was to prove far more negative for labor than widely appreciated in 1977.

This legacy of mobilization and representation without strong and autonomous organization has left its mark in numerous ways. In many workplace settings union representation exists today only by virtue of the elected delegates serving on the works committees. In such settings union delegates win through election the right to represent their fellow workers, but they fail to establish any union organization inside the workplace and recruit few if any workers as actual dues paying members. This state of affairs is especially common in hard-to-organize sectors such as banking, but can also be found in many small and medium sized factories. In my survey work I encountered instances of factory union delegates who saw no particular need to recruit workers as actual union members. In some firms the union confederations have even had to rely on non-members to carry their standard in the works committees election. The significant number of independent non-union delegates elected to the committees is indicative, in some instances, of pro-management or anti-union sentiments within the workforce. However, many of the independent delegates—perhaps close to half of the total number in that category—are genuinely committed to the collective defense of worker interests while remaining suspicious of the national union hierarchies. The existence of these delegates, some of whom I met in my interviewing, underlines the broader problem faced by the unions. Should they attempt to limit the discussion of strategies for the collective defense of worker interests to actual union members, or should they incorporate in collective efforts and discussions those non-members willing to participate? It is difficult to resolve this issue definitively in one way or the other. The excellent survey work on rank and file worker attitudes by Víctor Pérez Díaz has shown clearly that the area of influence of the unions among workers is much broader than suggested by actual membership. In the contemporary Spanish context the representation of workers and the collective defense of their interests rely in considerable measure on those outside union organization.

These remarks should not be construed as a suggestion that nothing has changed since

the Franco period or that the union confederations are in any sense peripheral to collective worker action. Much has changed: above all the freedom for activists and leaders from the constant threat of arrest during the Franco period, and the ability of the unions to discuss actions publicly and coordinate their activities above the level of the firm. Nevertheless, the union confederations have clearly failed to attain the organizational strength they had anticipated, and it is in this respect that the legacy of the Franco years shows its face.

Thus, the explanation for the weakness of the union movement is not to be found in the role of the parties nor in political decisions taken at the national level. The decline in union membership and in worker mobilizations following 1979 reflects more broadly shared problems: an economic crisis, which turned most workers towards caution, and a political culture left behind by the Franco years, which minimized the importance of autonomous organization for collective action. The context of the transition even more than the political form it took accounts for the course taken by labor conflict and organization. The much touted “demobilization-from-above” was neither imposed on a militant base nor responsible for the weakness of labor.

Macrolevel Features and Labor Restraint in Spain: Speculations for Comparative Analysis

A number of the crucial aspects of labor’s role in the Spanish transition depend—to one degree or another—on macrolevel features of the Spanish case we have not emphasized. Although it is not possible in this context to develop fully or rigorously this line of analysis, it is perhaps useful to briefly and speculatively consider several factors of likely causal significance.

In the Spanish transition the line—or the political boundary—between regimes was very clear for the labor movement and indeed for nearly all political sectors. Despite the reform-oriented nature of the political transformation and the continuity within major state institutions such as the army, police, and the judicial system, the institutional or legal terrain of labor relations changed quickly and dramatically. Labor unions, repressed throughout the Franco period, were

finally legalized in April 1977 two months before the first free elections in forty-one years. Unlike national cases where independent labor unions were partially tolerated and maintained in a legal if weakened status under authoritarianism, in Spain the meaning of democracy and dictatorship for workers' organizations was unambiguous. Thus the Spanish unionist's commitment to democracy—and their willingness to take into account the requisites of democratic consolidation when making demands—probably rests, in part, on the clarity of the line between regimes with respect to the legal rights and opportunities for workers' organizations.

With regard to the more specific question of the legitimacy of the democratic state which proved so important in accounting for attitudes toward concertation and labor restraint, two interrelated aspects of the Spanish political experience deserve attention. Especially important was the existence, during the Franco period, of a state apparatus distinct in many respects from the authoritarian regime as such. Although the state was responsible for carrying out the repression characteristic of the period, it also provided citizens with some guarantees of legal predictability, with more or less bureaucratic treatment in many respects, and with a variety of social provisions. Many of those holding important (or not so important) positions within state structures were neither creatures of the Francoist regime nor important players within its (formal and informal) councils. Given that the major structures of the state remained essentially unchanged during the regime transition, this differentiation under authoritarianism between regime and state helped facilitate the legitimacy under democracy of the state—a legitimacy which contributed to labor's acceptance of concertation and mobilizational restraint.

A related factor deserving consideration is the relative salience of the state for labor's experience of repression or recognition. Although employer repression of unionism through dismissals from work continues to exist in contemporary Spain, both coercion through organized violence and the granting of codified rights of representation have been essentially codified rights of representation have been essentially monopolized by the state. Unlike those settings where organized private violence by or for employers sharply curtails union activity, in contemporary Spain the issue of political control over the exercise of state repression and regulation is decisive:

The form taken by political rule—whether democratic or authoritarian—cannot be ignored by labor for it establishes the opportunities and the costs for collective worker action. In these important respects labor's inclination to adjust its demands to the perceived requirements of democratic consolidation and its granting of legitimacy to the democratic state both conform to a logic configured by the character and development of political rule. Labor's broad commitment to the stability of democracy is neither an act of sheer political will nor a randomly generated normative consensus. In national cases where the form taken by the regime—and/or the activities and regulations of the state—are less decisive for labor's activities, it may prove much more difficulty to forge an equally strong commitment to democratic consolidation within the union movement.

It is perhaps worth stressing that three separate dimensions are here relevant: 1) the similarity or dissimilarity of labor's legal status under authoritarianism and democracy, 2) the presence or absence of differentiations under authoritarianism between the existing non-democratic regime and the more or less permanent institutions of the state, and 3) the salience or relative lack of importance of state actors and regulations (as opposed to private actors like the employers) in determining the conditions surrounding labor movement activity. In the Spanish case all three dimensions appear to have pushed, to one degree or another, in the direction of labor's commitment to democratic consolidation and stability.

Also deserving some consideration is the impact of economic crisis on union behavior. The clear relationship observed in the Spanish case between economic difficulties and labor restraint cannot necessarily be counted on in all national contexts. Economic hardships and the threat of rising unemployment tend to make it more difficult than otherwise would be the case to sustain a high level of industrial conflict, but under some circumstances these conditions may help engender radicalized conflict. In the Spanish case it is important to note that workers' living standards had improved significantly in the decade and a half prior to the onset of economic crisis. Thus for many workers a salient objective was the retention of recent improvements. Moreover the sacrifices entailed by labor restraint were far less than overwhelming. The small decreases in real wages during several years are in no sense comparable to the large sacrifices

required by the economic “shock therapy” currently in vogue in some circles. To put the matter another way, labor restraint in Spain did not imply a change in the prevailing socio-economic model to the detriment of workers; rather it entailed postponing objectives perceived to be favorable to workers (and accepting with more or less resignation the rising unemployment of that historical period).

Thus a number of macrolevel features of crucial importance in the Spanish case helped push labor toward restraint. It is not at all clear that political will alone could provide for the repetition of this experience in other countries where these crucial features are absent.

Ten Years after the Return of Freedom: The Resurgence of Labor Conflict

Our exploration of the underpinnings of the decline in the union movement helps make its subsequent resurgence readily intelligible. In fact, many of the mechanisms emphasized in the preceding discussion help account for the surge in collective worker conflict beginning in early 1987. And conversely, our rejection of the suggestion of others that the parties were largely responsible for labor’s “demobilization” renders the subsequent conflictual stance of the UGT much more comprehensible. In short, the forces and actors that helped establish the course of labor conflict in the transition years remain—much to the dismay of many Spanish politicians or intellectuals—a significant part of contemporary Spain.

The vital significance and the shortage of plant-level leaders have remained a constant throughout the period of democratic political life. A number of central qualities of the majority of these workplace leaders—their radicalism relative to the rank and file or to a lesser extent to the national leadership, their capacity for judgments autonomous from the national confederations, and their ability to adjust union activity to fit within the constraints of local contexts or the historical moment—have also remained constant. Thus, the ability of the more independent minded UGT confederal leaders, men like Nicolás Redondo and José María Zufiaur, to resist the pressures of

the PSOE government, rests in part on their knowledge that such resistance helps protect the vital network of workplace leaders and activists who face the competition of a more radical *Comisiones Obreras*. The proclivity of the workplace leaders to resist control by political parties did not, by itself, lead to a radical policy of mobilization so long as the perceived requirements for the consolidation of democracy and the local imperatives of union action (especially the caution of the rank and file) pointed in the direction of restraint. However, this would leave union activists—even those of the UGT—free to pursue a more conflictual tack once the democracy was clearly consolidated and the local conditions were more favorable towards worker mobilizations. In other words, the fact that the earlier decline in conflict reflected the views and experiences of workplace leaders, in turn, left those leaders free to follow a more mobilizational strategy when conditions changed.

The apparent consolidation of democracy certainly helps account for—or at least helped *permit*—the resurgence of conflict. After the failure of the 1981 coup attempt and the successful transfer of power to the PSOE in late 1982, the earlier political need for consensus waned. It is significant that the campaign of CCOO against the UCD government's Worker Statute included work "stoppages"; several years later in June 1985 the same union confederation would drop the euphemism of work "stoppage" and wage a general strike in response to the plans of the PSOE government to reduce some Social Security pensions. Nevertheless, the consolidation of democracy alone cannot account for the great increase of strikes in 1987. The resurgence of conflict did not take place until the Socialist government had been in power for several years.

The disjunction between organization and collective action also helps explain the rapid and unexpected resurgence of conflict. The same mentality and traditions which kept many workers outside the arena of formal union membership also permitted them to participate in the renewal of conflict despite the apparent organizational weakness of the unions.

The linkage between labor mobilizations and economic conditions also helps account for the unexpected turn of fortune for collective worker action in late 1986 or early 1987. Just as the rapid economic decline and the crisis of many firms in the late 1970s helped produce a cautious

approach to conflict on the part of most workers, so too the economic stabilization and resumption of significant growth in 1986 and 1987 helped provide the basis for the increase of worker conflict. The self-congratulatory continuation of government policies of austerity and the containment or reduction of labor costs even after significant (5%) economic growth had resumed certainly helped stimulate the surge of labor demands and strikes. The proclamations of government ministers in favor of holding wage increases below the rate of inflation angered many top-level union officials and contributed to the pressures for renewed conflict at the workplace level. The revival of CCOO in the union elections of 1986 further contributed to these pressures. The decline of the UGT occurred in all but the smallest firms, where—in the absence of any genuine or pre-existing workplace unionism—traveling election organizers frequently arranged for local elections and recruited someone to stand as the UGT representative. Whether these largely staged elections in small firms serve to extend authentic union life to small workplaces or simply falsely inflate the total number of delegates of the UGT remains to be seen. However, the reliance of the Socialist confederation on these questionable elections in small firms in order to maintain its position relative to CCOO underscored the prevalence of those factors weighing in favor of a more conflictual UGT stance in most firms. The UGT criticisms of the government and the growth of labor conflict have developed in conjunction with a marked increase in joint actions including both labor confederations.

Whether this renewal of the mobilizational strength and the public role of labor will lead to an increase in organizational strength and the public acceptance of unions is quite another matter. Barring a change in the political and associational culture of the workplace, the Spanish unions may well have to make do with a lower level of formal membership than their counterparts in other advanced societies. However, as we have seen, this organizational weakness—despite its serious costs—does not preclude the effectiveness of large-scale mobilizational campaigns.

Since this analysis was written for the Kellogg Institute conference in April 1988 developments have strongly confirmed the analysis presented here with respect to the resurgence of labor's political protagonism. The general strike of December 14, 1988—called

jointly by the major unions—virtually halted all economic activity and achieved the participation of over ten million workers. Without Spain's characteristic dissociation between organizational strength and mobilizational capacities this outcome would be incomprehensible. The resurgence of labor mobilization as a result of the factors we have mentioned has returned the unions to a position of great prominence in public life, not only in industrial conflict but also in the communications media and other arenas. Whether this newfound political protagonism based on weak organizations will lead to concrete gains in policy-making is much more difficult to foresee on the basis of the historical experience and the underlying mechanisms analyzed in this chapter.

Endnotes

- 1 The demobilization-from-above interpretation was fairly widely diffused in Spain. The most distinguished analyst to present a version of this interpretation is José María Maravall in *La Política de la Transición* (Madrid: Taurus, 1981), p. 30.
- 2 Leading theoretical approaches that, in one way or another, link the breakdown of democracy to working class mobilizations include the work of O'Donnell and of Linz.
- 3 See the survey research of Víctor Pérez Díaz on working class attitudes and experiences: *Clase Obrera, Orden Social y Conciencia de Clase* (Madrid: Fundación del INI, 1980) and *Clase Obrera, Partidos y Sindicatos* (Madrid: Fundación del INI, 1979). See also José Félix Tezanos, *Crisis de la Conciencia Obrera?* (Madrid: Mezquita, 1982).
- 4 On the workers' opposition under Franco, leading sources in English are José Maravall, *Dictatorship and Political Dissent: Workers and Students in Franco's Spain* (London: Tavistock, 1978), and Jon Amsden, *Collective Bargaining and Class Conflict in Spain* (London: LSE, 1972). A valuable history of the labor movement during the Franco period and the first years of the transition is Fernando Almendros Morcillo, et al., *El Sindicalismo de Clase en España (1939-1977)* (Barcelona: Peninsula, 1978). An important collection of essays written by a major figure in Comisiones Obreras during the late Franco years is Nicolás Sartorius, *El Sindicalismo de Nuevo Tipo: Ensayos sobre Comisiones Obreras* (Barcelona: Laia, 1977).
- 5 On the first union elections of the new democratic period, see Robert M. Fishman, "The Labor Movement in Spain: From Authoritarianism to Democracy," in *Comparative Politics* (April 1982).
- 6 Much has been written on the association between strong union movements, government by the left in democracies and policies beneficial to the working class. For an especially interesting analysis, see John Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism* (London: MacMillan, 1979).
- 7 For a good analysis of the rightward evolution of the Socialists, see Donald Share, "The Immaculate Deception? The Spanish Socialist Party in Government," paper presented at the 1987 Meeting of the Western Political Science Association.
- 8 For an excellent analysis of this process, see Paolo Di Rosa, *The Disenchantment of Spanish Intellectuals: Reflections on the Relations between Intellectuals and Workers in Contemporary Spain* (Social Studies Honors Thesis: Harvard College, November 1986).
- 9 This figure was reported to me at the time by a Spanish researcher with significant ties to employers' associations.
- 10 Some controversy surrounds the level of worker participation in political strikes in 1976.

- 11 See *El País*, March 22, 1987, pgs. 1, 44, 45.
- 12 See *El País*, June 23, 1987, pgs. 1, 13.
- 13 I am grateful to the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) and its director at the time, Rafael López Pintor, for providing the assistance of the CIS interviewers for the survey. A description of the sample and the survey design is to be found in the methodological appendix of my forthcoming book, *Working Class Organization and Political Change: The Labor Movement and the Transition to Democracy in Spain* (Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 14 This point is developed at some length in *Working Class Organization...*, chapter 2.
- 15 The excellent study of Eric Batstone, Ian Boraston, and Stephen Frenkel, *Shop Stewards in Action: The Organization of Workplace Conflict and Accommodation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), notes that in some departments of the strongly unionized British factory they researched, no steward was present because no worker would accept the job. However, this observation is not developed systematically in their study.
- 16 On the union options presented to workers in 1978, see Fernando Almendros Morcillo, et al. On union elections in the Basque Country, see Andoni Kaiero Uria, *Las Elecciones Sindicales en Euskadi. Representación de los Trabajadores en la Empresa e Implantación de los Sindicatos* (Vitoria: Servicio Central de Publicaciones Gobierno Vasco, 1985).
- 17 According to the official UGT study of the 1980 elections, elections were actually held in firms encompassing somewhere between 52% and 57% of those workers eligible for participation. See *Elecciones Sindicales de 1980: Un Primer Análisis* (Madrid: UGT, 1981), p. 64.
- 18 These figures, unreported in Table 1, are also from the survey.
- 19 On the process of party formation and development in democratic Spain, see the excellent study by Richard Gunther, Giacomo Sani, and Goldie Shabad, *Spain after Franco: The Making of a Competitive Party System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
- 20 For a lengthier discussion of this point, see *Working Class Organization*, chapter 2.
- 21 Although the dismissal of workers for union activity is explicitly prohibited by the *Estatuto del Trabajador*, in the survey I found that in 8.6% of the firms in the survey, one or more workers had been dismissed for union activities during the previous three years.
- 22 A good example of this, which I document in *Working Class Organization*, concerns the appropriate representative for the workers in collective bargaining—the works committees or the union confederations themselves. See the data in Table 2.8, chapter 2.
- 23 Thus, the existence of radical union leaders—of whatever political stripe—cannot by itself ensure broad worker support for radical political initiatives. For an excellent descriptive account of the inability of a radical plant-level leader in the United States to win the backing of his fellow unionists in the wider electoral arena, see John W. Alexander and Monroe Berger, “Grass Roots Labor Leader,” in Alvin Gouldner (ed.), *Studies in Leadership: Leadership and Democratic Action* (New York: Harper, 1950).

24 See *Mundo Obrero*, 2-8 February 1978, special section on the IX Party Congress of the PCE.

25 On the importance of the initial regime-founding coalition for the stability of democracy, see Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

26 Especially telling in this regard was the warning by Metalworkers Secretary General Adolfo Piñedo at the First Confederal Congress of the CCOO in Madrid in June 1978. Piñedo cautioned that union opposition to the government's proposed labor legislation should not be framed in such a way as to question the legislative role of the Cortes, the Spanish parliament.

27 During the Second Republic Julián Besteiro, a defender of a particularly patient version of Marxism, maintained his leading role in the UGT after losing out within the party itself. Alone among the leading figures in the PSOE, Besteiro opposed the October Revolution of 1934—an effort backed by social democrats to the right of Besteiro as well as revolutionary maximalists to his left. Excellent discussions of the conflict within Spanish Socialism during the Republic and of the social backdrop to that conflict are to be found in Edward Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale, 1970); Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1970); and Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic* (London: Methuen, 1978).

28 Current estimates in late 1987 place the party membership at perhaps 170,000 but earlier estimates were considerably lower. For figures on party membership, see José Félix Tezanos, *Sociología del Socialismo Español* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1983).

29 For data on the party membership and sympathies of the plant-level leaders, see *Working Class Organization*, Table 5.8.

30 For the full text of the question and a lengthier discussion of the matter, see *Working Class Organization*, chapter 5.

31 For the workplace leaders' view of the legitimacy of the state by union and by province, see *Working Class Organization*, Table 5.6.

32 *Ibid.*, Table 5.7

33 *Ibid.*, Table 7.7.

34 *Ibid.*, Table 7.5.

35 Unfortunately, the strike data for the years of the transition are somewhat unreliable with significant differences among the available sources. See *Working Class Organization*, Table 7.1, which includes an explanatory note along with strike data for 1975-1980.

36 See Víctor Pérez Díaz, "Los Obreros Españoles ante el Sindicato y la Acción Colectiva en 1980," in *Papeles de Economía Española, Madrid*, 1980. See pp. 256-257.

37 On the relationship between organization and collective action including strikes, especially important are Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley,

1978), and Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, *Strikes in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

38 See *Working Class Organization*, Table 6.1.

39 For data on union membership in a number of Western democracies, see Stephens.

40 I develop this argument at greater length in *Working Class Organization*, chapter 4.

41 See Sartorius, pp. 111-112.

42 See *Working Class Organization*, chapter 4.

43 See the four hypotheses in “The Labor Movement in Spain: From Authoritarianism to Democracy.”

44 I develop this point at some length with supporting data in *Working Class Organization*, chapter 4.

Table 1

Presence of Plant Level Labor Leadership: % of Workplaces in
Which the Union Presented Candidates for the Works Committee

	<u>By Province</u>		<u>By Size*</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Barcelona</u>	<u>Madrid</u>	<u>Smaller</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	
COCO	85.7	87.1	75.7	87.9	100	86.4**
UGT	68.2	77.1	58.6	72.9	94.4	72.8**
USO	12.3	10.6	9.0	6.4	25.0	11.4

CSUT	9.1	4.1	2.7	6.4	12.5	6.5
SU	1.9	12.9	3.6	7.1	15.3	7.7
<hr/>						
(N)	(154)	(170)	(111)	(140)	(72)	(324)

*Size categories are as follows: Smaller = 51 - 250 workers.

Medium = 251 - 1000 workers.

Large = 1001+ worker

One firm remained unclassified as to size.

Small firms with fewer than 50 workers were excluded from the sample.

**In one firm unclassified by size CCOO and UGT were both present.

Table 6

Image of Union/Party Relations in:

The Union Movement as a Whole

	<u>By Union</u>				<u>By Province</u>		<u>Entire</u>
							<u>Sample</u>
Control by the Parties*	14.2	17.1	71.0	41.4	30.5	22.4	26.2

Influence by the Parties	49.6	50.0	22.6	37.1	46.8	42.4	44.4
Mutual Influence with Autonomy for Each	27.0	22.0	3.2	11.4	17.5	22.4	20.1
No Relation between Parties and Unions	2.1	1.2	3.2	2.9	1.3	2.9	1.9
Influence by the Unions	1.4	4.9	___	___	0.6	2.9	1.9
Control by the Unions	___	1.2	___	1.4	___	1.2	0.6
No Answer	5.7	3.7	___	5.7	3.2	5.9	4.6

(N) (141) (82) (31) (70) (154) (170) (324)

Table 7

Preference for the Ideal State of Union/Party Relations

	<u>By Union</u>				<u>By Province</u>		<u>Entire Sample</u>
	<u>CCOO</u>	<u>UGT</u>	<u>Other Unions</u>	<u>Independents</u>	<u>Barcelo-</u>	<u>Madrid</u>	<u>Total</u>
Control by the Parties	2.8	—	—	—	—	2.4	1.2

Influence by the Parties	5.7	3.7	—	—	3.2	3.5	3.4
Mutual Influence with Autonomy for Each	60.3	64.3	45.2	45.7	57.8	55.9	56.8
No Relation between Parties and Unions	21.3	15.9	48.4	45.7	27.3	28.2	27.8
Influence by the Unions	6.4	9.8	6.5	2.9	8.4	4.7	6.5
Control by the Unions	2.8	6.1	—	—	2.6	2.9	2.8
No Answer							
<hr/>							
(N)	(141)	(82)	(31)	(70)	(154)	(170)	(324)
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Endnotes

ⁱ The initial version of this chapter, presented at the Kellogg Institute conference in April 1988, opened with this assertion. Subsequent developments—most dramatically in the case of the general strike of December 1988—have tended to confirm the analysis contained in that initial

version. For an excellent analysis of recent developments and dilemmas in union strategy, see Jacint Jordana, "Del 14-D al sindicalismo de los años noventa" in *Sociología del Trabajo* No. 8, Winter 1989-1990.

ii The demobilization-from-above interpretation was fairly widely diffused in Spain. The most distinguished analyst to present a version of this interpretation is José María Maravall in *La Política de la Transición* (Madrid: Taurus, 1981), p. 30. For recent stimulating work which adopts the demobilization perspective see the research in progress of Salvador Aguilar and the Fundació Jaume Bofill, Barcelona.

For an excellent analysis of the exceptional case of Gijón, where left-wing opponents of labor restraint were expelled from CCOO, see Rubén Vega García, "La Corriente Sindical de Izquierda. Un Sindicalismo de Movilización," Unpublished Manuscript, Department of Contemporary History, University of Oviedo.

iii Leading theoretical approaches that, in one way or another, link the breakdown of democracy to working class mobilizations include the work of O'Donnell and of Linz.

iv See the excellent survey research of Víctor Pérez Díaz on working class attitudes and experiences: *Clase Obrera, Orden Social y Conciencia de Clase* (Madrid: Fundación del INI, 1980) and *Clase Obrera, Partidos y Sindicatos* (Madrid: Fundación del INI, 1979).

v On the workers' opposition under Franco, leading sources in English are José Maravall, *Dictatorship and Political Dissent: Workers and Students in Franco's Spain* (London: Tavistock, 1978), and Jon Amsden, *Collective Bargaining and Class Conflict in Spain* (London: LSE, 1972). A valuable history of the labor movement during the Franco period and the first years of the transition is Fernando Almendros Morcillo, et al., *El Sindicalismo de Clase en España (1939-1977)* (Barcelona: Peninsula, 1978). An important collection of essays written by a major figure in

Comisiones Obreras during the late Franco years is Nicolás Sartorius, *El Sindicalismo de Nuevo Tipo: Ensayos sobre Comisiones Obreras* (Barcelona: Laia, 1977). An outstanding recent contribution on the labor opposition in Catalonia is Sebastian Balfour, *Workers, Dictatorship and the City*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1989.)

^{vi} On the first union elections of the new democratic period, see Robert M. Fishman, "The Labor Movement in Spain: From Authoritarianism to Democracy" in *Comparative Politics* (April 1982).

^{vii} Much has been written on the association between strong union movements, government by the left in democracies and policies beneficial to the working class. For an especially interesting analysis see John Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism* (London: MacMillan, 1979).

^{viii} For a good analysis of the rightward evolution of the Socialists, see Donald Share, "The Immaculate Deception? The Spanish Socialist Party in Government," paper presented at the 1987 Meeting of the Western Political Science Association.

^{ix} For an excellent analysis of this process, see Paolo Di Rosa, *The Disenchantment of Spanish Intellectuals: Reflections on the Relations between Intellectuals and Workers in Contemporary Spain* (Social Studies Honors Thesis: Harvard College, November 1986).

^x This figure was reported to me at the time by a Spanish researcher with significant ties to employers' associations.

^{xi} Some controversy surrounds the level of worker participation in political strikes in 1976.

^{xii} See *El País*, March 22, 1987, pgs. 1, 44, 45.

^{xiii} See *El País*, June 23, 1987, pgs. 1, 13.

^{xiv} I am grateful to the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) and its director at the time, Rafael López Pintor, for providing the assistance of the CIS interviewers for the survey. A description of the sample and the survey design is to be found in the methodological appendix of *The Return to Democracy in Spain*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

^{xv} This point is developed at some length in *Working Class Organization . . .*, chapter 2.

^{xvi} The excellent study of Eric Batstone, Ian Boraston, and Stephen Frenkel, *Shop Stewards in Action: The Organization of Workplace Conflict and Accommodation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), notes that in some departments of the strongly unionized British factory they researched, no steward was present because no worker would accept the job. However, this observation is not developed systematically in their study.

^{xvii} On the union options presented to workers in 1978, See Fernando Almendros Morcillo, et al. On union elections in the Basque Country. See Andoni Kaiero Uria, *Las Elecciones Sindicales en Euskadi. Representación de los Trabajadores en la Empresa e Implantación de los Sindicatos* (Vitoria: Servicio Central de Publicaciones Gobierno Vasco, 1985).

^{xviii} According to the official UGT study of the 1980 elections, elections were actually held in firms encompassing somewhere between 52% and 57% of those workers eligible for participation. See *Elecciones Sindicales de 1980: Un Primer Análisis* (Madrid: UGT, 1981), p. 64.

^{xix} These figures, unreported in Table 1, are also from the survey.

^{xx} On the process of party formation and development in democratic Spain, see the excellent study by Richard Gunther, Giacomo Sani, and Goldie Shabad, *Spain after Franco: The Making of a Competitive Party System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

^{xxi} For a lengthier discussion of this point see *Working Class Organization*, chapter 2.

^{xxii} Although the dismissal of workers for union activity is explicitly prohibited by the *Estatuto del Trabajador*, in the survey I found that in 8.6% of the firms in the survey, one or more workers had been dismissed for union activities during the previous three years.

^{xxiii} A good example of this, which I document in *Working Class Organization*, concerns the appropriate representative for the workers in collective bargaining—the works committees or the union confederations themselves. See the data in Table 2.8, chapter 2.

^{xxiv} Thus, the existence of radical union leaders—of whatever political stripe—cannot by itself ensure broad worker support for radical political initiatives. For an excellent descriptive account of the inability of a radical plant-level leader in the United States to win the backing of his fellow unionists in the wider electoral arena, see John W. Alexander and Monroe Berger, “Grass Roots Labor Leader,” in Alvin Gouldner (ed.), *Studies in Leadership: Leadership and Democratic Action* (New York: Harper, 1950).

^{xxv} See *Mundo Obrero*, 2-8 February 1978, special section on the IX Party Congress of the PCE.

^{xxvi} On the importance of distinguishing between state and regime in the context of democratic transition see Robert Fishman, “Rethinking State and Regime: Southern Europe’s Transition to Democracy,” in *World Politics* (April 1990).

^{xxvii} On the importance of the initial regime-founding coalition for the stability of democracy, see Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

^{xxviii} Especially telling in this regard was the warning by Metalworkers Secretary General Adolfo Piñedo at the First Confederal Congress of CCOO in Madrid in June 1978. Piñedo cautioned that union opposition to the government's proposed labor legislation should not be framed in such a way as to question the legislative role of the Cortes, the Spanish parliament.

^{xxix} On the dynamics of delegitimation and legitimation in the Southern European transitions, see "Rethinking State and Regime."

^{xxx} During the Second Republic Julián Besteiro, a defender of a particularly patient version of Marxism, maintained his leading role in the UGT after losing out within the party itself. Alone among the leading figures in the PSOE, Besteiro opposed the October Revolution of 1934—an effort backed by social democrats to the right of Besteiro as well as revolutionary maximalists to his left. Excellent discussions of the conflict within Spanish socialism during the Republic and of the social backdrop to that conflict are to be found in Edward Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale, 1970); Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1970); and Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic* (London: Methuen, 1978).

^{xxxi} Estimates in late 1987 placed the party membership at perhaps 170,000 but earlier estimates were considerably lower. For figures on party membership, see José Félix Tezanos, *Sociología del Socialismo Español* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1983).

^{xxxii} For data on the party membership and sympathies of the plant-level leaders see *Working Class Organization*, Table 5.8.

xxxiii For the full text of the question and a lengthier discussion of the matter see *Working Class Organization*, chapter 5.

xxxiv For the workplace leaders' view of the legitimacy of the state by union and by province, see *Working Class Organization*, Table 5.6.

xxxv Ibid., Table 5.7.

xxxvi Ibid., Table 7.7.

xxxvii Ibid., Table 7.5.

xxxviii Unfortunately, the strike data for the years of the transition are somewhat unreliable with significant differences among the available sources. See *Working Class Organization*, Table 7.1 which includes an explanatory note along with strike data for 1975-1980.

xxxix See Víctor Pérez Díaz, "Los Obreros Españoles ante el Sindicato y la Acción Colectiva en 1980," in *Papeles de Economía Española*, Madrid, 1980. See pp. 256-257.

xl On the relationship between organization and collective action including strikes, especially important are Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1978), and Edward Shorter and Charles Tilly, *Strikes in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

xli See *Working Class Organization*, Table 6.1.

xlii For data on union membership in a number of Western democracies, see Stephens.

xliii I develop this argument at greater length in *Working Class Organization*, chapter 4.

^{xliv} See Sartorius, pp. 111-112.

^{xlv} See *Working Class Organization*, chapter 4.

^{xlvi} See the four hypotheses in “The Labor Movement in Spain: From Authoritarianism to Democracy.”

^{xlvii} I develop this point at some length with supporting data in *Working Class Organization*, chapter 4.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Attitudes of Industrial Workers and Workplace-Level Leaders

% Agree with statement	Industrial Workers* Pérez Díaz Survey		Workplace-Level Leaders 1981						Total
	1978	1980	CCOO	UGT	Other unions	Inde- pendents	Barcelona	Madrid	
My firm is like a team where there is a principal common interest in producing more and better to the benefit of everyone	52.1	56.4	22.0	28.0	35.5	50.0	33.8	28.2	30.9
My firm is not like a team, because there is fundamental opposition between the interests of the employers and the employees	44.2	38.	70.9	67.1	64.5	47.1	62.3	65.9	64.2
Doesn't know; Doesn't answer; other answer	3.7	4.7	7.0	4.8	--	2.9	3.9	5.9	4.9
(N)	(3443)	(2126)	(141)	(82)	(31)	(70)	(154)	(170)	(324)

* The data on industrial workers are from the article by Víctor Pérez Díaz, "Los Obreros Españoles ante el Sindicato y la Acción Colectiva en 1980." *Papeles de Economía*, No. 6. Madrid 1980.

TABLE 3

Leadership View of Workers as More Radical, More Moderate, or Holding the Same Views as Union Representatives (the Leadership)

Within the firm workers seen as:	CCOO			UGT			Other Unions			Independents			All
	Barce-lona	Madrid	Total	Brna	Madr	Total	Brna	Madr	Total	Brna	Madr	Total	Total
More radical	9.1	2.7	5.7	2.9	2.1	2.4	7.1	--	3.2	5.1	3.2	4.3	4.3
More moderate	57.6	65.3	61.7	54.3	63.8	59.8	64.3	58.8	61.3	51.3	58.1	54.3	59.6
Same position	33.3	32.0	32.6	42.9	34.0	37.8	28.6	41.2	35.5	41.0	35.5	38.6	35.5
No answer; No opinion	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.6	3.2	2.9	0.6
In all of Spain workers seen as:													
More radical	16.7	12.0	14.2	8.6	8.5	8.5	21.4	11.8	16.1	17.9	19.4	18.6	13.9
More moderate	60.6	58.7	59.6	65.7	61.7	63.4	57.1	58.8	58.1	59.0	41.9	51.4	58.6
Same position	21.2	22.7	22.0	20.0	27.7	24.4	21.4	29.4	25.8	20.5	25.8	22.9	23.1
No answer; No opinion	1.5	6.7	4.3	5.7	2.1	3.7	---	---	---	2.6	12.9	7.1	4.3
(N)	(66)	(75)	(141)	(35)	(47)	(82)	(14)	(17)	(31)	(39)	(31)	(70)	(324)

TABLE 4

Attitude toward the Political Transition: *Reforma* or *Ruptura*

% In agreement with the statement	CCOO			UGT			Other Unions			Independents			Total
	Barce- lona	Madrid	Total	Brn	Mdr	Tot	Brn	Mdr	Tot	Brn	Mdr	Tot	
The balance of forces	30	55	43	66	72	70	57	65	61	67	68	67	57

at the time of the

political transition

did not permit the

step to democracy

by *ruptura* and the

leaders of the left

did well in changing

strategy to facilitate

the *reform* which led
to democracy

Because of the

68

40

53

31

23

27

43

35

39

28

23

26

39

indecision and the

errors of many leaders

of the opposition a

historic opportunity

was lost to create a

more advanced dem
ocracy on the basis of
popular mobilizatio

ns

and													
a political <i>ruptura</i>													
Other answers: no answer: no opinion	2	5	4	3	4	4	0	0	0	5	10	7	4
(N)	(66)	(75)	(141)	(35)	(47)	(82)	(14)	(17)	(31)	(39)	(31)	(70)	(324)

TABLE 5

In the Current Spanish Context Do You Believe that at the Time of Making Demands the Unions Ought to Take into Account their Consequence for the Stability and Consolidation of Democracy?

	CCOO			UGT			Other Unions			Independents			Total		
	Barce-lona	Madrid	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total
Yes, above all those consequences must be taken into account and the demands measured against them	30	51	41	57	60	59	21	29	26	44	61	51	39	53	46
Up to a certain point yes, but the needs and interests of the workers have a greater importance	47	43	45	37	32	34	43	47	45	36	23	30	42	36	39
No, because the workers must be defended independently of the supposed political consequences and the problems of the political system	18	7	12	6	9	7	36	24	29	21	13	17	18	10	14
Other; no answer	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	1
(N)	(66)	(75)	(141)	(35)	(47)	(82)	(14)	(17)	(31)	(39)	(31)	(70)	(154)	(170)	(324)

TABLE 8

**Attitudes on the Importance of a Pact or an Agreement to Justify Limitations in Labor Demands—
By the Acceptance of the Legitimacy of the Democratic State**

Attitude towards the Legitimacy of the State

Attitudes toward pacts and labor	The state has the	As long as it is	In theory it	Only if infraction	Only the workers	The state should not	Other response;	Total
demands	right...	a demo- cracy...	is reasonable but...	is severe ...	are of interest	arrest workers....	no answer	
In favor of limiting labor demands inde- pendently of any pact	21.1	18.5	4.1	8.1	4.3	8.5	9.1	8.1
In favor of asking for something in exchange for limiting demands, but willing to limit them even without a pact	52.6	48.1	39.0	43.2	13.0	16.9	27.3	33.5
Willing to limit demands only if	10.5	18.5	41.5	40.5	34.8	23.9	31.8	32.6

there is a pact								
Against any pact or limitation on labor demands	15.8	14.8	14.6	8.1	47.8	49.3	31.8	25.2
Other answer; no answer	--	--	0.8	--	--	1.4	--	0.6
(N)	(19)	(27)	(123)	(37)	(23)	(71)	(22)	(322)

TABLE 9

Motives which the Workplace Leaders Consider Justified Reasons to Limit Labor Demands in the Current Context

	CCOO			UGT			Other Unions			Independents			Total		
	Barce-lona	Madrid	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total	Brn	Mdr	Total
The need to fight inflation	26	43	35	37	53	46	50	41	45	46	55	50	36	48	42
The danger of plant closings	58	72	65	74	77	76	86	59	71	72	71	71	68	72	70
The need to maintain the competitiveness of the Spanish economy in the international market	21	43	33	37	53	46	43	35	39	49	55	51	34	47	41
The importance of creating a situation favorable to the consolidation and stability of democracy	48	76	63	71	81	77	57	53	55	44	74	57	53	75	65
The need to develop and strengthen workers' organizations before attempting sharper struggles	48	65	57	69	72	71	36	41	39	44	42	43	51	61	56
The lack of support of other unions	39	51	45	49	43	45	21	24	23	44	29	37	41	42	41
The lack of a willingness of the workers to support strikes with the determination that	77	83	80	80	70	74	36	71	55	56	65	60	69	75	72

would be necessary

(N)

(66)

(75)

(141)

(35)

(47)

(82)

(14)

(17)

(31)

(39)

(31)

(70)

(154)

(170)

(324)