**Radical Politics in the Spanish Second Republic: Asturias, 1931-1936**

**Matthew Kerry**

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Department of History

University of Sheffield

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*Abstract*

The revolutionary insurrection of October 1934 was a key event in the Spanish Second Republic. The process of “radicalisation” is frequently used to understand this event and this thesis re-evaluates how radicalism can be conceptualised, demonstrating that it was a historically contingent force and a dynamic and reactive process, resulting from a combination of factors and strategies. Rather than a narrow focus on labour reform, this thesis grounds radicalism in the social environment and communities of the coalfields, the practice of politics at local level and the struggles which emerged during the Republic. Local communities were more complex and divided than has frequently been portrayed, and this was crucial to the process of radicalisation.

Radicalism and October 1934 cannot be understood without an appreciation of the particular political practice of the coalfields. Analysis of episodes of violence, boycotts and mobilisation over religious policy along with a re-evaluation of the role of the fascism enable us to understand what politics and the Republic meant in Asturias, and the dynamic process of radicalisation. The revolutionary insurrection of 1934 was an attempt to fashion a “revolutionary community”, which was formed in tension with previous experiences of community in the coalfield. The profound effects of repression on local communities were important for shaping the militant, radical, yet fragile, politics of the left in spring 1936. As such, this thesis, through an analysis of the everyday struggles and lived experience of the Second Republic, provides a complex and nuanced vision of both the coalfields and the wider Republic through an emphasis on the contingent nature of radicalism and changing idea of the Republic.

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## Abbreviations

Political Parties and Trade unions

AFAP *Agrupación Femenina de Acción Popular*

AN *Acción Nacional*

AP *Acción Popular*

BOC *Bloc Obrer i Camperol*

CEDA *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas*

CNT *Confederación Nacional del Trabaj*o

CPUT *Comité Pro-Unidad de los Trabajadores*

CGTU *Confederación General de los Trabajadores Unitaria*

FAI *Federación Anarquista Ibérica*

FE *Falange Española [later FE-JONS: Falange Española de las JONS]*

FNTT *Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra*

FSA *Federación Socialista Asturiana*

JAP *Juventud de Acción Popular*

JC *Juventud Comunista*

JS *Juventud Socialista*

MAOC *Milicias Antifascistas Obreras y Campesinas*

MES *Movimiento Español Sindicalista*

PCE *Partido Comunista de España*

PRLD *Partido Reformista Liberal Demócrata*

PSOE *Partido Socialista Obrero Español*

SCOM *Sindicato Católico de Obreros Mineros Españoles*

SOMA *Sindicato de Obreros Mineros de Asturias*

SUM *Sindicato Único de Mineros*

SUM-CNT *Sindicato Único de Mineros-Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*

SUM-ISR *Sindicato Único de Mineros-Internacional Sindical Roja*

UGT  *Unión General de Trabajadores*

Archives

AA *Archivo de Aller*

AHN *Archivo Histórico Nacional*

AHPA *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Asturias*

AL *Archivo de Langreo*

AM *Archivo de Mieres*

AO *Archivo de Oviedo*

CDMH *Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica*



## Map of Central Asturias I

***Concejos* (municipal districts)**

**Oviedo**

**Aller**

**Lena**

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**Mieres**

**Langreo**

**Laviana**

**San Martín del Rey Aurelio**

Nalón Valley

Turón Valley

Caudal Valley

Aller Valley

**Grado**

**Siero**



Avilés

Olloniego

Tudela Veguín

Sama

La Felguera

Laviana

Blimea

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## Map of Central Asturias II

**Capitals of *concejos* and important places referenced\***

\*Other places referenced are followed by the *concejo* (municipal district) in brackets

Figaredo

Ciaño-Santa Ana

Sotrondio

Barredos

Turón valley

Cabañaquinta

Moreda

Oviedo

Carbayín

Mieres

Ujo

Gijón

# Introduction

In the early hours of 5 October 1934 the coalfields of Asturias erupted into an armed revolt, just three-and-a-half years after the proclamation of the Second Republic had been joyously celebrated. The revolutionary insurrection in Asturias was vital to the evolution of the Republic and is also ‘one of the great revolutionary moments in modern European history’.[[1]](#footnote-1) Indeed, despite its failure, studying the revolutionary insurrection reveals much about the Republic, radicalism and violence in Spain, and more widely. The insurrection was a complex phenomenon which should be understood in the context of the specific developments and political practices of the coalfields, even if the revolutionaries saw themselves in much broader terms.

Radicalism is key to understanding the revolt, but the way that this is understood needs to be reformulated. The radicalisation of the working class during the Second Republic is often either narrowly focused on labour reform or else seen as simply the prompt that encouraged the socialist leadership, namely Largo Caballero, to threaten and plan a revolutionary movement. This thesis argues that radicalism was much more complex and cannot be seen as a label that describes Largo Caballero’s own trajectory. A broader approach to political practice and collective action in the coalfields demonstrates the need for a greater and more nuanced appreciation of the way that radicalism works. Radicalism needs to be grounded in the social environment and struggles in the coalfields of Asturias and so go beyond the traditional institutional focus to understand the dynamics of politics and protest, exploring previously neglected aspects such as boycotts, tenant activism and the role of religion, and re-evaluating others, such as the role of fascism and the development of working-class unity. Left-wing mobilisation was far from limited to labour issues; the tensest moments before the revolutionary insurrection of 1934 occurred when the residents of the coalfields felt their own communities were under attack, not as a response to economic issues. Local leftists were thus firmly embedded in local communities and were not simply appendages of the local trade union or political party. Nor were divisions between different groups—both within the left and more widely—static. These divisions were frequently *policed*—in other words, drawn and enforced—as individuals and groups sought to exert control and power each other.

The main coalfields of Asturias lie in the centre of the province to the south of Oviedo, the provincial capital. This thesis centres principally on the municipal districts (*concejos*) of Aller, Langreo, Laviana, Mieres and San Martín del Rey Aurelio, though the geographical limits are thus not rigidly fixed, just as the coal valleys were not hermetically sealed. The provincial capital and the industrial towns of Trubia, Tudela Veguín and Olloniego—the latter two also shaped by the mining industry—are also discussed. Other areas are referenced when considered pertinent, such as Carbayín in Siero, and Grado in the context of the revolutionary insurrection of October 1934.

The coalfields in question are structured around four main valleys, formed by the rivers Nalón, Caudal, Turón and Aller. These valleys are generally narrow, with mineshafts sharing the valley floor with densely-populated urban centres. Drift mines, villages and hamlets cling to the steep valley sides. The valleys rise from approximately 200m above sea level in the urban centres of Langreo and Mieres to 300m in Laviana and 400m in Aller, while the surrounding mountains are high and make travel difficult; the road between the Nalón and Caudal valleys over the Alto de Santo Emiliano climbs to over 500m, itself only half the height of the nearby Pico mountain which overlooks the valley of Turón. Industry was concentrated lower down the green and damp valleys with agriculture concentrated higher up the valleys, into the mountains. The climate is wet and cool; Dr. Jove y Canella, a doctor and writer who published studies of the coalfields in the 1920s, reported that in Langreo it was often misty and rained 129 days per year.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The main road and railway from Oviedo to Madrid passes through the Caudal valley and the town of Mieres. Other railways connected the coalfields with the ports of Gijón, Avilés and San Esteban de Pravia. Transport had always been a problem in the coalfields, both in terms of infrastructure and tariffs. Along with the difficulties in extraction and a lack of investment from inside Asturias, this had delayed development of the coal industry and affected its competitiveness.[[3]](#footnote-3) The first railway had opened in 1854—and other routes followed over the following decades—and it was only in the 1860s that the coal industry began to grow more rapidly.[[4]](#footnote-4) Even so, coal production only oscillated between 400,000 and 500,000 metric tons between 1872 and 1887, before finally growing to nearly 1.8 million tons in 1899. This was due to the establishment of bigger companies, including Fábrica de Mieres (1879), Sociedad Hullera Española (SHE) (1892) and Duro-Felguera (1900), a change in tariffs and improvements in transport.[[5]](#footnote-5) Asturian coal still struggled to compete with British coal on the Spanish market and the leap in the industry’s prices and profits during the First World War—along with a flood of immigration into the coalfields—were the result of the exceptional, external circumstances. With the return of British coal after the war, the contraction was sharp.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The period between the publication of *El movimiento obrero en Asturias* by David Ruiz in 1968 and 1990 saw the consolidation of a solid body of works on Asturias, although many concentrated on the period before the Second Republic.[[7]](#footnote-7) These studies centred mainly on the coalfields, though others have focused on the port city of Gijón.[[8]](#footnote-8) The working class—specifically the left—of the coalfields has been the traditional subject of analysis often through tracing the growth of unionism, specifically the socialist Sindicato de Obreros Mineros de Asturias (SOMA: Asturian Mine Workers’ Union) founded in 1910. A socialist newspaper had already appeared in the province in 1896 and by 1901, when the Federación Socialista Asturiana (FSA: Asturian Socialist Federation) was formed, the socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT: General Union of Workers) claimed 4,224 members in Asturias.[[9]](#footnote-9) Meanwhile, anarchism had taken root in La Felguera—one of the main centres of the steel industry—and Gijón, which would continue to be anarchist strongholds into the 1930s. Republicanism, which has started to receive more attention thanks to the work of Sánchez Collantes, already existed in the coalfields by the 1860s.[[10]](#footnote-10)

There had been strikes and periodic riots in the coalfields during the nineteenth century and the twentieth century began with two important strikes, one in 1903, the other the famous *huelgona* of 1906, which led to the dismissal of 700 men, including the socialists Manuel Llaneza and Ramón González Peña, and the shattering of an embryonic socialist union. It was on Llaneza’s return from exile in France that he founded the SOMA, which quickly grew due to its ‘aggressive policy’, reaching over 10,000 members by 1912. While mining companies initially resisted the union, by 1913 the mining companies’ association officially recognised the SOMA, with the exception of SHE, which continued to combat the socialists’ influence in Aller.[[11]](#footnote-11)

It is not surprising that the SOMA has received the lion’s share of analysis, given its status as the most important union in Asturias. According to traditional Marxist paradigms the new social context caused by a rapid process of urbanisation required a new type of workers’ organisation, and the SOMA channelled the discontent of the workers. The SOMA has generally been portrayed in a positive and sympathetic light, and as a tale of relative success. Historians attribute its early gains to an assertive and militant approach in the face of companies who ‘resisted the union vigorously’.[[12]](#footnote-12) Yet it was a reformist union, and emphasis is frequently placed on its moderate attitude which sought dialogue and negotiation.[[13]](#footnote-13) This reformism was in line with the rest of the socialist trade union federation, the UGT, and also with the traditional ‘pragmatism’ of the socialist parliamentary party, the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE: Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party).[[14]](#footnote-14)

Since the publication of Moradiellos’ study of the SOMA thirty years ago, scholars such as Muñiz Sánchez and Fernández Pérez have been trying to fill in certain gaps within the historiography of Asturian socialism, covering the time Manuel Llaneza spent in exile in the mining regions of northern France and the development of the Juventud Socialista (JS: Socialist Youth) in Asturias.[[15]](#footnote-15) Both follow the tradition of institutionally-focused histories, which continue to be the most common way of studying the Asturian working class. This institutional focus frequently leads to a top-down approach concentrating mainly on the political parties and trade unions themselves, or else conflates the union with wider society. This focus on organisations is not limited to the socialists. Other left-wing ideologies have also been examined in terms of trade unions and political parties, such as the classic study of Asturian anarchism by Barrio Alonso, which weaves the story of the Asturian anarchist movement into a wider national narrative. In 1917 socialists and anarchists collaborated in a nationwide revolutionary general strike against the Restoration regime, the end of the strike marked a change in the coalfields.[[16]](#footnote-16) Intense conflict rocked the SOMA after the First World War due to the economic crisis, which meant wage reductions and layoffs, and the influence of the Russian Revolution, which radicalised the grassroots. The seven-hour working day for those working inside the mines in 1919 was an important victory, but little consolation for a struggling union. In 1922, 21 sections were thrown out of the SOMA and together they formed the Sindicato Único Minero (SUM: United Miners’ Union), which joined the anarchist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT: National Confederation of Labour) and grouped together communists and anarchists.[[17]](#footnote-17) The rivalry between the SOMA and SUM is invariably cited in the historiography of the Asturian labour movement, though the latter has received less scholarly attention than the former.[[18]](#footnote-18)

If the SUM has received relatively little attention, still less has been dedicated to the Sindicato Católico de Obreros Mineros (SCOM: Union of Catholic Mine Workers), other than by Shubert, perhaps because it does not fit within the traditional (left-wing) notion of a trade union.[[19]](#footnote-19) The SCOM was founded in 1912 and is generally reduced to a yellow union, with little engagement with its confessional nature. Established as a ‘prophylactic against socialism’, the SCOM was engaged in fierce rivalry with the SOMA from the moment of the latter’s foundation, particularly in Aller, where SHE was intent on combatting the SOMA’s growing influence. The most infamous collision between the SCOM and SOMA occurred in April 1920 in Moreda, where eleven were killed in a shoot-out. From then on, the SCOM was in decline.[[20]](#footnote-20) Indeed, Catholicism and the church have not been well-served by histories of Asturias. Despite the wave of anticlerical violence in the revolutionary insurrection of October 1934, the position and role of the church—or indeed anticlericalism—has received scant attention, except for studies of the important social Catholic Maximiliano Arboleya.[[21]](#footnote-21) Yet mining companies subsidised and ran confessional schools and, while not all companies placed the same emphasis on religion, SHE banned blasphemy, built churches and paid priests to say mass. The priests worked as informers, passing reports on the workforce to SHE.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Likewise, other sectors of Asturian society have received scant attention from scholars. The Asturian ‘industrial bourgeoisie’ was the subject of two studies by Erice, though they only go as far as 1920, while a recent thesis engages with the issue of the mining companies in more depth and criticises the lack of interest shown by scholars in business.[[23]](#footnote-23) Castejón argues for a more pluralistic consideration of mining companies, exploring business and its relationship to other groups. Politics and ideology are scornfully rejected as part of Marxist-based militant histories.[[24]](#footnote-24) Beyond this, in the 1980s Suárez Cortina published a brief study of fascism, supplemented recently by a superficial volume by García de Tuñón Aza, descendent of one of the founders of the Spanish fascist party—Falange Española (FE)—in Asturias, which tends to concentrate on Madrid, though he does provide some important details about the Asturian FE.[[25]](#footnote-25) While there are many studies of October 1934, there is a surprising lack of studies of Asturias during the Second Republic per se and the lack of a deeper engagement with the Republic itself—particularly the period after the revolutionary insurrection—is surprising, given the importance of the insurrection. The best work on the coalfields, and which provides a broader view of the working class, continues to be *The Road to Revolution* by Shubert, first published in English in 1987.[[26]](#footnote-26) Again, this study does not engage with the effects of the insurrection, as it ends in October 1934.

Beyond trade unions and politics, the twin themes of ‘mixed workers’ (*obreros mixtos*) and paternalism have attracted some scholarly attention. Studies of mixed workers, who combined agricultural and mine work, tend to emphasise that they predominated in the period until the First World War.[[27]](#footnote-27) The phenomenon is often explained in terms of the *persistence* or *resistance* of agriculture, which slowed the ‘proletarianisation’ of the workforce.[[28]](#footnote-28) Nevertheless, some scholars have evaluated mixed workers more positively. For Sierra Álvarez, they demonstrated a ‘rational valuation of the time dedicated to each of their activities’, while García suggests that mining offered an excellent way for mixed workers to consolidate their smallholdings and earn an extra income, but was not perceived as a permanent economic activity.[[29]](#footnote-29) In truth, the predominance of the *obrero mixto* was unsurprising given the recognised instability of the mining sector; given daily wages is it really that strange that the miners usually ploughed their wages into land? Greater engagement with mixed workers could also help to breakdown the urban-rural dichotomy prevalent in the historiography. Sánchez Collantes has recently suggested that mixed workers were a lightning rod (‘*hilo conductor*’) for the greater politicisation of rural communities.[[30]](#footnote-30) And mixed workers continued to be important, even into the 1920s. Dr. Jove y Canella observed that workers returned to agriculture in Langreo having abandoned it prior to 1920, which problematises the notion of linear decline.[[31]](#footnote-31) The fact that even in the industrial workforce was not only present in rural areas in the 1930s but was also embedded within them, helped to shape the particular political culture in the coalfields, and will be discussed at length in the first chapter.

Paternalism is closely tied to the study of mixed workers. Paternalist practices have received considerable attention from scholars, including in the fields of housing and education. [[32]](#footnote-32) The focus on paternalism is unsurprising not only due to the large number of sources available, but also because of its importance in shaping life at local level. In June 1931, the right-wing provincial newspaper *Región* claimed that ‘[b]etween Urbiés and Mieres there is no manifestation of work, cultural or mechanical to which the aforementioned company [Hulleras del Turón] has not given constant and determined support’.[[33]](#footnote-33) Paternalism is fundamentally seen as a way of controlling and disciplining the workforce. Sierra Álvarez, in the best study on the subject, argues that ‘the paternalist program [was about] (social) moulding, engineering and pedagogy’. In other words, rather than simply disciplining the existing inhabitant of the mining valleys, the objective was the creation of the perfect worker, which meant that paternalist policymakers had to understand or imagine the personal and social needs of the male inhabitants of the coalfields in an attempt to ‘fix’ them to the coal industry.[[34]](#footnote-34) In contrast to Sierra Álvarez’s nuanced argument, twenty years later Muñiz Sánchez bizarrely attributed the implementation of paternalist policies solely to the mining companies’ desire to limit the formation of working class movements.[[35]](#footnote-35) This oversimplified approach is reiterated elsewhere when he attributes paternalism to the desire to impede the ‘proletarianisation’ of the miners. This contradicts the chronology; changes in the economic context meant that paternalism changed and diminished in importance after 1917: intensive paternalist practice and the organised labour movement did not coincide for very long, though company housing and schools would continue.[[36]](#footnote-36) Nevertheless, the spatial aspect of Muñiz Sánchez’s work is interesting, in which he analyses the intensely visual and patent hierarchies in the coalfields, the construction and articulation of which were evidently important and served to mould local lived experiences.[[37]](#footnote-37)

The last twenty-five years have seen a marked focus on culture in the historiography of Asturias, in both its formal and informal aspects. Such studies acknowledge the dense, active associational life in the coalfields and, as such, frequently group together culture and sociability. Jorge Uría’s work on themes including choirs, theatre, football and bars argues that Asturian society was developing into a ‘mass society’ at the beginning of the twentieth century and demonstrates how cultural expressions were used as a vehicle for protest.[[38]](#footnote-38) Uría’s analysis of agrarian and urban societies has challenged a historiography heavily influenced by labour and economic history in which the rural world is portrayed as largely static; an article on the Asturian peasantry contrasts contemporary literary representations and historical ‘reality’, concluding that rural society was undergoing a process of modernisation at the beginning of the twentieth century.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Informal spaces of sociability have been studied by Uría and others, such as Guereña, who has published extensively on popular education, sociability and prostitution in Asturias, though, again, mainly on the Restoration period.[[40]](#footnote-40) Studies emphasise the key role that taverns and *chigres* (bars) played as the main spaces of sociability for a (male) working class that lived in dispersed hamlets, as well as places of leisure that were more comfortable than the average home of the period.[[41]](#footnote-41) Taverns were places of exchange and interaction, often at crossroads and junctions, and centres of political life—a fact that was recognised by politicians who used alcohol as a political tool at election time.[[42]](#footnote-42) Even the layout influenced behaviour: working class taverns often had stools, which, as well as being relatively cheap and easy to produce, encouraged interaction and movement compared to the more rigid layout of bourgeois cafés.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Recent studies have catalogued and acknowledged the importance of cultural institutions such as the *ateneos* and Casas del Pueblo.[[44]](#footnote-44) *Ateneos* were cultural centres which emerged in the nineteenth century, where talks were given and other activities, such as music or theatre, were organised. These were inter-class, predominantly masculine institutions, aimed at educating the lower classes, with the support from intellectuals and bourgeoisie. The network of *ateneos* grew between 1925 and 1933 with the density and number network of cultural and leisure associations, societies and institutions in Asturias ‘only comparable to Catalonia’.[[45]](#footnote-45) The rival to the *ateneos* was the network of the Casas del Pueblo, the local socialist institutions with a much stronger political character. Llaneza believed bricks and mortar institutions would allow the socialist movement to combat the influence of company paternalism.[[46]](#footnote-46) While the origins of the *ateneos* lay in the nineteenth century, the first Casas del Pueblo appeared in Spain at the turn of the century—in Oviedo the centre was founded in 1907.[[47]](#footnote-47) From when SOMA was founded it launched into building Casas del Pueblo, ‘a real obsession’ of Llaneza, the first of which was built in Turón in 1913. By the time of the Second Republic, there was a strong network of socialist centres, providing places for meetings and political education, socialising, libraries, education (though limited), talks by external speakers, theatre groups, sporting activities, and also even co-operatives, pharmacies, friendly societies and cinemas.[[48]](#footnote-48)

The incorporation of these cultural perspectives into the historiography led to a more explicit consideration of culture in Ruiz’s revision of his 1988 account of the revolutionary insurrection. The revolutionaries’ ideas were the result of their accumulated experiences—not only at the coalface but at home, in the trade union, the tavern and at football matches—but these are presented as subsidiary to the political sphere, or else under-theorised.[[49]](#footnote-49) Cultural production is still seen by Ruiz as purely a vehicle for class consciousness. In contrast, in a more sophisticated study, Radcliff demonstrates how the city of Gijón was transformed through the mobilisation of the lower classes of society and the subsequent polarization of society and politics during the Second Republic. She concentrates on politics and culture, with particular consideration for the concept of hegemony, exploring areas such as space, urbanisation and the lived experience. She explores the contribution of women to the social and political struggle in the city, the neighbourhood in the structuring of society and its influence in conflicts, demonstrating an uneven rhythm of development and protest with no straightforward process of mobilisation.[[50]](#footnote-50)

## The Republic

The 1920s were a turbulent decade for the Asturian socialists. SOMA membership plummeted in the 1920s in contrast to the wider socialist movement, whose membership only dropped slightly.[[51]](#footnote-51) Advances had been made at the level of municipal politics with socialist mayors were elected in Mieres and Langreo in 1918 and 1920 respectively, and the PSOE obtained over 40% of the votes in San Martín del Rey Aurelio and Mieres in 1918, but the SOMA struggled to recover from the inability to combat the layoffs and wage reductions after the First World War, and from the acrimonious split over the Third International.[[52]](#footnote-52) Socialists collaborated with the Primo de Rivera dictatorship established in 1923 and Llaneza (in)famously had a meeting with the dictator just after he seized power. Socialists worked within the structures of the dictatorship, including the *comités paritarios*—arbitration committees—established in 1926, as a way of strengthening the socialist movement through use of the state apparatus.[[53]](#footnote-53) But the SOMA struggled to defend its members from layoffs and short-time working, and the eight-hour day was re-established in 1927 was ignited frustration and the SOMA Executive, initially against a strike, was forced to backtrack in the face of grassroots militancy.[[54]](#footnote-54) 1929 marked a change. UGT membership began to increase again in 1929, accelerating in 1930, and Largo Caballero ‘was pulling away from close commitment to the Primo regime’ as the economy began to struggle and grassroots militancy increase.[[55]](#footnote-55) In January 1930 Primo de Rivera resigned and the following months were of positioning and mobilisation with active campaigns not only by republicans and socialists, but also by monarchists.[[56]](#footnote-56) In Asturias, SOMA membership was increasing again and the JS showed evidence of ‘growing activity’ in 1930 and 1931, which included the creation of new sections—this was particularly intense before the elections of April 1931.[[57]](#footnote-57) The SUM was also growing both in size and influence. A SUM-led solidarity strike in November 1930, condemned by the SOMA, was supported by 20,000 mine workers. Confrontation between the unions increased.[[58]](#footnote-58) Strikes were shows of strength and ‘demonstrations of rivalry’ to the point of threats in 1931.[[59]](#footnote-59)

In summer 1930, the famous San Sebastián meeting took place, at which a revolutionary committee was organised in order to conspire to bring down the monarchy and replace it with a Republic. Socialist leaders Prieto and de los Ríos did attend, but not as official representatives, and the PSOE only approved the San Sebastián pact in October. A plan was hammered out in October for a military rebellion supported by a UGT general strike to bring down the monarchy.[[60]](#footnote-60) The revolutionary general strike of December 1930 was a failure. In Asturias, strikes took place in the coalfields and in Gijón—where there was greater violence—from 15 December.[[61]](#footnote-61) A month later, and three months before the Republic was proclaimed, Manuel Llaneza, the founder of SOMA, died, penniless. Ramón González Peña, Graciano Antuña and Amador Fernández took over the reins of the SOMA, and the wider Asturian socialist movement, in which the SOMA was a powerful force.

Berenguer—the prime minister appointed after the fall of Primo de Rivera—confidently convened general elections for 1 March. In early 1931, however, political parties withdrew from the elections and Berenguer resigned. A new government convened municipal elections in their place and an intense electoral campaign took place.[[62]](#footnote-62) There was an awareness that Spain was at a crucial juncture. Even *Región*, the leading newspaper of the Asturian Catholic right and staunch defender of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, accepted that a certain degree of change was needed, explaining that the ‘capable mass of the people’—those who ‘think and discuss’—should be given a voice, more freedom and a greater role in decision-making (the ‘*cosa pública*’). However, such change did not did mean a Republic. Vicente Madera Peña, the leader of the SCOM, criticised those who were campaigning for a Republic, portrayed as ‘a sort of paradise’ and a panacea to Spain’s problems.[[63]](#footnote-63) Ahead of the elections, the ‘historic’ liberal and conservative parties were ‘worn out, stagnant and inactive’, the Reformist Party—the historic Republican party in Asturias—was ‘intact’ and the rightist parties—the Unión Monárquica Nacional and the Derecha Regional Asturiana—were still in the process of organising themselves.[[64]](#footnote-64)

The election campaign was the most intense that had been seen in Spain, with increasing polarisation between the candidacies in favour of the monarchy and the republican-socialist coalition.[[65]](#footnote-65) The elections were presented as a stark choice between two opposing options; in *El Noroeste*’s opinion Spaniards could choose to be ‘citizens or subjects’. The correspondent for *El Noroeste* in Ciaño made an appeal for citizens to vote for the Refomist candidacy, ‘formed by those men who fought the Dictatorship, who openly opposed the Dictatorship, who have been defending your freedom and rights’.[[66]](#footnote-66) The left’s campaign was driven by broad ideas of ‘justice’, ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ and the denouncing of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. The Asturian socialist weekly publication, *La Aurora Social*, campaigned in favour of democracy and against the monarchy, but did not expect a Republic.[[67]](#footnote-67) Amnesty for those imprisoned due to the failed Republican rising of December 1930 was central to the election campaign in Asturias and more widely with amnesty marches and rallies.[[68]](#footnote-68) There was criticism of coercion by the mining companies El Caudal and Industrial Asturiana in Aller during the election campaign.[[69]](#footnote-69) However, the elections were calm and in Mieres there were marches with vivas shouted to the Republic on the afternoon of polling day.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Table 1. The municipal election results (April 1931)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Republicans | Socialists | Communists | Monarchists | Reformists |
| Langreo | 13 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Laviana | 7 | 8 | 2 | 1 | - |
| Mieres | 9 | 14 | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| Oviedo | 13 | 13 | - | 5 | 9 |
| San Martín del Rey Aurelio | 2 | 15 | - | 4 | - |

Sources: José Girón, ‘Elecciones y partidos políticos en Asturias, 1890-1936’, cited in David Ruiz *et al.*, *Asturias contemporánea, 1808-1975. Síntesis histórica. Textos y documentos*, (Madrid, 1981), p. 118; *La Voz de Asturias*, 14 April 1931.

In the coalfields the republican-socialist candidacies were the clear victors in the municipal elections, except in Aller and in Lena, where the elections were annulled due to complaints at irregularities. When the elections were repeated in these municipalities at the end of May the socialists won a landslide victory in Aller, obtaining 15 of the 21 councillors. In Lena, the Reformists won a majority, while five socialist and five radical-socialist councillors were elected in Ribera de Arriba—a small municipal district between the coalfields and the provincial capital.[[71]](#footnote-71) The elections also saw other groups make small inroads: communists were elected in Langreo for the first time.[[72]](#footnote-72) Nevertheless, the *ayuntamientos* (municipal councils) in the capital and coalfields were in the hands of the republicans and socialists, though to differing degrees, and the results confirmed not only leftist political hegemony in the coalfields, but that the socialist movement was the most influential political and trade union force.

The Second Republic was proclaimed on 14 April in the wake of the election results that had been a clear indication of a widespread rejection of the monarchy. There was surprise and shock at the results.[[73]](#footnote-73) The monarchy fell peacefully. In Asturias, as elsewhere, the Republic was proclaimed ‘explosions of joy’ as the “people” joyously celebrated that *their* regime had been proclaimed.[[74]](#footnote-74) New authorities took control, which were often the revolutionary committees from the December insurrection, such as in Oviedo, where the committee met at the socialist centre at 12 o’clock on 14 April. Teodomiro Menéndez, a veteran socialist, was appointed governor of the province and he officially took charge at nine in the evening.[[75]](#footnote-75) In Sama, the revolutionary committee also took control. The socialist Belarmino Tomás chaired the first plenary of the *ayuntamiento* and local squares were renamed after Galán and García Hernández, the ‘martyrs’ of the failed insurrection of December 1930.[[76]](#footnote-76) The Republic did not emerge from a vacuum and its proclamation was interpreted as a victory over the past and the ‘old order’. Portraits of the king were burnt in Mieres, and a small wave of incidents challenged the church’s role in the new context.[[77]](#footnote-77) In Oviedo, rumours of the church’s stance appeared to be confirmed on 15 April when the Republican flag which had been raised on the diocesan centre went up in flames. In response, a crowd managed to enter the building and destroyed ‘a few books and other items’. The treasurer of the centre was arrested for the deliberate destruction of the ‘flag of the patria’—even though it was not yet the official flag.[[78]](#footnote-78) Burning the flag only served to underline what the republicans and left believed: the right and the church were united against the installation of the new regime. In Oviedo, a canon of the Cathedral strolling through the plaza de la Constitución with friends was approached by an individual who shouted ‘viva *la República*, down with the clergy!’ before blaspheming and insulting the canon’s mother. The canon replied with a punch and the politicians José Buylla and Teodomiro Menéndez had to intervene as the situation threatened to escalate.[[79]](#footnote-79) The people had been empowered; an individual was now able to blaspheme and insult a priest directly in the centre of the city. Nevertheless the feeling of collective empowerment was undercut by a sense of insecurity. In Langreo the mayor was forced to issue a proclamation [*bando*] highlighting the ‘calmness’ of the country since the proclamation of the Republic. He criticised the ‘unfounded rumours’ spread by those against the ‘regime of popular sovereignty embodied by the Republic’, and called on the local inhabitants to confront these people, on whom the mayor ‘will impose an exemplary punishment’. This *bando*, *El Noroeste* noted, was well-met by public opinion.[[80]](#footnote-80)

The proclamation of the Republic was widely understood as a revolution, that is, the conquest of political power.[[81]](#footnote-81) At best, it was a limited political revolution, though with the promise of social transformation for many who voted for it: ‘the problems facing the country would be solved, class privileges would disappear and a regime of equality and social justice would be established’.[[82]](#footnote-82) Justice was also understood in an immediate sense in that the Republic was expected to right wrongs of the past. On 16 April, the railway workers sacked as a result of the failed revolutionary strike of 1917 petitioned the president of the provisional government asking to be reinstated.[[83]](#footnote-83) There would be a new way of doing politics, moulded by an understanding of social justice. Celso Fernández, the republican mayor of Langreo, explained to the local press that his priority was to address the system for contracting workers. He wanted to do away with the ‘regime of privilege’ that functioned ‘capriciously’ and introduce ‘strict justice’ rather than ‘old cacique-style techniques’.[[84]](#footnote-84)

The Republic saw a notable growth in membership for both the SOMA and the SUM. SOMA membership had begun to increase before the Republic was proclaimed and continued to do so in 1931, almost doubling between 1930 and 1932, climbing from 38% of the workforce to 69%.[[85]](#footnote-85) The SUM grew rapidly after it was legalised in 1930 and claimed 9,000 members by June 1931, though numbers decreased after the mining strike of June 1931 and differences between communists and anarchists climaxed, leading to a split in the autumn.[[86]](#footnote-86) Meanwhile, the SCOM slumped to a shadow of its former self, with only 1,056 members in 1932.[[87]](#footnote-87) New SOMA, SUM and political party sections opened or reorganised at the beginning of the Second Republic, and towards the end of the year seamstresses were organising their own trade unions.[[88]](#footnote-88)

In addition, there was a notable growth in youth mobilisation; many SOMA members had joined recently and those active in propagandising and agitating in the pueblos were frequently young.[[89]](#footnote-89) Graciano Antuña, president of the FSA in 1934, was born in 1903, Juan Pablo García, president of the JS in Mieres and candidate in the elections of 1933, was born in 1908, as was José Barreiro, a young teacher at the Casa del Pueblo in Sama. And they had often been active from a very young age. Manuel Marcos Estrada, born in 1908 or 1909, had joined the SOMA in 1923 and the Agrupación Socialista in 1933.[[90]](#footnote-90) The communists were similar. Ceferino Álvarez Rey had joined the Juventud Comunista (JC: Communist Youth) in 1922 at the age of 15 and recalled that communist agitators were ‘all young’.[[91]](#footnote-91) An electoral candidate and provincial leader during the Second Republic, Carlos Vega was only 33 when he was killed in January 1937.[[92]](#footnote-92) Juan Ambou, who played an important role in the revolutionary insurrection, had been born in 1909, and Manuel Grossi, a dissident communist who proclaimed the socialist republic in October 1934 in Mieres, was only four years older. Young female activists were frequently the ‘daughters of *compañeros*’, at least in the case of the socialists, and probably more widely. Although activism was predominantly masculine, female activism did increase during the Republic. Purificación Tomás, who played an important part in the Second Congress of the Asturian Socialist Youth in 1933, was only 15 when she emerged onto the political scene. She was the daughter of a prominent socialist, Belarmino Tomás, and had been schooled by José Barreiro.[[93]](#footnote-93)

Anarchists and communists in Asturias did not react with ‘hostility’ to the proclamation of the new regime, though this attitude would swiftly change.[[94]](#footnote-94) The attitude of the CNT more widely was not condemnatory; Ealham describes *Solidaridad Obrera* as welcoming the Republic and the CNT leaders as showing ‘goodwill’ to the new regime, while Casanova emphasises that the CNT, expectant of freedom which it could use to grow, waited patiently for the enthusiasm of the masses to wane.[[95]](#footnote-95) Certainly, the Republic was identified as an opportunity for growth. The Partido Comunista Español (PCE: Spanish Communist Party) was stuck in the Comintern’s isolationist and anti-reformist policy of the Third Period, whereby socialists were portrayed as the same as the bourgeoisie. Even if the communists were highly critical of the regime and its policies, this did not prevent their participation in the elections.[[96]](#footnote-96)

There was no single reaction by Catholics to the proclamation of the Republic, though it was met by ‘apprehension’ by the church, and there was a clear contrast with the positive reaction to Primo de Rivera’s coup in 1923.[[97]](#footnote-97) The bishop of Oviedo was critical of the regime, but ordered the diocesan clergy to abstain from politics and obey the authorities. This reflected a cautious attitude amongst the church hierarchy, who appeared to be fearful of the parish priests’ potential to place the church in the spotlight.[[98]](#footnote-98) Certainly, newspaper reports emerged of priests pronouncing anti-Republican sermons.[[99]](#footnote-99)

Electoral defeat, for which they were unprepared, had disorientated the monarchist and non-republican right, and resulted in two reactions: the ‘catastrophist’, prepared to use violence against the nascent regime, and the ‘accidentalist’, which disregarded the form of the regime, and thus proposing an ambiguous acceptance of the Republic to defend core values.[[100]](#footnote-100) The ‘accidentalist’ position would be pursued by the newly-formed Acción Nacional (AN: National Action)—later renamed Acción Popular (AP: Popular Action)—which withdrew from the June general elections for the Constituent Cortes in Asturias, along with the Partido Republicano Liberal Demócrata (PRLD: Liberal Democratic Republican Party), which had been re-founded from the Reformist Party. This withdrawal followed an episode of violence at a PRLD rally in Oviedo, when members of the audience who interrupted the speakers were thrown out, only for a crowd to surge into the theatre, destroy seats and later trash furniture at the PRLD centre.[[101]](#footnote-101) Political tensions were running high and the incident served as a useful pretext for the AN and PRLD to protest against the Republic through non-participation in the elections. Withdrawal probably saved the two parties from embarrassment, given that the wave of enthusiasm for the republicans and socialists in Asturias (and nationally) would only have underlined their minority status in Asturias in the summer of 1931.

Lacking major opponents and continuing to bask in Republican enthusiasm, the republican-socialist coalition easily won the June elections, obtaining twelve seats. Four went to the socialists, including the veterans Teodomiro Menéndez and Manuel Vigil Montoto, and the SOMA president Amador Fernández.[[102]](#footnote-102) There were four radical socialists, Álvaro de Albornoz (lawyer and Minister of Justice 1931-3), Leopoldo García Alas (rector of the university), Carlos Martínez (a doctor in Gijón), José Díaz Fernández (a journalist), one member of the Liberal Republican Right, Julián Ayesta, two from the Agrupación al Servicio de la República, Ramón Pérez de Ayala (a novelist) and Manuel Rico Avello (jurist, secretary of the mining companies’ association and Minister of the Interior 1933-4), and one Radical Party member, José Álvarez Buylla, who was a lawyer. Carlos Martínez recalled that most of them would travel together to Madrid on the train.[[103]](#footnote-103) The four remaining seats in the Cortes went to the separate Federal-Agrarian candidacy, which was formed by Eduardo Barriobero, Ángel Menendez Suarez, Ángel Sarmiento, Emilio Niembro. They had support in Gijón, but only managed to poll approximately a third of the votes of the republican-socialist candidacy.[[104]](#footnote-104)

The abstention of the political right prevented important sectors of Asturian society from voting for candidates who represented their views. Desires for representation led to the submission of an imaginative, spontaneous candidacy in Asturias without the knowledge of those nominated. The list included the names of cardinal Segura—who had already been expelled from Spain for his criticism of the new regime—and SCOM leader Vicente Madera.[[105]](#footnote-105) There was clearly discontent: 3,000 women in Aller were reported to have signed a protest against the separation of church and state.[[106]](#footnote-106) Only with the debate over the draft Constitution in the autumn would the provincial Catholic right start to strengthen and mobilise.

## The Historiography of the Second Republic, Radicalisation and October 1934

Between the late 1970s and 1990s a solid body of work on the Second Republic emerged, both from inside and outside of Spain, which built on the foundations set by previous scholars, such as Thomas, Tuñón de Lara, Payne, Malefakis and Tusell.[[107]](#footnote-107) This wave of studies included an important body of work on the Spanish socialist movement (Juliá, Bizcarrondo, Preston, Graham), in addition to Cruz on the PCE, and Casanova and Ealham on the anarchist movement.[[108]](#footnote-108) The political right received the attention of Montero (Confederación Española de Derechas Autonóma, CEDA: Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups), Blinkhorn (Carlism), and Ellwood, Saz Campos and Jiménez Campos (fascism), while others have concentrated on rural society (such as Cobo Romero) and Catholicism (Callahan, Lannon, Vincent).[[109]](#footnote-109) Ironically, less attention has been paid to republican parties, with the notable exceptions of the figure of Azaña (Juliá) and the Radical Party (Townson, Ruiz-Manjón), while in the 1990s there was a shift towards interest in political violence (Aróstegui).[[110]](#footnote-110) However, over the last fifteen years the Second Republic has become a less fashionable subject of study in contrast to the growth in studies of the violence of the Civil War and its aftermath, and the Francoist dictatorship, particularly its early years, and also the study of the Transition.

Nevertheless, over approximately the past fifteen years new areas of study and approaches have reflected shifting historical trends, with particular areas of growth including youth, religion, public order, violence, and gender. The study of youth politics has come particularly from Souto Kustrín and her study of the left, but also from Lowe in a volume on the CEDA’s youth organisation, the Juventudes de Acción Popular (JAP: Youth of Popular Action).[[111]](#footnote-111) Research projects led by Cueva and Montero have led to a steady stream of studies of religion and anticlericalism during the Second Republic, and which have been added to by others, such as Louzao and Thomas.[[112]](#footnote-112) Public order, given its central role and relationship to violence, has also received a degree of attention. This is unsurprising, given interest in the nature of the Republican state. Importantly, political violence is interestingly often treated separately from anticlericalism.[[113]](#footnote-113) This is due to a stubbornly narrow understanding of the ‘political’, which continues to be reduced to institutions rather than a broader understanding of power. Indeed, a recent review on the historiography of Catholicism in the Second Republic called for more of a sociological focus, in recognition of this narrow view.[[114]](#footnote-114) Gendered perspectives have provided a notable and important advance in studies both on Catholicism and the Republic more widely (Blasco, Moreno, Aresti, Vincent) and are symptomatic of an important wave of gendered histories over the last decade.[[115]](#footnote-115)

Such approaches have been fuelled by (socio)cultural perspectives, which have also influenced two important studies by Cruz on mobilisation and collective action.[[116]](#footnote-116) His attempt to weave together evidence and episodes from all over Spain is laudable; indeed, the number of regional studies continues to increase rapidly and notable additions include those by Rey and Macarro Vera, in addition to Gil Andrés and Souto Kustrín.[[117]](#footnote-117) Nevertheless, an emphasis on the classic subjects of Spanish history—elections and clientelist relationships (*caciquismo*)—persists.[[118]](#footnote-118) A particularly active group of historians grouped around Rey and Álvarez Tardío have argued in favour of a more traditional view of politics. They openly reject ‘structural interpretations’, including Marxism, ‘cultural anthropology’ and ‘linguistics’ in favour of ‘leadership groups, parties and pressure groups, the parliament, elections [...] violence’, a stance which serves to simplify rather than enrich our vision of the Second Republic.[[119]](#footnote-119) Methodologically, it is more of a step backwards than forwards. Ironically, despite these assertions, Rey himself has said that ‘we know a great deal about the Republic, about its political elites, its institutional structures [...]. In contrast, however, we have not known too much about the way these experiences were lived by ordinary citizens’.[[120]](#footnote-120) Moreover, his own work on La Mancha does emphasise, for example, collective action at local level.[[121]](#footnote-121)

Ideas such as democracy and the Republic need to be understood in broader and more flexible ways. The static notion of an immobile left unable to engage in democratic practices belies the dynamism of politics, but is characteristic of the too-frequent rigid, top-down approach. Bizarrely, this is defended in *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited* at the same time as other historians are criticised for being ‘presentist’. The airy self-defence that this will be contextualised by making comparisons with interwar democracies fails to convince. This approach is anachronistic and a poor attempt to engage with the nature of democracy and political practice in the 1930s.[[122]](#footnote-122) Taking into account collective action and the practice of politics—that is, the dynamics and exercise of power relations—in the streets, allows for a subtler analysis through a wider lens of vision that explores the lived experience of the Republic in the pueblos.

The “radicalisation” paradigm is central to the study of the Second Republic. As Santos Juliá remarked, no history of the Second Republic could be complete without the ‘phenomenon known as the radicalisation of the socialists’ and thirty years later Payne echoed the sentiment, somewhat obliquely: ‘[s]ome historians have argued that the most decisive single development in the history of the Republic before July 1936 was the shift in Socialist policy during 1933-34’. The process of radicalisation is central to his argument that the left were the culprits for the “collapse” of the Republic.[[123]](#footnote-123) However, even if “radicalisation” is agreed to be key, this does not mean that it has been theorised or explored adequately. Preston declared in 1978 that the ‘origins of the radicalisation of the Socialists have never been satisfactorily explained’, and since then a range of approaches and interpretations of radicalisation have been used, as was recently noted by Aróstegui and Payne. Radicalisation is, however, almost taken for granted, though some scholars have questioned the term (‘This so-called radicalisation […]’) or appealed for deeper analysis, as in Souto Kustrín’s call for the ‘practical consequences’ of the radicalisation of youth to be studied.[[124]](#footnote-124) Even at the beginning of the 1980s, Macarro Vera appealed for more research to understand what the radicalising of the masses actually meant.[[125]](#footnote-125) Nevertheless, “radicalisation” continues to be a way of bridging the crisis in the republican-socialist government in the summer and the preparing of a revolutionary insurrection in early 1934.

Radicalisation as a process is often characterised in a similar way. It was a chain reaction from below which funnelled up through the socialist movement, provoking a change in direction at the top. The ‘masses’ played a key role: they “radicalised” first, and a section of the socialists, headed by Largo Caballero, responded to this change.[[126]](#footnote-126) Largo Caballero was a ‘barometer’ of the UGT, who tended to follow the direction of the grassroots.[[127]](#footnote-127) As such, the process has a clear linear chronology, though historians tend to focus more on the radicalisation of the socialist movement from the summer than on the process affecting the ‘masses’. The starting point is generally summer 1933 with the change in Largo Caballero’s rhetoric, as is the case of Preston and Payne, or else towards the autumn and the collapse of the republican-socialist government and the election campaign.[[128]](#footnote-128) In terms of Asturias, Ruiz dates ‘the first experience of radicalisation’ of the SOMA grassroots to the beginning of 1932, which he seems to associate with the rupture of discipline from below.[[129]](#footnote-129) In terms of the socialist leadership, the shift in the socialist movement culminated in early 1934, when the *caballeristas* gained control of the UGT. One of the problems with the radicalisation paradigm, however, is the local-national, masses-leadership dichotomy, in which the jump is made between the two with little analysis of how this happened or of what occurred among the masses once the leadership “radicalised”. Usually the focus switches to the socialist committees, indicative of the tendency to turn the study of radicalisation into a personified process focused on Largo Caballero, once the energy and impulse for change had transferred from the grassroots.[[130]](#footnote-130)

The linearity of the narrative tends towards the simplification of a complex process, though scholars such as Juliá have tried to nuance this. He emphasises the dual message of the socialists before the elections: Largo Caballero’s radical rhetoric continued to contemplate both power through elections and if not, by force (the ‘double scenario’ in the words of Santos Juliá).[[131]](#footnote-131) It was a dynamic process and Macarro Vera’s depiction of a ‘radicalising spiral’ is more useful.[[132]](#footnote-132) Similarly, the divided nature of the socialist movement also needs to be taken into account, as does the nature of the youth movement, generally portrayed as the enthusiastic vanguard for more radical stances.[[133]](#footnote-133) The rivalry between the ‘centrist’ wing identified with Indalecio Prieto and the left wing identified with Largo Caballero is understood as central to the process of radicalisation within the socialist movement. The division ‘surfaced’ during the 1920s and became increasingly important as the party was riven in two—it would be this that would prevent the socialists from governing during the Popular Front in 1936.[[134]](#footnote-134) Heywood agrees: it was the Republic that ‘was to exacerbate’ the pre-existing ‘tensions already visible’, which ‘would culminate in the “radicalisation” of an important section of the PSOE’.[[135]](#footnote-135)

While Largo Caballero’s rhetoric is often used to measure his radicalisation, strikes are frequently taken as indicators of the masses’ degree of discontent and radicalism. This approach is, however, problematic. As Macarro Vera argued, the characteristics of strike action need to be studied, rather than simply concluding that the number meant a shift to the left, and he notes that the strikes were ‘moderate’, aimed at defending the Republic and social legislation to the point that strikers were ‘demanding that *that* State defended itself’ (emphasis added).[[136]](#footnote-136) The question needs to be asked what strikes *actually* meant for the workforce and this will be discussed in chapter I. Shubert and Barrio Alonso have a slightly different approach, explaining the process of radicalisation through the politicisation of strike action in 1934.[[137]](#footnote-137) This approach is more useful, given that it engages with the actual nature of strike action, but it too betrays a narrow definition of the ‘political’.

A variety of factors have been cited as causing the process of radicalisation, whether for the masses or the leadership. Rey recently categorised these causes into ‘defensive-reactive arguments exogenous to the socialist movement’, such as the hope placed in the Republic and fear of fascism, and ‘endogenous’ explanations, including ‘conceptualisation of power’, ‘opportunism’ and ideology, which Rey favours.[[138]](#footnote-138) Clearly, however, these factors are not mutually exclusive, particularly if separate processes by which the masses and the leadership “radicalised” are recognised. Different factors, such as the effects of unemployment or debates about whether the PSOE should participate in government, affected levels of the socialist movement in different ways, but the processes were not entirely separate. Consequently, while the cause traditionally ascribed to radicalisation—unemployment—is insufficient, it should not be completely rejected. For Blas, unemployment was key, though this had to be understood in the context of the Republic, while Ruiz made an even stronger Marxist argument, by claiming that SOMA’s attitude can be mapped directly onto unemployment figures in Asturias.[[139]](#footnote-139) Such an argument does not stand up to the chronology and the elections of November 1933 were clearly hugely important. Economic factors on their own were not enough; Shubert argues that it was the failure of the promise of the Republic to solve the mining industry’s problems that ‘provided the link between the economic and the political’, fuelling radicalism.[[140]](#footnote-140)

Other nuanced approaches have connected the deteriorating context with the obstruction of the republican-socialist reforms, leading to frustration and disenchantment.[[141]](#footnote-141) Bizcarrondo combines the factors, arguing it was the result of the ‘intensification of class struggle’ due the rightists’ ‘counteroffensive against reformism’, the economic context, the ascent of fascism and the ‘rapid deterioration of the political situation’ in early 1933.[[142]](#footnote-142) Rather lower down the ranking of causes of choice, Payne also attributes radicalisation to the threat from the left, or the socialist ‘temptation’ to move to the left due to a weak communist movement.[[143]](#footnote-143) However, a weak communist movement was no incentive to move to the left—other factors are needed to explain the adoption of a more radical stance. Given the traditionally reformist position of the socialists—and the small size of the PCE until spring 1936—there was no need for the socialist movement to change strategy, unless there was a desire to do so from within the movement itself or from the constituency from which it drew its support.

As a dynamic and relative force, the context of the Second Republic is key to radicalisation, and this has been understood by historians who have also sought to understand the implications of radicalism—understood as the shift within the socialists—for the Republic itself. The difficulty is that socialist attitudes towards the Republic were far from fixed. For Bizcarrondo, there was still a desire to make a revolution within the ‘framework of Republican democracy’ at the end of 1933, while for Heywood, Largo Caballero’s radical shift is interpreted as going beyond legal frameworks.[[144]](#footnote-144) The failure of the revolutionary movement in October 1934 makes any definitive answer as to the overall objective of the movement and how it would have developed a hypothetical one. Clearly, “radicalisation” is a loaded term. Rather than a conceptual and analytical tool, it refers to a specific process at a particular moment in time.

While, ‘radicalisation’ is understood in general terms as a shift to the left, historians have offered differing views as to what this actually means in practice. For Souto, the radicalisation of the JS can be traced through the adoption of a ‘pro-Bolshevik’ attitude and desire for a dictatorship of the proletariat.[[145]](#footnote-145) In a similar way, Uría measures radicalisation through the intensification of leftist agitation and activity, fuelled by an increasing number of images, memories and practices linked to the USSR, and after October 1934 by the invocation of the insurrection itself.[[146]](#footnote-146) However, this is a weak conceptualisation of radicalism, simply using it to connect the revolutionary insurrection to its wider context.

Clearly, understanding radicalism, even in general terms, as convergence with communism is problematic. Invoking the USSR does not equate to radicalism per se. Rather, radicalism needs to be understood as a style and mode of politics, though with some relationship to objectives. Militancy and confrontation—though not necessarily exclusion—do not preclude collaboration. Radicalism is often taken to imply physical confrontation and fights between left-wing and right-wing youths on the streets of Madrid—and in 1930s Europe more widely—are understood as symptomatic of their radicalisation.[[147]](#footnote-147) However, here radicalism is more of a description rather than a conceptual tool. Politics can become radicalised without street fighting, but radicalism does entail a culture of confrontation within which the use of violence can be legitimised, either purposefully or as part of a radicalising dynamic.

This thesis will demonstrate that understanding what radicalism meant in Asturias in the 1930s is key to developments during the Republic, particularly the revolutionary insurrection. Rather than using the term as a simple conceptual “bridge”, it will describe the dynamic process of radicalisation. While the political playing field was not fixed, radicalism, as a positioning stance was constantly redefined as it shifted towards a particular extreme. In this way, as a relative and relational process, it never ‘culminated’. There were periods of more intense radicalisation—or the activation of radical attitudes—that were eventually being funnelled towards the revolutionary insurrection, but this did not make it either a foregone conclusion or a straightforward linear process. This conceptualisation of radical is therefore both broader and contextually rooted. Radicalism is defined as a political style and mode of politics which rejected more moderate methods of conducting politics and which consequently implies confrontation, whether through physical violence or rhetorical conflict.

Without a growth in radicalism it is difficult to see how a jump towards social revolution could be imagined, let alone taken. Consequently, radicalism is about the relationship of the present to the future. It means bringing forward the (perceived) horizon of the future to the present. Attention needs to be paid to where people position themselves in relation to a revolutionary future and how the opportunity for a revolutionary movement is fashioned. As Selbin emphasises, it is people that create revolutions, not structures:

Revolutions, rebellion, and acts of resistance do not occur without the articulation of compelling stories that enable and empower people who seek to change the material and ideological conditions of their lives. People draw on the past to explain the present and predict the future, forecast a future predicted on the present, and refashion the past as necessary to fit the exigencies they face.[[148]](#footnote-148)

But it is not just a question of framing the opportunity for revolution. Revolutions need to be more than imagined and are also understood in relation to lived experience.

Radicalism has also been central in understanding the revolutionary insurrection in Asturias. The principal wave of studies of the insurrection dates from the 1970s to the 1980s, and includes those by Aguado Sánchez, Díaz Nosty, Taibo, Shubert, Ruiz, and the proceedings of two conferences held in 1984.[[149]](#footnote-149) These studies are characterised by either an empirical, politico-military focus reconstructing what happened (as in the case of Taibo and Díaz Nosty) or else by the attempt to understand the roots and context of the insurrection, whether in Asturias or more widely—as in the case of Ruiz, Shubert, *Estudios de Historia Social* and *Cincuenta años para la reflexión*.[[150]](#footnote-150) Despite Avilés’ claim that the historiography of the insurrection is ‘large’, in fact there has been little written on the causes of the insurrection since the 1980s.[[151]](#footnote-151) Recent works have reproduced previous arguments—Taibo’s re-edited study is extremely similar to the original, despite the claim it has been ‘revised, corrected and increased’.[[152]](#footnote-152) Rodríguez Muñoz’s study is similarly full of detail, but does not rewrite or alter understandings of *why* the insurrection came to pass.[[153]](#footnote-153) Other recent studies influenced by the ‘cultural turn’ have moved to analyse the ‘myth’ of October: how the events were represented for particular political ends before, during and after the Civil War, and how they have contributed to the mythologisation of ‘red Asturias’.[[154]](#footnote-154)

In studies of Asturias, radicalism seems to work upwards from below and is strongly associated with youth. This is understandable given the organisation and execution of an armed insurrection in 1934, notwithstanding a small minority of studies that place responsibility with the government and the right-wing political parties.[[155]](#footnote-155) The process of radicalisation, often implied as a progressive move towards the left (Shubert, Fernández Pérez, etc.) is, however, never properly defined. In fact, the term ‘radicalisation’ has been used so often to explain what happened to the PSOE and UGT and their members between 1931 and 1934 that it has become an accepted definition for this stage in the organisations’ development.

With regards explaining insurrection itself, Shubert identified two schools of thought which continue to be relevant today. The first emphasised the role of the socialists and the second highlighted the radicalisation of the working class. Evidently, as he notes, such explanations are not mutually exclusive.[[156]](#footnote-156) In fact, in many ways they were mutually dependent; no matter how well the socialists organised the insurrection, they needed to convince the grassroots and wider groups to follow them. Indeed, emphasising the socialists’ rhetoric or organisational capabilities is both restrictive and insufficient—other factors are needed. Avilés recently identified three such factors: the insurrection was the product of the ‘discontent of the workers’, ‘socialist political culture’, or due to a ‘plurality’ of factors. This does nothing more than reproduce Shubert’s division between socioeconomic circumstances and socialist responsibility, with the addition of a hazy characterisation of Bizcarrondo who is summarised as simply attributing the insurrection to several factors, of which socialist ‘frustration’ derived from government participation with the republicans was key.[[157]](#footnote-157)

For Ruiz, the question is much more one of responsibility; indeed, wider debates between historians about the Republic revolve around the perennial question of responsibility for the Civil War. In Ruiz’s view the responsibility for the insurrection should be placed squarely at the feet of the socialists. His *Octubre de 1934*. *Revolución en la República Española* is the culmination of the years he has dedicated to the study of the Asturian working class movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, focusing on the government, political parties and trade unions as much at national level as in the coalfields. Like Shubert, he cites socioeconomic circumstances, such as job insecurity and descending salaries, as being crucial to the outbreak of insurrection, but this does not prevent both their histories being conceptualised through the prism of the SOMA.

For Shubert, the insurrection was the product of the experiences accumulated over the previous decades, and particularly between 1921 and 1934. The ‘readiness to rebel’ was due to a combination of five factors: ‘the chronic economic crisis’, ‘the inability of the miners’ unions’ to protect the miner worker, ‘the failure of the Second Republic to provide a remedy for the situation, ‘the pessimism resulting from the rise of fascism’, and ‘the ideological rivalry [...] and the creation of the *Alianza Obrera* [Workers’ Alliance]’. Of these, Shubert highlights the unfulfilled promise of the Republic as crucial.[[158]](#footnote-158) In other words, it was a combination of political and economic circumstances in the particular context of the 1930s and, specifically, the Second Republic.

## Mining, Communities and Asturias

Presenting the events of October 1934 as the product of radicalism poses two risks. There is the danger of first repeating the stereotype of ‘red Asturias’, and second, of essentialising mine workers as innately radical. The myth of ‘red Asturias’ was forged in the wake of events of 1934 and compounded by the famous ‘silent strike’ of 1962 during the Francoist dictatorship, which has led to a stereotype of Asturias as a hotbed of firebrand radicalism.[[159]](#footnote-159) The stereotype of the ‘radical miner’ has a long history, and has been reinforced by periods of militancy and important strikes, though more recently miners have been (rightly) rejected as being radical per se.[[160]](#footnote-160) As strike figures (and other evidence) demonstrate, not all miners were radical. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that a large scale revolutionary revolt did occur in Asturias during the Second Republic and an understanding of radicalism is essential to understanding how and why it happened. Indeed, understanding radicalism as a flexible and relational process means that such events were rooted in and contingent on local circumstances and the context of the period in question.

Radicalism and mine workers have traditionally gone hand-in-hand as classic subjects of labour history. As Taylor recently noted, any contemporary study of a coalfield region or society must include, ‘*de rigueur*’, a critique of the famous Kerr-Siegel ‘isolated mass’ hypothesis which attempted to explain why certain workers, including miners, were more prone to strike action.[[161]](#footnote-161) Kerr and Siegel concluded that this was because these groups were likely to live in isolated, homogenous communities shaped by similar experiences, with strike activity ‘a kind of colonial revolt against far-removed authority, an outlet for accumulated tensions, and a substitute for occupational and social mobility’ and shaped by the ‘inherent nature of the job’.[[162]](#footnote-162) This hypothesis was heavily criticised for its ‘overemphasis on industrial characteristics’, methodology, logic and empirical value.[[163]](#footnote-163) Other scholars have tried to understand the perceived strike-prone nature of mine workers, but by showing greater degrees of flexibility in their theorisation.[[164]](#footnote-164) Nevertheless, central to these studies is an understanding that mine work had an important moulding effect on not only mine workers, but also the local community.[[165]](#footnote-165)

In the coalfields of Asturias, mining was the dominant economic activity in the 1930s. This was combined with heavy industry, particularly in Mieres and La Felguera, small workshops, and also small businesses and services, and agriculture. In total, there were 27,596 mine workers in the province in 1934, concentrated mainly in the Nalón and Caudal valleys, who worked in 900 productive mines (862 of which were coal mines). Together with the metallurgical industry they totalled 34,191 workers.[[166]](#footnote-166) Official figures from the same year state 651 women—who were banned from working inside the mines themselves—worked in the processing of coal, down from 699 in 1930 and 775 in 1929.[[167]](#footnote-167) These women were often young and received a low rate of pay on a par with inexperienced adolescents.[[168]](#footnote-168)

There was no single mining experience and not all mines were comparable. The first pits were sunk in 1916-7 and by 1930 there were 31 pits, including the Mosquitera mine owned by Duro-Felguera, which was 5.6m in diameter and 268m deep, but drift mines continued and there were no vertical shafts in Aller until 1942.[[169]](#footnote-169) Hundreds worked at the large pits in the Nalón valley (such as Fondón and Sotón) in areas which were densely urbanised. In contrast, SHE workers in Aller ascended paths each morning up to the drift mines on the mountainsides ‘with a staff in their hand’.[[170]](#footnote-170) SHE was the company which had fought the influence of the SOMA most strongly, and had opposed building a train line into the valley, preferring isolation. This had led to a more fragmented workforce and a higher percentage of mixed workers than in other areas.[[171]](#footnote-171) Indeed, vertical shafts (at the bottom of the narrow valleys) led to a more stable workforce—and a reduction in the number of mixed workers—through encouraging the formation of urbanised areas, in contrast to mountain mines.[[172]](#footnote-172) Thus the characteristics of the local mining industry shaped local patterns of inhabitation and sociability.

In addition, there were different modes of employment, including subcontracting, and occupational stratification in the mine itself, with a wide range of wages. Subcontracting was common and increased over time and into the 1930s.[[173]](#footnote-173) There were also *chamizos*—illegal mines—where small groups of workers extracted coal from a mining concession belonging to a mining company and later sold it on. Within the mines themselves mine workers were highly stratified; a census of the Cristina mine in Olloniego in 1929 detailed 422 interior workers organised into 19 categories, in addition to 143 exterior workers.[[174]](#footnote-174) Nevertheless, despite the stratification, being a mine worker could confer a powerful sense of identity, yet it was not uncommon for males to pursue extra economic activities to contribute to the family income. Ramón García recalled that his family had a bar and butcher’s, in addition to his father working as a miner, while Críspulo Gutiérrez, an important local communist, sold books and later worked for Duro-Felguera.[[175]](#footnote-175) A prominent local socialist in Sama, Lázaro Tomás, was a barber and bookseller, in addition to being a writer, while fellow socialist Herminio Vallina worked as correspondent for *Avance* and an assistant in a pharmacy and had previously in a mine as a sixteen-year-old.[[176]](#footnote-176) There was therefore a certain amount of flexibility, even if the powerful proletarian identity of the mine worker was how many defined themselves. Belarmino Tomás maintained in bar conversations that his father was a miner, even though he had also worked in other industries.[[177]](#footnote-177)

The important symbolic figure of the ‘miner’ weighed heavily, even if this did not tell the whole story of the Asturian coalfields. Traditionally, images of the miner as the ‘archetypal proletarian’ and communities as closely-knit and relatively homogenous have also been prominent in histories of mining areas, though such projections have been questioned.[[178]](#footnote-178) Historians now recognise that, as Geary has argued, ‘the occupational community of miners itself has often been more fractured than many earlier commentators imagined’, such as in terms of religion, ethnicity, gender, and politics.[[179]](#footnote-179) Consequently, as historians’ focus has shifted to “non-archetypal proletarians”, such as strike-breakers, it has been necessary to question preconceived notions of a unified, left-wing, working-class society.[[180]](#footnote-180) The classic image of the Asturian coalfields has been that of a left-wing proletarian bloc, with local conflict and divisions understood through the prism of trade unions. The underlying assumption that emerges from the failure of the Catholic mining union was that it was anachronistic. The exception to this simplifying and homogenising tendency is Shubert, who carefully traced the sharp divisions between local inhabitants and an immigrant labour force, and also stratification of the labour force itself—though again this is understood of difficulties in the ‘development [...] of group consciousness’.[[181]](#footnote-181) Indeed, it is a central premise of this thesis that divisions in the coalfields—particularly in terms of religion and politics—were an essential contributory factor to the process of radicalisation.

As coalfield societies have often been defined by the occupation of coalmining, women have traditionally been described in relation to the home: ‘[w]omen, by contrast, are depicted as primarily servicing the family, especially their sons and husbands, and as excluded from economic, political and leisure activities in the “public” sphere’.[[182]](#footnote-182) Often excluded from public life—in the sense of politics, traditional union-based labour histories have consequently omitted women from their narratives though more inclusive, community-based histories can help to counteract this.[[183]](#footnote-183) In Asturias, while female employment at the mines was low, women also worked in *chigres* (bars) or ran lodging houses, and would also have worked on the family’s land, in addition to other activities, such as coal-picking.[[184]](#footnote-184) Indeed, Dr. Jove y Canella criticised that young women were not prepared for homemaking as they spent their youth working rather than learning their domestic duties.[[185]](#footnote-185) On a provincial level, domestic service and the tailoring industry were important sectors that relied on female labour, employing approximately 11,000 and 3,000 women respectively, according to official statistics. These women were often young and unmarried.[[186]](#footnote-186)

Present to a lesser or greater degree in the coalfield studies mentioned so far is the idea of ‘community’ and community studies have been a classic method of studying coalfield societies. It is not difficult to see how the traditional representation of the “otherness” of the mine and the underground world has fuelled community-based studies about coalfield regions. The genealogy of these studies is often traced back to the classic study, *Coal is Our Life*, with its account of the cohesive, single-identity mining community, determined by the activities undertaken underground.[[187]](#footnote-187) Indeed, even if theories of strike-propensity based on ‘isolated’ communities have been debunked, the image persists of mining communities as separate, closely-knit, enclosed and independent societies, to the extent that they have been portrayed as being distinctly different to traditional constructions of national identity, which usually take their inspiration from a rural idyll.[[188]](#footnote-188) The “otherness” of coalfield society was remarked on by José Luis García García in an anthropological study of Asturias. He noted how the scholar of mining regions is asked the ‘inevitable question’ of whether s/he has actually been inside a mine, concluding that this reflects the perceived esoteric nature of the underground world, ‘whose limits, for various reasons, not everyone can cross’, and the distinctiveness of the work, which is claimed even by local inhabitants who have never actually been inside a mine.[[189]](#footnote-189) This distinctiveness which emphasises the mining industry contributes to approaches that frame subjects in binary terms, such as above ground versus below ground, home versus mine, work versus leisure, male gender roles versus female gender roles, even as the mining community itself is juxtaposed with wider society. In Asturias, the mixed workers bridge both economic sectors and it is therefore exceedingly difficult to categorise them according to the traditional, oversimplified and stereotypical representations of each ‘world’.

Community is a notoriously slippery concept. Definitions of community proliferated such that 94 separate uses of the term had been noted by 1971.[[190]](#footnote-190) Warwick and Littlejohn criticised the lack of a ‘systematic attempt therefore to revise the ideal of mining community, traditional or otherwise of *Coal is Our Life*’, and, in an effort to avoid the structuralist and deterministic approaches of previous sociologists, loosely describe community as ‘the probability of the settlement of a number of people within a locality leading to the formation of local social networks’ as well as ‘human groups which share a common local space’.[[191]](#footnote-191) Recent approaches, while recognising the conceptual minefield of the notion of community, tend to agree that there is an emotional core to community based on ideas of sharing, but which is nevertheless fluid.[[192]](#footnote-192) What is needed is an approach to community which notes their ‘constructed nature and their diversity’, focusing on how communities were imagined and expressed.[[193]](#footnote-193) Communities are not necessarily harmonic, despite the stereotype of homogenous, closely-tied coalfield communities. Smith’s study of the 1910 riots in Tonypandy analyses the meaning of community through his analysis of violence.[[194]](#footnote-194) Indeed, it is this appreciation of the conflictive relationships, contested nature and shifting boundaries of the community that is the most fruitful line of analysis for historians. Community should not be treated as a static term, but an important part of local experience. As Barron argues, community is key to understanding how people conceptualised ideas such as class, given that these concepts were grounded in the personal, day-to-day experience: ‘it is important to see the local community as simply the first building block for the imagination of wider solidarities, grounded in a historical metanarrative’.[[195]](#footnote-195) The local community was important for imagining and articulating the idea of the people; thus attention needs to be paid to the local, lived experience and how the national (and international) were interpreted in local communities. Indeed, in Spain, the pueblo, which means both town and people, is recognised as important, both as a principal space for experience and as a constitutive element of identities.[[196]](#footnote-196)

Despite the imagined nature of community, an understanding of the physical environment is essential to understanding its relationship to the expression of communities. The spatial configuration of the population in the Asturian coalfields in the 1930s was varied. The central area of Asturias—which included the coalfields and provincial capital—was most densely populated of the province.

Table 2. Population figures in 1930

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Aller | 24,658 |
| Langreo | 39,777 |
| Laviana | 11,367 |
| Mieres | 42,787 |
| Oviedo | 75,463 |
| San Martín del Rey Aurelio | 16,442 |

Source: Ministerio del Trabajo, *Censo de la población de España* [1930]*…Regiones de Asturias y León*, pp. 2-5.

Of the 75,000 inhabitants of the municipal district of Oviedo, 42,000 lived in the capital itself. In the coalfields, the population of Mieres, San Martín del Rey Aurelio and Langreo had more than doubled between 1900 and 1930, while in less heavily-industrialised Aller and Laviana the population had not risen as steeply.[[197]](#footnote-197)

The population lived in hamlets and villages that clung to the steep sides of the valleys or in the growing urbanised area on the valley floor. According to Dr. Jove y Canella, the population of San Martín del Rey Aurelio in 1923 was roughly 16,000, of whom 4,000 lived in the main urban centres and the rest lived in 124 hamlets and villages. Despite development, the municipal district was not urbanised to any great extent by 1923.[[198]](#footnote-198) Mine workers thus lived in a mixture of environments, from company housing to outlying hamlets and villages, though ‘primarily’ in the latter, and mine workers were ‘never entirely ghettoized’, and in Mieres and Laviana the ‘mining population [was] widely dispersed’.[[199]](#footnote-199) Consequently, the boundary between rural and urban was not necessarily clear.

Living conditions were difficult, due to both the scarcity of houses, but also the quality of dwellings. Barns and *hórreos* (granaries) were used by those who arrived in Asturias looking for work.[[200]](#footnote-200) The Jesuit Sisino Nevares, interested in social matters and who published a study praising the work of SHE in 1935, catalogued SHE dwellings in Aller: there were thirty-three ‘*cuarteles*’ with 465 dwellings, and 51 ‘single-family houses’.[[201]](#footnote-201) This was clearly insufficient for a workforce of 4,000 miners. In his reports on the Nalón valley in the 1920s, Jove y Canella emphasised that ‘hygienic and cheap housing’ needed to be built in Langreo, while in San Martín del Rey Aurelio, ‘*good houses are scarce* (sic)’.[[202]](#footnote-202)

Even if communities were ruralised, this did not mean that sociability was circumscribed to the pueblos and hamlets. Sama was traditionally the commercial centre of Langreo and the facilities in the Samuño valley were insufficient for the needs of the local population.[[203]](#footnote-203) Pueblos were far from static. Fiestas and weekly markets meant that there were opportunities for contact and exchange. The market in Sama was ‘one of the most important of the province’ and attracted people from beyond the municipal district of Langreo. After buying or selling women would go to pastry shops while men went to the tavern.[[204]](#footnote-204) Similarly, migration between the mining valleys was not uncommon.[[205]](#footnote-205) Mine workers frequently travelled distances to mines and did not always live in the municipality where they worked. Young women would travel to the provincial capital to work in domestic service.

Moreover, the pueblos were not insular communities, as can be seen in the enthusiasm for tourism, through mass trips, to not only put ‘man in touch with nature’ but also to forge fraternal links with other localities.[[206]](#footnote-206) 30% of the population of the capital had not been born in Oviedo, and 37% of this migrant population were from outside of the province.[[207]](#footnote-207) Bonifacio Martín and Emilio Rey, both socialist councillors in Oviedo during the Republic, were born in Valladolid and Ardón (León) respectively. Certainly, there could also be ‘hostility’ to outsiders. Shubert has traced the animosity shown towards migrant workers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[[208]](#footnote-208) Traditionally, there was a powerful idea of the pueblo or municipality as an imagined space. It was customary during fiestas in honour of the local patron saint for fights to erupt between young men from the locality and those from a nearby village or parish and such fights would continue to be the subject of ironic comments in the socialist daily *Avance* even in the 1930s.[[209]](#footnote-209) Such practices served to delineate the local community and promote internal cohesion. Reports criticising beggars are demonstrative of notions of the local community, and its association with local solidarity and mutual aid. The correspondent of a provincial newspaper violently rejected a claim that Boo (Aller) was full of beggars, retorting that Boo only had one poor person—the rest were foreigners to the pueblo.[[210]](#footnote-210) It is this powerful sense of a local community that forms a central part of this thesis through the analysis of its relationship to local politics, ideology and the Republic. The pueblos—not the corridors of the Cortes—were where the vast majority of Spaniards experienced the Republic. Understanding local dynamics and how they were imagined within other interlocking layers of community is crucial not only to understanding the Asturian revolutionary insurrection, but the Republic itself.

This focus on local dynamics determines the overall structure of the thesis itself, which begins just after the proclamation of the Second Republic in April 1931 and ends with the eruption of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936. Rather than following the classic division of the Republic into two biennia (the reformist 1931-3 and conservative 1934-5) followed by the Popular Front spring of 1936, the chapters of this thesis are divided according to natural breaks dictated by developments in Asturias. While it is certainly true that the dividing line between the two biennia—the national elections of November 1933—led to a distinct change in the composition, policies and direction of the government, and was a key turning point in the Second Republic, this only served to accelerate processes which were already underway in the coalfields.

This framework serves to underpin discussion of the causes and consequences of the revolutionary insurrection of October 1934, through a focus on tracing the development of radicalism and its relationship to ideas of community, collective action and the experience of the Republic in the coalfields. Within this, there are reoccurring sub-themes and motifs, such as strikes, boycotts and the role of rumour, violence and gender, which played an important role in the practice of politics at local level and how different groups and identities were policed. It is through such phenomena—and how this was reflected and constructed through language—that radicalism and the experience of the Second Republic can be analysed.

The first chapter explores the nature of community and political practice in the coalfields between 1931 and 1932 in order to explain the emergence of radical stances and the shape of later collective action and initiatives, such as the development of grassroots unity in 1933 and 1934. Struggles over the role of religion in the pueblos and also tenant activism formed a crucial part of the texture of local politics in 1932 and were important in increasing frustration in the coalfields. They cannot be understood without the wider context of the Republic and the social justice with which it associated. There was a perceptible shift amongst the grassroots in 1932 which is evident through the socialist move to reclaim the label of ‘radical’, though without changing their strategy of moderation. The chapter ends with the first general mining strike of the Republic begrudgingly called by the SOMA in late 1932, which actually served to legitimise dissent amongst the grassroots.

The second chapter traces the different factors that fuelled the development of radicalism between 1933 and 1934. The SOMA, far from leading radicalism, succeeded in alienating rank-and-file members, who turned to grassroots unity initiatives as a way of finding a way of moving forward. It was during 1933 that ‘fascism’ was first identified in the coalfields and anxieties about the nature of the right in local communities, which were compounded by electoral defeat in November, were a key catalyst for radical, confrontational stances. Nevertheless, the key factor in sparking and maintaining the waves of tension in 1934 was the actions of the state security forces. The inhabitants of the coalfields protested against the way in which the state’s coercive power was being used, while repression of protest led to feelings of humiliation and disempowerment.

Chapter IV analyses the revolutionary insurrection of October 1934. After an overview of the events, it engages with the insurrection in terms of the formation of a revolutionary community and imaginary, in order to explore how revolutionaries imagined themselves and the wider context as they attempted to make a revolution. The revolutionary experiment was, however, cut short and the thesis concludes with a final chapter on the period labelled here as the ‘post-revolution’, covering both the repression, ambivalence of 1935 and the return of the left and unrest during the spring of 1936. Both the repression and the events of spring 1936 cannot be understood without one another. After the exclusion of 1935, a fragile, yet assertive left appears, radically assertive and more proactive in taking action into its hands to defend its Republic.

## Source Discussion

The use of sources has been conditioned to a great extent by what has survived; many documents were either lost in the revolutionary insurrection or the Civil War. The three main sources used are the provincial press, minutes from municipal meetings and judicial investigations conducted by the authorities. All three are incomplete, but nevertheless together enable analysis of political practice, community and the meaning of politics in the coalfields and Oviedo between 1931 and 1936.

*Avance*, *Región* and *El Noroeste* were the three most important newspapers from Asturias during the Republic and every single surviving issue between 1931 and 1936 that it has been possible to locate has been read in the preparation of this thesis. *Avance* was a provincial socialist daily that appeared in 1931 and that grew to be extremely important for the Asturian left, reaching a print run of approximately 20,000 in spring 1934. Its importance was such that mine workers in Barredos even went on strike when Civil Guard seized copies of the newspaper.[[211]](#footnote-211) It is for these reasons that *Avance* is cited as influential in explanations of the revolutionary insurrection; for Taibo it is one of the Asturian ‘differences’ without which it is difficult to understand the insurrection.[[212]](#footnote-212) From the opposite side of the political spectrum was *Región*, the most important right-wing daily in Asturias and supporter of AN. *Región* was critical of the left and the Republic in general. The newspaper is important in terms of its size—it ran to sixteen pages—thus transmits an extensive amount of information about the capital and the pueblos. *El Noroeste* was traditionally the Republican mouthpiece in Asturias and was closely associated with the Reformist Party, later the PRLD. The newspaper supported the idea of a Republic, but was hostile to the socialists and backed the joint AP-PRLD candidacy in the 1933 general elections. Nevertheless, *El Noroeste* continued to publish news sent from the pueblos by communists and anarchists.

All three were effective and modern press operations. According to Uría, the ‘efficacy of *Región* as a mass means of communication could only be countered by [...] *El Noroeste* or […] *Avance*’.[[213]](#footnote-213) Concentrating on the provincial press as opposed to provincial archives is important for eschewing an overly institutional focus. A complete survey of these three titles has been undertaken to trace developments and to reconstruct, in the way that this is possible, what happened in the coalfields during the Second Republic. The press has been used, therefore, both as a source of information for the pueblos, including letters, reports and *denuncias*, and of political discourse—both via such reports and the editorials. All three newspapers had a section dedicated to regional news. Relying on a local network of correspondents, news would be sent by the correspondents—who functioned as a sort of filter—or else letters sent by individuals and groups for publication. Different and even contradictory reports could be published in the same newspaper. As such, local news—on which much of the research is focused—does constitute a voice of the ‘pueblo’, even if it did not represent the majority of the pueblo in question and was refracted by the opinion of the individual who wrote the article. For many pueblos, these short articles are the closest we can get to finding out what was happening, while at the same time providing evidence for how the press acted as tool for forming public opinion and as an instrument for mobilisation and protest.

Unfortunately, complete runs of these three newspapers have not survived. Copies of *Región* from autumn 1933 and summer 1936 are missing, as are the editions of *El Noroeste* from spring 1936. *Avance* was banned following October 1934 and its printing press destroyed. It did not reappear until June 1936. Such gaps have been filled through the use of other available material. *El Carbayón*, the Catholic daily whose company merged with *Región* in 1932, was consulted for the latter half of 1933, but did not contain material as rich as *Región*.[[214]](#footnote-214) The similarly conservative *La Voz de Asturias* has also been used to supplement information gleaned from the other newspapers. *Acción*, a conservative and Catholic newspaper created by women in 1932 and based in Gijón, has also provided information on right-wing organisations in the coalfields. *La Aurora Social*, the Asturian socialist weekly publication, was used as a source on socialism for 1931 until *Avance* appeared. *Asturias* and *La Tarde*, also socialist and which substituted *Avance*, were used for 1935 and 1936. The fact that *El Noroeste* published news sent by communists and anarchists is invaluable given that copies of the communist publications *El obrero astur* and *Aurora Roja* have not survived, except one copy of the latter, while the collection of the anarchist weekly *Solidaridad* published in Gijón is incomplete. Other publications have been cited where convenient, including *La Veu de Catalunya* for Josep Pla’s reports on Asturias after the insurrection.

The *ayuntamiento* served as a forum for debate between different groups, as an institution in its own right that was the local manifestation of the state apparatus and as a forum for the representation of local communities. The minutes from municipal meetings—*actas municipales*—have generally been underused by historians, but provide an important window into a different facet of local politics, beyond a focus which centres mainly on unions. The *actas* provide an official record of municipal discussion (though to varying degrees) and the decisions made. These *actas* have been consulted for most important municipalities studied (Oviedo, Langreo, Mieres), in addition to the Provincial Deputation and the municipality of Aller. Even then, several volumes of *actas* from the municipalities studied have not survived. Other *actas* were not consulted (Laviana, San Martín del Rey Aurelio, Siero) due to practical difficulties, though information from the meetings was published in newspapers and has been located in this manner.

The final important source base is that of official records of police and judicial investigations carried out into instances of delinquency and crime, though again many of these records were destroyed during the insurrection and reconstructed afterwards. While a comprehensive study of all records is impossible, the analysis of crime provides the opportunity to study wider processes and ideas at micro level. This enables useful insight, texture and a contrast to the broader, institutional focus of other sources. Such sources are problematic in that attempting to reconstruct exactly what happened can be difficult due to conflicting statements by participants. In fact, it is often these differing versions that can be valuable understanding mentalities, attitudes and the desire to present a convincing “truth” in a particular context.

Together, these three sources provide complementary windows onto life in the pueblos. They have been supplemented by other sources and publications, including official bulletins, telegrams from the provincial authorities to Madrid, material from the FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica: Iberian Anarchist Federation) archive in Amsterdam, and documents from the state-run coal company archive, the Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica in Salamanca and the chaotically-organised local archive of Aller. Autobiographies and memoirs, such as by Ceferino Álvarez and Ángeles Flórez, have provided interesting detail, and the accounts written in the wake of the revolutionary insurrection are extremely valuable for examining the events of October 1934. There were no newspapers produced during the revolutionary insurrection, except during the last few days. Inevitably, there is reliance on accounts written in the wake of the events of October 1934. Nevertheless, the surviving revolutionary proclamations—*bandos*—will be the subject of close analysis and discussion in chapter III.

# Chapter I

**Political Practice and Conflict in the Coalfields, 1931-1932**

Introduction

Between 1931 and 1932 the foundation of the Republic was constructed. After the elections for the Constituent Cortes in June, a clear victory for the republican-socialist coalition, a new constitution was drafted and debated over the summer and autumn before being finally ratified in December. Legislation decreed in 1931 was followed by further laws in 1932 that were projected as the necessary reforms for the modernisation of Spain and the cementing of the Second Republic. These centred particularly on labour, statutes of autonomy, agrarian reform, education, the army and the church.

This chapter analyses the practice of politics in the Asturian coalfields in 1931 and 1932, demonstrating that this was shaped by local experiences grounded in the coalfield communities themselves. It analyses unions and political action in the context of these communities, emphasising the dynamic and mutually constitutive relationships between different groups. Conceptualising the working class in a narrow manner as coalescing along ideological lines occludes the fact that workers with different ideologies lived and worked together on a daily basis. They coexisted at work, in the streets of the pueblos, and in bars and institutions such as the *ateneos*. There was frequent mutual engagement through assembly-based practices, such as during strikes, which formed a grassroots, working-class democracy, though this was fractious and frequently undermined. Nevertheless, these shared spaces and practices would be key to unity initiatives in 1933 and 1934.

Political and ideological education was gained through day-to-day experience in the coalfields, including at the workplace. The relationship between the workforce and their immediate bosses was one of conflict, and the former were willing to strike in defence of their demands, even when faced with the opposition of the union hierarchy. This combativeness of the grassroots does not necessarily mean that they were ‘radical’. Strike figures cannot be used as an index of radicalism per se; rather, strike action formed part of the standard practice of labour relations at local level during 1931 and 1932, despite the moderate and reformist stance shown by the socialist hierarchy. Nevertheless, this combativeness was conducive to the development of more radical stances.

Moreover, the particular spatial configuration of the unions and political parties meant that they were intertwined with the politics of community. These communities were not homogenous, but divided. While the left, namely the socialists, was hegemonic in the coalfields, the political right—though a minority—did exist. Divisions over religion, ignited by the secularising Republican project, were heightened during the struggles of 1932 and through such struggles competing claims to represent the local community—the local pueblo—were asserted. Part of this process included the policing of such divides, whereby individuals and local groups would take it upon themselves to control behaviour.

1932 saw the emergence of a growing radical stance, which needs to be understood in relation both to the struggles in these communities over the role of religion, and dynamics within the left itself. While in 1931 the socialists had tried to tread a line of both defending the Republic and highlighting that it was not “theirs”, the following year saw both a more militant identification with the Republic and the embracing of the previously rejected labels of ‘radical’ and ‘revolutionary’, terms previously used to mock anarchists and communists. The re-appropriation of this language is evidence of a shift amongst the grassroots towards radicalism, though this did not mean the rejection of the Republic. Rather, it was the redefining of the Republican project in more radical terms in the face of resistance and opposition and the first general mining strike called by the SOMA at the end of the 1932 would actually serve to legitimise such radical stances.

## The Republic, Community and Local Left-wing Political Practice

The relationship between the socialists and the Republic—and the role that the former should play in the latter—was complex and contradictory, and evolved during the Republic. This was not aided by divisions within the socialist movement, which would become increasingly marked.[[215]](#footnote-215) The majority, however, were in favour of participating in government.[[216]](#footnote-216) Recent studies, often identified with a ‘revisionist’ turn, have shifted towards being more critical of the socialists’ democratic credentials, though often from a relatively narrow and traditional political focus. Such criticism of socialist attitude(s) to democracy fails to engage with its complexities in the context of the 1930s. These studies emphasise, somewhat contradictorily, both the instrumental (or transitory) nature of socialist support for the Republic and their patrimonial ‘sense of ownership’ for the Republic.[[217]](#footnote-217) The only way of combining these ideas is through the argument that the socialists believed they were the only ones capable of carrying out the (social) reforms Spain required. Even then, at best this was a weak sense of ‘ownership’ of the regime and needs to be nuanced. Socialism was not incompatible with the democratic framework of the Republic, even if socialists felt that the Republican regime was not *theirs*. They emphasised both the necessity of collaboration in government and the ‘consideration of the Republican regime as a platform to advance towards socialism’.[[218]](#footnote-218) This should not be interpreted as a lack of commitment to the new regime. Reforms could be carried out through the Republic, but, even then, they did not lead to the socialisation of society or the means of production.[[219]](#footnote-219)

The fine line stressed by the socialists that the Republic was the basis or starting point for socialist revolution at some undetermined moment in the future reflected the socialist movement more widely, including in Asturias.[[220]](#footnote-220) For Cándido Barbón, socialist councillor in Mieres, the socialists were ‘the best and most enthusiastic defenders of the Spanish Republic’, but the regime ‘is still bourgeois and we are socialists’.[[221]](#footnote-221) González Peña, the SOMA leader, echoed the sentiment at the SOMA congress in May 1931, describing the Republic as a ‘giant step’ forward, though ‘it would be a mistake to suppose that the Republic will satisfy the working class’ complete aspirations’.[[222]](#footnote-222) But the fine line was difficult to maintain, particularly in the face of opposition to the regime, as socialists positioned themselves firmly in the centre through criticising what they presented as extremism on both right and left. Thus they reinforced a vision of moderation and support for the Republic: socialists were responsible, sensible and showed restraint above all else.[[223]](#footnote-223) This was necessary to cement the Republic and formed part of a longer SOMA (and UGT) tradition. Indeed, in September 1931 SOMA ordered striking members back to work, warning that otherwise they risked jettisoning ‘the policy that has always served [the SOMA] as a method of struggle and is the reason why our organisation has reached such prestige and standing that it unquestionably enjoys today’.[[224]](#footnote-224)

In short, despite their rhetoric, socialist loyalties were closely bound up with the Republic. For the working class to abandon the Republic would be dangerous, as an article in *La Aurora Social* explained shortly before the June 1931 elections.[[225]](#footnote-225) Furthermore, it seems doubtful that the fine, nuanced line was present amongst the working class more generally, who identified strongly with a regime that promised social justice. Indeed, opposition served to cement grassroots identification with the Republic. In late 1931, a new Agrupación Socialista was formed in Blimea and members declared themselves ‘prepared to defend the Republic’, which took place against the backdrop of the rightist campaign for ‘revision’ of the Constitution.

In contrast to self-proclaimed socialist moderation, communists and anarchists were labelled as ‘extremists’, whose attitude was dangerous, unrealistic and immature in the context of the Republic. Their radicalism and revolutionary identity and attitude were ridiculed; there was ironic criticism from Moreda of the ‘authentic revolutionaries’ who were said to be trying to infiltrate the UGT while a meeting at the Casa del Pueblo in Sama was interrupted by individuals labelled sarcastically as ‘the real revolutionaries [*muy revolucionarios*]’.[[226]](#footnote-226) Revolutionary posturing was thus generally ridiculed or criticised by socialists in 1931, though the odd article in the socialist press did try to define being a revolutionary as not being about calling strikes. This was a responsible and moderate—and therefore acceptable—form of being revolutionary, in contrast to the communists and anarchists.[[227]](#footnote-227) It would be in 1932 that the situation would change and the socialists would overtly contest other groups’ claim to revolutionary identities.

The socialist attitude of moderation and restraint was tested almost straight away when the anarchist and communist SUM called a general mining strike to demand the return of the seven-hour working day inside the mines. The strike was a battle for syndical hegemony and, understanding it as such, the company bosseswere quite content to let them fight it out.[[228]](#footnote-228) Even before the strike began, the SOMA complained that the SUM was coercing its members and distributed flyers telling miners to go to work in order to ‘guarantee the stability of the Republic’, portraying the strike both as an attack on the Republic and on the SOMA.[[229]](#footnote-229) The difference in strategy was clear: the SOMA preferred negotiation with the government to obtain the shorter working day, whereas the SUM threatened a strike if the mining companies did not directly implement it.[[230]](#footnote-230) The different attitudes made the strike both a barometer and litmus test of each union’s strength. As a general strike it failed to mobilise the whole workforce. On the first day the civil governor estimated that 7,000 were on strike and 20,000 working.[[231]](#footnote-231) While some SOMA members and even SCOM members did initially go on strike, the conflict became deadlocked, remaining relatively stable and reflecting geographical syndical strength.[[232]](#footnote-232) It became a battle of figures and rumours, with manifestos distributed in the streets and vehement personal defences printed in the newspapers.[[233]](#footnote-233) In the end, the strike failed in its objectives, though an agreement was reached with the Minister of Labour for a national conference, with the participation of the SUM and SOMA, to consider proposals for the mining sector. The SUM, however, was beset with infighting between its anarchist grassroots and communist leadership.[[234]](#footnote-234) The PCE actually banned its members from attending the national mining conference, which left the socialists with a free hand. Though the conference was unable to reach an agreement, the socialist Minister of Labour decreed the seven-hour day from 1 September anyway, and the SOMA revelled in its victory while the company bosses reacted with anger.[[235]](#footnote-235) The SUM eventually imploded and divided in two in the autumn.

During the June strike, violence was used in sabotage tactics against those who went to work in an attempt by strikers to extend the reach of the stoppage.[[236]](#footnote-236) Firefights erupted when those who continued working responded in kind, with Turón a main focal point for the violence, which often took place away from urban areas, in the mountains or around the pits themselves.[[237]](#footnote-237) The most serious incident occurred on 11 June when a train carrying mine workers on its way from Figaredo to Turón was targeted.[[238]](#footnote-238) The use of violence was unusual, described as ‘unknown until now’ in Asturias by the provincial socialist press.[[239]](#footnote-239) Violence was both symptomatic of the failure of the SUM to extend the strike and of the tensions between the unions, but the use of violence also indicates the ‘existence of community ties, not their disintegration’, as Radcliff argues in her study of Gijón. Violence was part of a spectrum that expressed the ‘volatile intimacy that ran from rejection to solidarity’.[[240]](#footnote-240) The violence employed in the SUM strike was indicative of the coexistence of different groups in the pueblos, and the shared spaces they inhabited. While evidently in each ideology had its areas of strength, such as anarchism in La Felguera, this should not lead to the conclusion that trade unions and political parties were easily delineated geographically. In Turón, frequently cited as a communist stronghold, there were also anarchists and socialists and a sizeable number voted for rightists in the elections of 1933.[[241]](#footnote-241) Different ideologies cohabited in the pueblos and mines.

Moreover, while there was virulent and violent internecine conflict, the SOMA-SUM cleavage was not necessarily expressed at local level in the same way as it was projected by the union leaderships. At grassroots, the situation was much more complex. Press reports hint at local collaboration, or at least attempts at it. The SUM in Tudela Veguín had proposed a joint SUM-SOMA struggle for the seven-hour day in August and a month later an assembly was reportedly attended by members of the SUM, SOMA and ‘neutrals’ to discuss the punishment meted out by Hulleras del Turón due to strike action.[[242]](#footnote-242) When local strikes were called, debates took place within the wider unions as to whether the strikers should be supported. The entangled nature of strikes could clash with a sharper ideologically-moulded perspective from outside. During the Tudela Veguín cement factory strike, a strike had also been called at the mines of Hulleras del Veguín, with conflicting reports as to whether it was controlled by the CNT or SOMA.[[243]](#footnote-243) A joint UGT-CNT solidarity committee had been created for both conflicts. A proud socialist defended the initiative; it had not been formed to ‘create a united front’—in reference to the communist policy of uniting workers “from below”—but to ‘raise funds from all of the pueblos of the province’.[[244]](#footnote-244) But both anarchists and socialists in Tudela Veguín were under pressure from their respective organisations.[[245]](#footnote-245) The situation at grassroots was not as clear-cut as from the outside, and the greater freedom with which they operated challenged the ideological and organisational operation of unions, at least in the view of the SOMA leadership, for whom politics needed to be exercised *vertically* through the union itself. Leaders frequently called on the rank and file not to follow the appeals for strike action by “external elements”. While these individuals may have been outside the SOMA, they were workmates of SOMA members in the mine itself.

As a consequence, while syndical divisions were important, they were not necessarily the determining factor in the local configuration of political organisation and action. Local relationships, such as ties of kinship or residence, were also important. Indeed, it is important not to over-emphasise union politics. Likewise the same must be avoided for the urban-rural dichotomy. The rural world was not necessarily disconnected from local industry. Even with the decline of the mixed worker described in the introduction, the fact that many continued to live in small villages—not only the urbanised valley floors—suggests that many mine workers continued to be embedded in the rural environment. Anecdotal evidence from violent incidents supports this: a quarrel in Paniciri (Langreo) between an individual and his brother-in-law over the demarcation of land ended with death of the former—he was described as a ‘worker’, which could mean a mine worker, and his attacker was a miner.[[246]](#footnote-246) A violent incident involving mine workers in 1934 took place at an *esfoyaza*—the traditional communal practice of stripping leaves from maize.[[247]](#footnote-247) Thus it is logical to assume that despite the decline of the mixed worker, the situation was more complex than it may have first appeared.

Furthermore, the specific configuration of politics and unionism in the coalfields had important effects. Local sections of trade unions and political parties were based in the pueblos, rather than at the place of work. Many of the pueblos were small, meaning that organisations were often fragmented. La Cerezal (San Martín del Rey Aurelio), in which a JS section was created in summer 1931, was said to have only 80 inhabitants.[[248]](#footnote-248) In the wider municipality of San Martín del Rey Aurelio, which had a population of less than 17,000 in 1930, there were 19 individual SOMA sections.[[249]](#footnote-249) The anarchist SUM, reformed after its implosion in 1931, was similarly formed by small sections of between 25 and 115 members. This contrasted with the CNT metal, construction and ‘various trades’ unions in La Felguera, which claimed a membership of 3,000, 183 and 500 respectively.[[250]](#footnote-250) This specific spatial configuration had important effects. It meant that the mine-working inhabitants of a particular pueblo did not necessarily work together and, correspondingly, different unions coexisted at the same workplace. Thus, union membership, place of residence and workplace were not divided along clean lines, but rather intersected, meaning that contact between individuals of differing ideologies was frequent. As Fernando Rodríguez wrote when criticising the CNT’s attempts to throw out communists, which he attributed to an attempt to prevent anarchists listening to communists, ‘they forget […] that we communists do not live on the moon, that we go to the workshop, mine and factory to work alongside our exploited companions, and it is there that we think of ways of mitigating our state of slavery’.[[251]](#footnote-251) Antonio López, while rejecting that he had ever been a communist, declared that the accusation was not a ‘dishonour’ for him, but the ‘contrary’, as several friends of his were communists and were fighting for the same cause.[[252]](#footnote-252)

The bitterness of inter-syndical rivalry thus emerged both at the workplace and in the pueblos. The intimacy of daily life meant that the ‘enemy’ was not faceless, and other solidarities, such as those based on neighbourhood or class ties, could be mobilised across syndical boundaries depending on the circumstances. The communist Sabino Menéndez recounted an incident in Ciaño-Santa Ana in which there was a ‘small argument about current Spanish politics’. Sabino touched a drunk socialist from Sama on the arm ‘in a gesture of friendship’, but he replied ‘[d]o not touch me, you’ll dirty me’. In response, Sabino challenged him to a debate about the socialists’ relationship to Marx and Pablo Iglesias—the founder of the Spanish socialist movement—to show ‘that my hands are neither dirty nor do they infect’.[[253]](#footnote-253) This indicated that politics at local level meant cohabitation with the ‘other’. Personal defences sent to newspapers are similarly revealing of both the fractiousness of politics and the intimate knowledge that individuals had of each other. A critical reply by ‘a group of miners from La Mariana, Mieres’ to an article by Benjamín Escobar demonstrated an intimate knowledge of him, including where he had worked, the number of times he had been expelled from the PCE, and even his relationship with foremen at work.[[254]](#footnote-254) Similarly, an article in *Avance* from SOMA ‘member number 6’ in Moreda detailed the history of a fellow miner, his history within the SOMA, contacts with the SUM, and resulting intrigues, going as far back as 1924—again indicating similar intimate knowledge of the other individual.[[255]](#footnote-255) It would be this cohabitation and mutual knowledge which would be the foundation of future unity initiatives in 1933 and 1934, and of joint strike action at the workplace.

This intimacy was not limited to the place of work or the streets of the pueblos. Coexistence in formal—including *ateneos*—and informal spaces of (male) sociability, such as bars and brothels, provided the opportunity for frequent contact between local inhabitants, including political and syndical rivals. This intimacy fomented shared experiences which, through mutual recognition and appreciation could be the foundation for solidarity and co-operation, transcending political and union differences. However, such intimacy could also fuel conflict. Bars were ubiquitous—Dr. Jove y Canella claimed that there no hamlets without a bar in San Martín del Rey Aurelio—and essential spaces of male working class sociability.[[256]](#footnote-256) Bars were where political discussion and argument took place, and were recognised as such, despite traditional, moralising criticism from the socialists, for whom bars were places of vice and rival spaces of sociability to their own Casas del Pueblo.[[257]](#footnote-257) Nonetheless, socialists did not limit themselves solely to the Casa del Pueblo—the ‘red bar’ in Sama was a meeting place for communists and the left in general.[[258]](#footnote-258)

Individuals also socialised in political, trade union and cultural centres, such as Casas del Pueblo and *ateneos*, which formed a dense network in the coalfields and contributed to a thriving associational culture. These important institutions had been built up over the previous decades and continued to expand during the Republic.[[259]](#footnote-259) In 1931 the SOMA opened its new centre in Ciaño-Santa Ana which measured 1,526m2 and included an assembly hall, theatre, co-operative, and library.[[260]](#footnote-260) The membership was large: the Ateneo Popular in Mieres, the rival of the local socialist Casa del Pueblo, claimed more than 1,000 members in 1932, while the Ateneo Obrero in Turón had 800.[[261]](#footnote-261) These centres offered classes, sports clubs, shows, choirs and talks on different subjects.[[262]](#footnote-262) Their number and size points to the centrality of these institutions in the daily life of the coalfields. While principally male, women would also frequent the *ateneos*, where talks were organised that addressed women’s health issues and their rights.[[263]](#footnote-263) Theatre groups (*cuadros artísticos*) and choirs were formed by young men and women and performed theatre, music and variety shows.[[264]](#footnote-264) Such theatrical performances helped to mould and cement identities through social and political criticism, including the propagation of anticlerical ideas.[[265]](#footnote-265) Clearly, female spaces of sociability did not correlate completely with those of men, nor did they necessarily function in the same way. Washing places were traditionally where women worked and talked; articles in *El Noroeste* addressed to women and criticising the political situation focused heavily on deficiencies in washing facilities and the water supply, and indeed women would organise to petition for improvements.[[266]](#footnote-266)

While Casas del Pueblo were socialist, *ateneos* cut across syndical and political lines, and were often projected as politically neutral institutions. There was no clear line between politics and culture, and criticism of their politicisation was frequent. Elections at the Ateneo in Turón in 1932 were said to have raised more ‘political passion’ than municipal elections and there was a call for the heat to be taken out of the political debates as ‘in the Ateneo there is room for the extreme left and extreme right and centre’.[[267]](#footnote-267) The relationship was fractious, but ideologies did coexist in these institutions as different groups competed for control. Nevertheless, conflicts were bitter, contributing to an unruly democratic practice at grassroots level through engaging in practices such as elections.

Political disputes did not solely take place over the leadership of the *ateneo*. Political collisions were at the very centre of the practice of politics at the workplace and on the streets. During strikes, rival manifestos were printed and distributed in the streets, engaging with the views of the other union(s) through criticism and refutation. *Controversias* were held, whereby representatives of different unions and parties engaged in formal debate in front of a crowd.[[268]](#footnote-268) This ritualised political combat appears to have frequently descended into bitter conflict, as revealed in a surprised report on an impromptu debate at a CNT rally in Barros (Langreo), which highlighted the good-natured atmosphere and that all three speakers had shaken hands: ‘a wonderful example of magnanimity [...] if only it was always thus!’.[[269]](#footnote-269) Members of different political parties and unions attended one another’s events, whether to listen, or to sabotage or subvert it.[[270]](#footnote-270) Meanwhile, an event at the Casa del Pueblo in Blimea on 8 May presided over by the socialist José Estrada, was interrupted and ended with ‘heated arguments’, with several obliged to make statements to the authorities for slander, including the communist Críspulo Gutiérrez. The communist report blamed the situation on the refusal of the socialists to allow a *tribuna libre—*a shared debating platform.[[271]](#footnote-271) While the demand for a *tribuna libre* was an attempt to ‘capture’ the audience from the socialists through verbal combat—the communists placed great emphasis on the oratorical skills of their members—it is interesting that individuals such as Gutiérrez, who was a high-profile local communist, were allowed into the socialist event in the first place.[[272]](#footnote-272) Nevertheless, the fact that such practices existed points to a rich grassroots “democratic” practice of politics, even if this was frequently attacked and undermined. This was a democratic culture based not on consensus, but dialogue and confrontation, yet which could nonetheless also yield co-operation. Politics was certainly waged in a conflictive and combative way at local level, but this did not necessarily mean intransigence. There was an openness and respect which meant that Benjamín Ortiz, a Cathedral canon, was well treated and applauded when he spoke at the Ateneo Obrero in Turón, while another cleric, Maximiliano Arboleya, the leading advocate of social Catholicism, was also invited to Turón and gave a talk entitled ‘The Catholic Church in the face of human misery’ to a full crowd.[[273]](#footnote-273) This was the same place where two years later the most violent episode of anticlerical bloodletting would take place during the revolutionary insurrection and in its wake Arboleya reflected on how well he had been treated in Turón only eighteen months earlier.[[274]](#footnote-274)

Workplace assemblies were an integral part of the practice of politics, particularly during strikes. Mine workers would meet to discuss issues at hand and elect strike committees. These representatives would meet with trade union officials and company representatives to resolve strikes. A strike at the Cantil mine in July 1932 was solved in accordance with a solution presented by the mayor, which was accepted by a workers’ assembly.[[275]](#footnote-275) Clearly affiliation played an important part: elected representatives were union members. During a conflict at Carbones La Nueva in August 1933, the workers’ assembly discussed whether they wanted the SOMA to negotiate on their behalf or whether they preferred an independent committee. A compromise was proposed which, while accepted by the SUM-CNT (the anarchist-affiliated SUM), was rejected by the SUM-ISR (the SUM affiliated to the Internacioanl Sindical Roja—the Profintern) and in the end the SOMA Executive was chosen as the sole negotiator.[[276]](#footnote-276) The practice of assemblies went beyond formal work organisation. In the summer of 1932, *chamiceros*, individuals who were mining illegally, came under pressure from the Civil Guard in San Martín del Rey Aurelio. In defence of their interests they came together to organise assemblies and elected a committee, which included communists and a socialist.[[277]](#footnote-277) The practice of assemblies was widespread, to the extent that in the context of the lengthy Duro-Felguera strike in 1933 there was criticism that only one assembly had been held and that this was undemocratic.[[278]](#footnote-278) Such criticism was harsh given the circumstances of the conflict. The security forces were targeting the local CNT as it refused to comply with Republican legislation, but there was nevertheless a grassroots emphasis on a certain kind of direct democratic practice based on accountability. Criticism from the socialist hierarchy of the ease with which strikes could be called and organised at local level is probably indicative of the ability of mine workers to organise at the level of the pit, which clashed with how unions were supposed to function. In sum, there was an informal (and unstable) democratic practice of politics—within the left—which was nonetheless open to criticism and attempts to undermine it. The union hierarchy did not solely determine the development and experience of the strike. Such democratic practices continued over the following years and were an important mechanism through which politics was practised, *within* the left. In April 1933, 400 former SHE workers who received an unemployment subsidy held a meeting to discussing their situation, which was described as taking place ‘in the greatest democracy’.[[279]](#footnote-279)

This practice of politics and the struggles and experiences of everyday life shaped the understanding of politics among the working class left. Political education took place this process of socialisation into politics at the mine, home or local Casa del pueblo. It was these experiences that mediated how individuals understood themselves as participants in a class struggle. Engagement with unions and political groups increased during the Republic. Unions reorganised and new sections were opened. Female trade unions were formed in 1931 and female socialist militancy grew throughout 1932.[[280]](#footnote-280) However, not all on the left were in favour of or proactively sought female political action; for example, a woman from Laviana complained that the local Agrupación Socialista did not let women join.[[281]](#footnote-281) Politically-active women had to struggle against misogyny within the left, in addition to wider community pressures and traditional attitudes towards gender roles—this will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

Not that members or sympathisers of trade unions or parties necessarily had a decent grasp of theory, not least because of poor Marxist analysis of the socioeconomic situation in Spain by the 1930s.[[282]](#footnote-282) The PCE only ‘addressed the matter [of training new recruits] with real urgency’ from 1936.[[283]](#footnote-283) Life as a communist for many was more about *tertulias* and political discussion than what the party said, though, emphasis was placed on ‘discipline’ and on the moral conduct of members. Indeed, Cruz suggests that members understood reports of Soviet propaganda about communist improvements better than the actual concepts of ‘soviets’, ‘worker and peasant government’.[[284]](#footnote-284) And Souto notes that the new affiliates of the JS during the Republic had ‘limited political training’.[[285]](#footnote-285)

There was shared enthusiasm for the USSR, to varying degrees, on the left—Uría notes that it is difficult to isolate a ‘communist culture’ from the rest of the left and communist ‘sectarianism’ did not mean that there was not ‘confluence’.[[286]](#footnote-286) The ‘Friends of the USSR’ association created in Mieres in 1933 highlighted the ‘heterogeneity’ of its committee while the Mieres Anti-War Committee was drawn from the Radical Socialists, Communists, the Ateneo, Círculo Cultural de los Pontones, the choir of the Casa del Pueblo, the Metallurgical trade union and the Asociación Coral Instrumental Mierense.[[287]](#footnote-287) Similarly, during 1931 and 1932 *Avance* reprinted the socialist journalist Julián Zugazagoitia’s articles on Russia, feeding the curiosity of its readers, and in late 1932 young socialists published extracts fromLenin, claiming that his position was more in line with the socialists than the PCE.[[288]](#footnote-288)

Practices such as civil weddings and funerals served to reinforce political and syndical identities. Civil marriages and burials were individual and collective reaffirmations of secular values, consciously projected as ‘democratic’, modern, progressive, and as victories over the forces of reaction, particularly the church. Young attendees were exhorted to follow the example of marrying in a civil ceremony.[[289]](#footnote-289) Such ceremonies mimicked liturgical forms even as they subverted them: at a communist wedding in Sama portraits of Lenin and Stalin stood on a red cloth—evoking an altar—and those present sang *The Internationale*.[[290]](#footnote-290) These alternative practices, which even included ‘red’ baptisms and confirmations, were performative reaffirmations of anticlerical identities and of left-wing ideology.[[291]](#footnote-291) Civil marriages were part of broader, everyday practices that reinforced bonds within the left and the local community. Fernández Pérez notes a shift in the performance of left-wing identities at funerals in 1934. Now, in addition to ‘secular prayers’ and singing *The Internationale*, and uniformed ranks raised clenched fists.[[292]](#footnote-292) While it is difficult to measure such changes with the sources available, this seems likely, as it correlates with the adoption of more aggressive and radical stances.

Gestures of solidarity were frequent, whether through the organisation of shows variety acts were organised to raise money for the unemployed or to build *ateneos*, visits to mines on payday to raise strike funds for striking miners or the collections held at cemetery gates to raise money for those left in a desperate situation by the death of a family member.[[293]](#footnote-293) In 1933 a collective barbershop opened in Mieres offering free haircuts to the unemployed while municipal workers in Sama decided to give 1% of their wages to those out of work.[[294]](#footnote-294) Solidarity was frequently very immediate and personal in nature. Lists of contributors’ names to strike funds and other initiatives were often published, which was both a source of pride and of social pressure. In February 1932 the strike committee at the Molinucu mine published the amount raised, where it had come from and who had raised it ‘for the satisfaction of the *compañeros* who contributed a sum’.[[295]](#footnote-295) One worker complained that his name appeared next to the sum of 0.25pesetas, when he had actually provided a peseta—the confusion was due to two workers having the same name.[[296]](#footnote-296) This practice of solidarity would be later implemented to pay for the fines imposed on *Avance* by the authorities in 1934; the newspaper would print lists with the names of the hundreds of individuals supporting it.[[297]](#footnote-297)

In addition to the press, talks at *ateneos* and Casas del pueblo, and discussions in bars such practices provided the working classes with a degree of ideological education, which enabled them to understand themselves as participating in class struggle, imagined from their own circumstances, though potentially in quite a vague manner. Most books read at the *ateneos* were not political theory, but literary texts, though with an increasing ‘internationalisation’ in terms of taste, and a certain perceived ‘radicalism’.[[298]](#footnote-298) The most popular books at the Ateneo in Mieres in 1931 were novels, though two of the most popular authors, Galdós and Blasco Ibáñez, were well-known for their anticlericalism.[[299]](#footnote-299) In politico-cultural terms, radicalism was thus a loose idea that formed part of left-wing identities and was shaped by these institutions and practices, such as mutual solidarity.

There was an enthusiasm for culture—as attested to by the network of cultural centres and libraries—which was closely tied to understandings of political action. Culture was an emancipatory tool; the ‘weapon’ of the time was the ‘book, the newspaper’ declared ‘a son of Langreo’ in his defence of the children’s library in Sama.[[300]](#footnote-300) Indeed, the Ateneo Popular and school library were inaugurated in La Canga (Langreo), a hamlet with a population of just 26 people, while the Ateneo itself already claimed 28 members.[[301]](#footnote-301) Creating cultural institutions was a duty: from Riaño (Langreo), a call was made via *El Noroeste* for help in creating a lending library, a labour of ‘culture and progress’.[[302]](#footnote-302) Politics and culture were not only understood as mutually constitutive, but also as participatory and linked to action. After a talk in the Ateneo Obrero in Turón, the attendees agreed to send a telegram to the prime minister demanding the abolition of prostitution as there could not be ‘equality, fraternity and liberty’—the traditional Republican values—while the practice continued to exist.[[303]](#footnote-303) The attendees were inspired to lobby for change at national level, consciously linking what they had heard to the wider Republican project, while municipal and provincial authorities provided subsidies for *ateneos* and cultural ventures, as they also sought to build more schools.[[304]](#footnote-304)

This active exercise of politics built on traditions of collective mobilisation in the pueblos, such as petitioning or the formation of associations to create schools. In Blimea, the inhabitants had been fighting the *ayuntamiento*’s attempt to collect taxes on the school they ran themselves for years.[[305]](#footnote-305) There was a degree of autonomy and self-help in the pueblos, which also served as a platform to defend the interests of the local community, as they saw it, by putting pressure on local authorities. According to a report in *El Noroeste*, the whole pueblo of Las Borias (Langreo) went to the *ayuntamiento* in Sama to demand water. The mayor explained that he had been negotiating with Duro-Felguera and that the company would study the matter.[[306]](#footnote-306) This was the performance of the pueblo—the local community—at local level. The occupation of the streets—part of the repertoire of collective action of trade unions and political parties—was part of the performance of the ‘people’, who were empowered by the idea of the Republic. It was the ‘people’ who had brought the Republic and were invoked as the ‘driving soul’ of the new regime.[[307]](#footnote-307) There was a very clear sense that the construction of the (or a) Republican project was a collective task; it had been ‘the work of the people’ though the ballot box, and this would be fundamental to the understanding of the new regime.[[308]](#footnote-308) The language of the ‘people’ and ‘citizenry’ infused politics, as it had done over the previous year.[[309]](#footnote-309) This feeling of empowerment served to cement the strong feeling of identification with the Republic at local level, which was patent in the attitude demonstrated by the public attendance at the meetings of the municipal council of Langreo. The first session was met with enormous enthusiasm and curiosity according to *El Noroeste*.[[310]](#footnote-310) In Mieres, *Región* remarked that the meeting room was not large enough for those who wanted to attend the council’s sessions.[[311]](#footnote-311) The *ayuntamiento* was the representative of the local community—the ‘people’ at local level. Indeed, the idea of the people was projected onto the local community, though there was clearly no unified idea of what the people or the local community was. Competing ideas of the people fuelled competing conceptualisations of the Republic that formed an integral part of political struggle during the Republic.

Mutual defence at the level of the municipality brought diverse associations and political groups from Laviana together to protest over the Raigoso waters. The construction of the water supply between Laviana and Langreo had been beset by funding problems and local struggles. It would supply water from the Raigoso river to Langreo from Laviana, and the socialists of Langreo were firmly behind it.[[312]](#footnote-312) In 1930 the work began and problems emerged with Laviana.[[313]](#footnote-313) The *ayuntamientos* struggled to agree on compensation for Laviana and tension increased, to the extent that civil guards were deployed to protect construction workers, though the situation—with protestors present and a strike declared in Laviana—did not escalate.[[314]](#footnote-314) A telegram signed by twenty-three organisations, including shopkeepers, socialist and SU sections, the Ateneo and the Agrupación Musical Laviana, was sent to the Ministry of the Interior demanding the removal of the civil governor after the use of the civil guard.[[315]](#footnote-315) It was an impassioned defence of their water—their right, for which they should be justly compensated and which should be negotiated without the need for force. They defended the collective interests of the municipality to the extent that the government was labelled ‘dictatorial’.

Old demands were reactivated in the context of the Republic. In Las Piezas (Langreo), houses were sinking into the ground. Complaints had been made during the dictatorship, but nothing had been done. Now, in a Republic, justice had to be done and the civil governor was called on to solve the problem.[[316]](#footnote-316) The Republic carried the promise of change for local communities, with the new context interpreted by citizens as an opportunity to put forward and obtain their demands. As *their* Republic, they would be listened to and change would be enacted. In July 1931 the correspondent of *La Aurora Social* remarked that the *ayuntamiento* of Aller had been inundated with demands for facilities to be built, while six months later *Avance* commented that the pueblos had ‘awoken’ and freed into disputes and fights over roads and schools after having been under the yoke of oligarchies. It was an ‘explosion of sleeping desires, of repressed impulses’.[[317]](#footnote-317)

Political action was not restricted to the trade unions and *ayuntamientos*. In 1932 there was a wave of action in the coalfields over rents, which was stimulated by a decree from December 1931 which meant that tenants could request rent reductions in certain circumstances.[[318]](#footnote-318) The resulting legal situation was unclear, and the Ministry of Justice was forced to clarify the legislation in March.[[319]](#footnote-319) Activism in Asturias was different to the rent strikes the year before in Barcelona, where rent activism had begun before the Republic, developing into a massive rent strike in the summer, though both built on local traditions of community activism.[[320]](#footnote-320) Direct action was employed in Barcelona due to the immediacy of the issue, the lack of ‘faith in Republicans’ and the ‘notoriously intransigent landlord class’.[[321]](#footnote-321) In contrast, the Asturian movement responded to the legislation of December 1931 and faith in the Republican regime. *Ligas de inquilinos—*Tenants’ Leagues—were established to negotiate the rent reductions, illustrating the capacity at local level in the coalfields for speedy organisation.[[322]](#footnote-322) Such Leagues built on pre-existing associational cultures and mobilisation on behalf of the needs of the pueblo. Women were particularly active, building on previous traditions of community activism and confronting political authorities through articulating claims for justice.[[323]](#footnote-323) At meetings in Trubia and to appoint a district committee in Foncalada (Oviedo) women were in the majority, and two women were appointed to the committee in question.[[324]](#footnote-324) In Aller and Trubia, organisers spoke in the name of and appealed to working class mothers: ‘As women, as proletarian mothers, it hurts us to see our children barefoot and poorly-fed because of the excessive RENT THAT WE PAY (sic)’.[[325]](#footnote-325) Nevertheless, orators at meetings were male, which is indicative of male predominance in more formal political structures.

The intense wave of activism was based on reaching a negotiated agreement, and thus preserving a sense of community, while simultaneously trying to reduce rents; this was in contrast to a more combative strategy followed by the CNT tenant activists in Gijón, who preferred direct action.[[326]](#footnote-326) The struggles were more about social justice in local communities than waging class warfare. The Sociedad de Inquilinos in Mieres emphasised that it tried to reach agreements ‘harmoniously’ with landlords, and declared its pride at having negotiated lower rents while maintaining good relationships with the owners.[[327]](#footnote-327) Further ‘friendly’ agreements were reached; the Sociedad also alluded to landlords who, ‘badly counselled, having seen the latest order, believe that previous decrees will no longer be valid, to the point that they naively think justice will not be done’. The Sociedad would make sure that it was.[[328]](#footnote-328) Though there were attempts at ‘friendly’ agreements, it was clear that resistance would be met with a more forceful and confrontational stance. There was criticism, too, in Oviedo of ‘intransigent’ landlords.[[329]](#footnote-329) In Laviana, one landlord had been punched. Not only had he refused to follow recent legislation and the ‘correct indications’ of the Tenants’ League, but he had actually announced a rent rise.[[330]](#footnote-330) His assailant was arrested and a crowd gathered outside the prison to protest at the manner of the arrest, before going to the house of the landlord, who took refuge in the home of the socialist deputy mayor. Ironically, the landlord was then accompanied to his home by the secretary of the League for protection.[[331]](#footnote-331) But stiff opposition would be met with resistance. A rally in Aller was projected as a ‘movement against the rough [*cerriles*], rude and malicious landlords’.[[332]](#footnote-332) And the situation was becoming increasingly tense in Aller, with lawyer of the Tenants’ League forced to defend himself against accusations of coercion; he declared that combatting privilege did not mean he was an ‘anarchist’.[[333]](#footnote-333) Indeed, some cases went as far as the courthouse and the League in Aller took pride in having ‘triumphed in every case dealt with by the justice system’.[[334]](#footnote-334) Though it was confrontational, the activism was reformist, using institutional channels, though with the threat of further pressure if justice for the local community was not done.

Justice for tenants was understood as part of the wider struggle for social justice that was widely identified as a fundamental part of the Republican project.[[335]](#footnote-335) Consequently, the failure to deliver justice could be understood as undermining the Republic itself. A judge was criticised in *Avance* for his ‘conduct’ which was understood as ‘aimed at discrediting a Republican decree in order to discredit the Republic itself’.[[336]](#footnote-336) Justice was thus about far more than social legislation; it was intimately linked to the idea of democracy and the Republic itself. *El Noroeste*’s editorial on the first day of 1932 proclaimed that ‘[t]he Republic is democracy and democracy properly understood addresses the emancipation of man from moral and economic servitude’.[[337]](#footnote-337) This was justice for the many, not the few; *La Aurora Social* explained that not only had justice awakened, but so had the masses.[[338]](#footnote-338) In her analysis of the trial of a young woman from Trubia, Nerea Aresti has demonstrated the ‘state of expectation and hope of the people, particularly of women, in the Republican legal and judicial system’ and how the absolution of the young woman was associated with the Republic and what it represented.[[339]](#footnote-339) It is not difficult to see how the understandings of Republican justice could be shaped by older, traditional understandings of local justice, fairness and the moral economy of the local community.

Tenant activism was community-based and built on a pre-existing tradition of political activism and local mobilisation through the use of petitions, demonstrations and newspapers. In Langreo, an ‘altruistic’ association called Sociedad Luz, Agua y Comunicaciones had been formed by local citizens in 1922 to improve the infrastructure in the municipality, taking ‘progress’ to the pueblos. Local political groups were not isolated from this context; they were often heavily involved. The socialists convened a meeting of tenants at the Casa del Pueblo in Oviedo in mid-May and agreed to work with the leaders of the Tenants’ League in Oviedo to protest to the authorities.[[340]](#footnote-340) Blanco de Tapia, a socialist councillor in Oviedo, was a lawyer for the League and Lorenzo López, a socialist and future mayor of Oviedo, was president of the Provincial Federation. Trade union and party politics were intimately intertwined with community politics, building collective ideas of fairness and equity. In Laviana, the socialist organisations articulated the local desire for public washing facilities and requested the *ayuntamiento* to take action.[[341]](#footnote-341) Some, empowered and enthused by the Republic, enacted the Republic from below. By autumn 1931 there were claims that the socialists were building the Republic in the pueblos precisely by taking infrastructure issues into their own hands. In Baiña (Mieres) the Agrupación Socialista organised the reinstallation of street lighting in a different part of the pueblo ‘for the better service of the pueblo’ and negotiated the opening of the school ‘at the obligatory time’ and without religious education.[[342]](#footnote-342) This was the articulation of the idea of the Republic in the local community by those who understood themselves as the regime’s stalwart defenders.

The *ayuntamiento* was petitioned by local inhabitants. Of particular concern were the activities of the mining companies. Agricultural workers in Nembra (Aller) repeated their appeal to the *ayuntamiento* to intervene in their dispute with Industrial Asturiana. They complained that the company ruined fields, cut water supplies and installed infrastructure in a dangerous manner.[[343]](#footnote-343) The authorities tried to ‘right the wrongs’ of the past while also expecting companies to contribute to the construction and repair of infrastructure. A councillor in Langreo proposed that the mining companies paid for a new road as it was due to slagheaps that the old road had disappeared. The council decided to inform the companies that slag could no longer be deposited on roads or in rivers.[[344]](#footnote-344) This was based on a moralising discourse whereby the companies had a responsibility to compensate for the material effects of their activities on the local environment and communities. Indeed, collaboration almost seemed to blur into dependence, or taking advantage of the companies: the *ayuntamiento* of Aller asked SHE to build washing facilities in Caborana, ‘as all its users are workers of the company’, while promising to sort out the water and look after the facilities.[[345]](#footnote-345) The emphasis was on negotiation: committees were formed and meetings arranged to try to reach agreements. The relationships appear to have been cordial on the whole, even as the *ayuntamientos* were attempting to assert their power and authority. In Mieres, the *ayuntamiento* decided ‘not to oppose’ a new power line that crossed a road, as long as it met the standards required and the pylons were not placed too close to the buildings.[[346]](#footnote-346) Paradoxically, this led to a situation in which private companies were expected to provide public services and were roundly denounced for anything that adversely affected public services, particularly in Langreo. In August in Mieres, councillors demanded that Fábrica de Mieres take responsibility for ‘depriving the *vecindario* of the *pueblos* of water’ and reminded the company that the *ayuntamiento* was not going to solve the problem.[[347]](#footnote-347) There had already been complaints about polluted water in the nineteenth century.[[348]](#footnote-348) In the 1920s, Dr. Jove y Canella noted that the water supply in Langreo was an ‘urgent’ problem: water was needed both in terms of ‘quantity’ and ‘quality’.[[349]](#footnote-349) Water had used to be ‘abundant’ in San Martín del Rey Aurelio but supplies were disappearing due to mining activities.[[350]](#footnote-350)

The association of the Republic with justice and the particular characteristics of the coalfields meant that it was unsurprising that attention should turn to the mining companies. The companies provided work and services, such as company shops (*economatos*), housing, transport and a degree of medical care. During the preceding decades, companies had invested in infrastructure and welfare, providing services that would be associated with the state. SHE had built the barracks for the local Civil Guard and subsidised water pumps in Aller.[[351]](#footnote-351) At the same time, the industrial activities meant that companies were also held responsible for the practical problems with infrastructure that local communities faced. Springs in the villages disappeared due to mine work, slagheaps impeded transit along roads and rivers were polluted. The water supply was a ‘constant and pressing problem’.[[352]](#footnote-352) Similarly, the companies were the object of *denuncias* and attacks on the exploitation of workers and the dangerous working conditions in the mines. The relationship of the mining companies to local communities was a complex one and the stage was set for an attempt to re-assess the role of the mining companies in the context of local politics.

In the context of the Republic, *ayuntamientos* asserted their authority as a state body which the companies had to respect, even as they relied on the companies for the supply of public services, such as water. A harder line was taken with companies that were less receptive to the assertion of Republican municipal power. In November, the *ayuntamiento* of Langreo agreed to fine Carbones Asturianos 75 pesetas per day, in accordance with the law, unless the company sorted out the problems caused by a slagheap.[[353]](#footnote-353) In Aller, the *ayuntamiento* discovered that SHE had been using water from the general supply without paying tax and demanded the bill be paid, including eighteen months of back payment.[[354]](#footnote-354) This was not a case of singling out SHE; the *ayuntamiento* was clamping down on tax avoidance more widely.

The local authorities—and communities—depended on the companies, even as they criticised them. This extended to education. Education reform was a cornerstone of the Republican project for the republican-socialist governments and would be the principal method through which Spain would be modernised and Republican citizens created, guaranteeing the future of the regime. A ‘profound cultural transformation’ was planned.[[355]](#footnote-355) The secularisation of schooling, in line with the secular character of the Republic, was a key part of this. State education provision had historically been weak and the state had relied on religious communities to make good the shortfall.[[356]](#footnote-356) In the coalfields, the situation was complex, with different networks of schools: state or national schools (‘a scarce number’), municipal schools, private schools, often subsidised by the *ayuntamiento* or the mining companies, with the latter usually confessional, and schools set up by political parties, trade unions, and even community initiatives.[[357]](#footnote-357) There were schools run by associations, such as the Sociedad Cultura e Higiene of Tiraña (Laviana), those at the Casa del Pueblo or the rationalist school in La Felguera. These schools as well as religious schools had often been subsidised by the municipal authorities.[[358]](#footnote-358) According to official figures, over 5,000 children received education at schools run by religious personnel in Aller, Langreo, Laviana, Mieres and San Martín del Rey Aurelio in the school year 1932-3.[[359]](#footnote-359)

The companies ran confessional schools and it became apparent in 1932 that they would trenchantly resist pressure to provide secular schooling. In 1931, however, religion was not, as yet, so central and there was no full-frontal anticlerical onslaught at local level. While compulsory religious education symbols were banned, this did not have much of an effect, nor did it provoke protest among the clergy.[[360]](#footnote-360) Some images were removed, as in Mieres, though *El Noroeste* reported that by October they had been re-instated and religious education continued, which was criticised by the newspaper.[[361]](#footnote-361) In May the municipal authorities in Aller had managed to negotiate a compromise with a teacher so that religious education would be taught at the end of the day, in order for it to be optional.[[362]](#footnote-362) The only bitter conflict occurred in the anarchist stronghold La Felguera, where Duro-Felguera workers demanded the removal of the de la Salle brothers who staffed the company school and their substitution by secular teachers. The company refused, citing the voluntary nature of education. Duro-Felguera maintained the de la Salle brothers did not violate the government’s ban on teachers who had no qualifications. Duro-Felguera was unable to do the same in the case of a school run by Dominicans (who had been introduced in 1923, violating a promise made to the socialist *ayuntamiento* in 1921) as they lacked teaching qualifications and the company closed the school in autumn 1931.[[363]](#footnote-363) It was apparent that the choice was confessional schooling or no schooling at all. The company was prepared to use the state’s legislation to defend its own interests, but it took a hard line in order to defend confessional education. There had previously been struggles over Dominican schooling. In 1930, workers had fought the extension of Dominican teaching to another school.

While there was a strong left-wing labour movement, with an underlying anticlerical streak, and the left was in power, this hegemony should not imply homogeny. Divisions did exist; there were rightists and Catholics in the coalfields. The possibility for conflict over the role of religion existed, but it was the debate over the Constitution in autumn 1931 that marked the beginning of the process. By December, *Avance* declared it was receiving *denuncias* of parish priests and their criticism on a daily basis and a month later *El Noroeste* claimed that ‘[a]lmost every day commissions from the pueblos arrive at the civil governor’s office to denounce the conduct of parish priests’ for their comments during sermons.[[364]](#footnote-364) The appeal for the authorities to intervene indicates the concern for the power and influence of the parish priest. With increased Catholic mobilisation in the pueblos in 1932 the identification of the local church as resisting the Republic would be cemented. Disputes over religion would become much more acute in 1932 and Catholic resistance contributed to a more radical stance within the left in the coalfields.

## Mine Work, Struggle and Strikes

Mine work was lived as a struggle, both to win coal from the earth and against the immediate bosses. In the mine, the workforce was under the control of the foremen (*capataces*), while mining deputies (*vigilantes*) organised the workforce and measured piecework. Both deputiesand foremen saw themselves both as victims of the company and workforce. The former, for example, were fined for being generous by the companies, while workers believed that deputies took incorrect measurements, with the corresponding effects on wages.[[365]](#footnote-365) Strikes frequently erupted due to disagreements and conflicts with foremen, and these could be serious, spreading from their mine of origin to other pits, as occurred in Siero in November 1931.[[366]](#footnote-366)

The press was frequently used as a forum to denounce the actions of foremen and deputies. Celedonio González of the María Luisa mine was labelled a ‘dictator’ and accused of punishing workers who worked to contract.[[367]](#footnote-367) A foreman from the Candanal group was criticised by a ‘humble Asturian miner’ from Hueria de Carrocera (San Martín del Rey Aurelio), who wished ‘to call the attention of everyone—company bosses, authorities, workers’ organisations’ to the foreman’s endangering mine workers and use of ‘words with workers which are every day further from what we workers deserve’.[[368]](#footnote-368) Concerns about safety were combined with issues of dignity and respect. Workers were very sensitive to the way their immediate superiors treated them. In Tolivia (Laviana) a mine worker in question had been injured and hospitalised. Feeling unwell when he left the hospital, he informed the foreman that he would not be returning immediately to work. The foreman ‘replied in a rude way, laughing at him by saying that if he was not useful for work he should go to the office “to shuffle papers”’.[[369]](#footnote-369)

Conflicts and disputes with foremen were about correct and proper treatment, and status and control. In other words, they were about an individual and collective sense of dignity and how this related to the imposition of authority in the confines of the mine. The situation in the mines was frequently tense and the principle of enforcing authority at all costs led to strikes and violent incidents, as at the Fondón pit in Sama in July 1934. A miner, named Corsino, had attacked the foreman, José, who claimed that Corsino had refused to do what he had been told. Corsino explained that José had threatened him with a pistol and there was a recent history of tensions between the two. From the statements given to the authorities it seems that the origin of the incident was that José had ordered Corsino to fill six wagons, but Corsino only had time to fill one and refused to fill the rest.[[370]](#footnote-370) Both the level of tension in the mine, and the determination of the foremen to impose their authority are clear, to the extent that a foreman threatened to use a firearm underground when faced with mine workers who staunchly stood their ground in terms of what they believed to be their rights and responsibilities.

This corrosive working relationship, and the underlying threat of violence, was not limited to the mines. In August 1931, a foreman threatened a worker on the Ujo-Collanzo railway construction works and proceeded to draw a pistol when the worker defended himself. He was dissuaded from shooting by two other workers, who were dismissed alongside the worker at the centre of the incident. As a consequence, two hundred went on strike to demand their readmission—there was a clear collective sense of what was right and wrong.[[371]](#footnote-371) This daily experience of injustice and the hard line taken to impose authority by foremen fuelled strikes as the company considered ‘that giving in to such demands meant the undermining of discipline’.[[372]](#footnote-372) As a consequence, these conflicts remained in the workplace for mine workers and their immediate superiors to resolve. They show the fractious relationships and the potential for violence in the mines over the organisation of work and a collective sense of right and wrong.

Mine workers were willing to fight back against the rigid imposition of authority from above, but they did not launch protest strikes at every opportunity. Workers at the Sorriego mine expressed their pride in having avoided a conflict for years due to their own ‘good sense’, despite the ‘provocations’ of the foremen.[[373]](#footnote-373) Nevertheless, the conflictive relationship fuelled divisions and resentment among a self-respecting workforce which took pride in skilled, honourable work. An individual declared in *El Noroeste* that ‘I am not a strike-breaker […] I live off my manual work and I fight for democracy’.[[374]](#footnote-374) Work identities, with an emphasis on pride and dignity, were channelled into political identities; the experience of work moulded the understanding of politics and the class struggle. In early April 1931, the SUM’s response to a mining accident described the incident as having left ‘eight *compañeros* out of the struggle’.[[375]](#footnote-375)

Consequently, it was through the everyday struggles at the mine that the class struggle was understood. Artisanal pride blended with proletarian identities. Being on the frontline was valued and foregrounded in personal defences sent to the press. For example, Severino González defended himself from accusations printed in *El Noroeste* by recounting that he had ‘always [had] to work to look after my family and myself [and] always [had been] on side of the weak’. He had sacrificed himself for others and not used his job for his own benefit.[[376]](#footnote-376) Such letters detailed their own personal trajectories in relation to past strike action and projected a powerful sense of identity in relationship to the company, mine and wider society. A letter from a socialist published in March 1933 went as far back as the strike of 1917 to legitimise his position and reject accusations that he had been a communist.[[377]](#footnote-377) Recounting personal militancy was a form of legitimation. José Prieto left the SUM critical of the ‘intrigues’ and of the orders which came from outside the union, but nevertheless declared ‘I am not leaving the Union (sic) to abandon the struggle, no; I cannot imagine life without struggle’.[[378]](#footnote-378) The combativeness of the mine workers and their relative propensity to strike needs to be understood as a response to this struggle to control over work practices.

Such pride and confidence was clear in the frequent criticism of the mining management, who were blamed for problems not only at the mines, but also in the mining industry as a whole. Litanies of mistakes and mismanagement were frequently published in the provincial press. SHE’s Dos Amigos mine was criticised for having a ratio of three deputies to thirteen hewers. The author of the article was not surprised that the company had increased production, as in his view it was needed to pay the high wages of the deputies.[[379]](#footnote-379) Such articles asserted a claim to control over the organisation of work, though criticism of mining companies went beyond the confines of the tunnels and the galleries of the mine to the company itself. In April 1932 a letter published in *Avance* recounted the ‘thorny path that [IA workers] had followed’. The article went back to 1925, detailing dismissals, reductions in wages and piecework rates, the use of subcontracts, a ‘crisis’ in 1929 and 1930, followed by days lost regularly in 1931 because of ventilation problems and a reduction of the working week. The article pinpointed the ‘economic catastrophe’ as due to ‘bad management’. This had affected the price of coal ‘and now it is us workers who have to pay’.[[380]](#footnote-380) While workers identified themselves as participating in the class struggle, the problem was not identified as the broader market forces of capitalism, but the day-to-day management of the mine, which would be solved by worker ownership. The lack of confidence in the company contrasted with the confidence in the mine workers’ collective capability to solve the problems.[[381]](#footnote-381) Collective contracts, whereby mine workers would take charge of the running and organisation of the mine and sell coal back to the company, were frequently proposed as a solution to the problems faced by the industry.[[382]](#footnote-382) Collective contracts would mean the removal of the company’s representatives—the foremen and deputies—as they were perceived as the real problem in the mines.[[383]](#footnote-383) Such a strategy was indicative of a strong sense of confidence in being able to solve the problems of the mine through collective self-organisation, and the workers were supported in this by the authorities and the SOMA. Alonso Mallol, the civil governor, supported the workers in their attempts to take control of the mining activities of the Carmona mine in Mieres for two or three months.[[384]](#footnote-384) Further collective contracts followed in 1933.[[385]](#footnote-385) This collective sense of self-respect and autonomy, which could be deployed combatively in strikes, was even appealed to by José María Moutas, one of the AP leaders in Asturias, who called on mine workers in Turón to act according to their conscience, not because ‘someone told you to’, during a talk at the Ateneo.[[386]](#footnote-386)

This grassroots combativeness was evident in labour relations in the mines during 1931 and 1932. When legislation was rushed through to decree the seven-hour day in the mines from 1 September, confusion emerged as to the exact length of the working day and strikes erupted over disputes over fifteen, ten or even five minutes, such as at the Riquela mine in Turón.[[387]](#footnote-387) SUM members in Santo Andrés (Turón) stopped work after seven hours, following SUM orders, despite company edicts which decreed a seven hour ten minute day. However, a SUM official explained that company was right and the Santo Andrés section protested strongly against the humiliation its members had suffered.[[388]](#footnote-388) The situation was such that the arbitration committee—the Comité Paritario Interlocal de Minería—confirmed the seven hour ten minute day, including a twenty minute break.[[389]](#footnote-389) Nevertheless, mine workers were clearly willing to challenge the authority of the company and strike immediately over a matter of principle.

The SOMA leadership were already conscious of both the combativeness and potential indiscipline of the grassroots at the beginning the Republic. Members in Olloniego were asked not to strike unless they went through the ‘official channel [*vía reglamentaria*]’ in early May, while two weeks later, at the SOMA congress, the Executive Committee modified the statutes of the union with regards to strikes: local sections could not call strikes, though after debate regional committees were authorised to do so.[[390]](#footnote-390) This had already surfaced in 1921, when the SOMA leadership, faced by more militant grassroots, argued that it was their responsibility to call strikes, not that of local sections.[[391]](#footnote-391) Not only does this demonstrate the leadership’s impulse to restrict grassroots militancy, but it also indicates different conceptualisations of strike action. The leadership understood strike action as a strategy with potentially important political effects and which should therefore not be used lightly. They preferred moderation, ‘which was not just the policy of the S[O]MA, but the cornerstone of socialist conduct throughout the whole country’ and emphasised the use of ‘institutional resources’, such as arbitration committees.[[392]](#footnote-392) This reformist strategy of the socialist movement was focused on growing the UGT as an organisation and using the state to do so; it had been the strategy followed by Largo Caballero during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and continued under the Republic with Largo as Minister of Labour.[[393]](#footnote-393) The willingness of other unions to strike was used to reinforce the socialists’ sense of moderation and restraint. Communists in Aller, for example, were accused of striking ‘for sport’.[[394]](#footnote-394)

Nevertheless the SOMA rank-and-file did go on strike in 1931 and 1932. In November, a conflict erupted at the Saús mine in Siero over a deputy. The conflict spread and soon 2,200 were on strike in Siero in solidarity.[[395]](#footnote-395) The SOMA declared the solidarity strike to be ‘improper’ and ‘unlawful’, and demanded a return to work. The union emphasised due and proper process; the arbitration committee was the mechanism for the resolution of conflicts.[[396]](#footnote-396) But the strike continued, and it was only at the end of the month that the socialist report could note approvingly that mine workers were returning to work, having realised they were ‘playing into the bands of the communist elements of the CNT (sic), who only justify their existence with the declaration of disorderly strikes’.[[397]](#footnote-397) Socialism was presented as order in contrast to communist and anarchist disorder.

Strikes were frequently attributed to external groups and individuals who “sowed confusion” amongst the workforce. A strike at the Mariana mine in Mieres was attributed to ‘irresponsible elements’ though the socialists did, however, claim credit for its resolution, in opposition to the SU.[[398]](#footnote-398) A report from Olloniego blamed a conflict on ‘anarcho-communists’ and, reflecting on the position that UGT members should adopt, rejected socialist involvement’.[[399]](#footnote-399) Silverio Castañón, a young socialist, warned against ‘confusionism’ in Turón and appealed to socialists to combat those ‘elements who disturb the workers’ and to foment ‘serenity and wisdom’ amongst them.[[400]](#footnote-400) But the projection of these ‘elements’ as external and “sowing confusion” amongst what were, by extension, unsuspecting miners, appears extremely implausible given the intimacy of the shared spaces of the mining valleys, the streets of the pueblos, and the workplace itself. ‘Troublemakers’ needed to present a convincing narrative in order to stimulate strike action. The question arises, therefore, as to the extent to which this was wilful incomprehension by the SOMA. Attributing strike action to “external elements” who had fooled the grassroots was a way of both recognising that rank-and-file socialists did strike while also condemning the action and reinforcing the anti-strike message. Youthful radicalism was dealt with in a similar manner. Cándido Barbón, socialist councillor in Mieres, blamed ‘people of little or no responsibility’ for inciting the youth to strike in Turón.[[401]](#footnote-401) Blaming youthful or foreign influences served to draw a line, excusing those who had gone on strike, through condescending admonishment. It legitimised the protests as the expression of youth even as Barbón delegitimised them for being unrepresentative and external—almost—to the union. The combativeness of the grassroots in pursuing demands or protesting through strike action was rejected by the socialist leadership, who preferred a moderate approach and saw such strikes as unnecessary radicalism. Nevertheless, it is clear that there was a greater predisposition amongst younger workers to go on strike.

Strikes themselves were complex phenomena. They emerged for different reasons, lasted for varying amounts of time, mutated (at times) to include different demands, involved different unions and levels of intervention and at times had recourse to violence. Disputes were frequent in 1931, but were often localised and relatively short—particularly in the mines—and originated in the workplaces themselves. Longer strikes were more characteristic of other industries, such as a construction strike in Turón which lasted nearly a month, or the national telephone strike, during which phone lines were blown up in the mining areas.[[402]](#footnote-402) Though there was the exception of the lengthy conflicts in Tudela Veguín. The majority of *mining* strikes were short and localised, but illustrate a widespread willingness to use strike action.

Wages were frequently at the centre of strikers’ demands in 1931, and not just in the mines.[[403]](#footnote-403) A strike in the María Luisa mine over piecework rates was quickly resolved when the company increased the amount paid per metre advanced.[[404]](#footnote-404) Wage demands were often grouped together with others. The SUM in Tuilla provided Duro-Felguera with a list of demands, while at the Lláscares mine the SU declared itself proud of obtaining a wage rise of 5 to 7.84 pesetas for labourers and preventing the dismissal of 25 workers.[[405]](#footnote-405) A list of demands was presented by workers at the Molinucu mine backed by the threat of strike action, which was then carried out. In principle an agreement was reached, though the company refused to pay the lost days of work.[[406]](#footnote-406)

In contrast, spontaneous strikes erupted in response to more immediate incidents, such as accidents, unpaid wages or punishments by foremen. Though spontaneous, strikes were often controlled, lasting for twenty-four hours. In January 1932, the SU in Barros (Langreo) wanted a twenty-four hour strike to coincide with the trial in Turón.[[407]](#footnote-407) In June mine workers at the Sotón pit refused to enter the mine in protest at accidents. A SU official praised the firmness of the mine workers, who refused to work despite the exhortations of the SOMA officials. Seventeen had died in the mine since April 1929.[[408]](#footnote-408) These strikes were a collective, symbolic protest and were part of a longer tradition of stoppages due to fatal mining accidents. After an accident, mine workers would not work the following day, when the funeral would take place.[[409]](#footnote-409) This enabled the communal performance of grief, but also had echoes of protest. Indeed, this protest could grow depending on the circumstances of the deaths. In Boo (Aller), a strike in 1932 over a fatal accident turned into a prolonged conflict in protest at the negligence of SHE.[[410]](#footnote-410) For workers there was a clear logic to different modes of strike action, whether as gestures of protest or in defence of demands.

There was frequent recourse to strike action because it worked, and not only in the mines. While a conflictive strategy, those on strike were often open to negotiation; at the firebrick factory in La Felguera strikers agreed to a wage increase and 25% of lost wages instead of the requested 50%.[[411]](#footnote-411) A strike in Olloniego over a deputy was solved by the SUM, who managed to negotiate his transfer to a night shift elsewhere where he would no longer ‘be in charge of workers’.[[412]](#footnote-412) It also seems that strikes were often necessary to force the companies to negotiate. *Pinches* (amongst the lowest paid assistants) at the coal washery at the Mosquitera mine went on strike and the company closed the mine. The following day, the company had ceded ‘something’ to the *pinches*.[[413]](#footnote-413) But it was not just about obtaining wage increases or improving conditions; strikes were also used to force the company or contractor to enforce legal agreements or the payment of wages. In Langreo, bakers announced a strike as employers were not adhering to the conditions set by the arbitration committee, though the mayor’s negotiations meant it was averted.[[414]](#footnote-414) In a metalworking workshop in Sama, wages were below those fixed by the arbitration committee and strikers demanded an increase in wages, which were as low as 0.75 pesetas.[[415]](#footnote-415) Strike action was thus used to put pressure on companies who disregarded such rulings. Strikes were not necessarily radical, but a way of forcing the implementation of change.

Not only were strikes aimed at forcing the company to act, they were also a strategy to appeal for outside intervention in the dispute at the workplace. Appeals were often made to civil governor, mayors and also the unions to intervene in conflicts. Clearly, such intervention depended on the strike, the attitude of the strikers and the authorities themselves: Celso Fernández, the mayor of Langreo, was particularly active in negotiating with mine workers and mining companies to solve conflicts. In June 1931 mayors, particularly Fernández, worked unsuccessfully to find a solution to the general strike called by the SUM, despite the fact that the demands of a seven-hour day and of wage rises were issues for the government and companies respectively.[[416]](#footnote-416) This was not, however, universal. For example, the metalworking anarchists of La Felguera did not want the governor to intervene in their sit-down strike over dismissals in July 1931.[[417]](#footnote-417)

Similarly, strikes could be used to force the SOMA to negotiate a solution. Thus, while the SOMA was reluctant to call strikes, it was predisposed to intervene in negotiations and so mine workers called strikes to force or encourage the union to intervene.[[418]](#footnote-418) Striking was effective, as the SOMA regularly intervened in conflicts which emerged from the workplace, as in the cases of delayed payment of wages in Olloniego, at the Llamas mine, and to solve a strike at the Mariana mine 1931.[[419]](#footnote-419) Similarly, in July 1932 strikers’ representatives met with the Regional Committee to try to negotiate a solution to the conflict at the Cutrifera mine in Aller, which was due to a lowered piecework rate.[[420]](#footnote-420) Despite socialist caution and the SOMA’s anti-strike stance, it is clear that SOMA members did go on strike and the union intervened to help them. A strike in Barredos (Laviana) in July 1931 over a foreman was actually called by the SOMA section and socialists even initially participated in the June 1931 general mining strike called by their syndical rivals, the SUM.[[421]](#footnote-421) But it was precisely SOMA’s preparedness to intervene and its success at negotiating which encouraged strike action. This relationship between the SOMA and strike action explains the prevalence of combativeness and dissent amongst SOMA members who nonetheless remained within the union. Possessing a SOMA card was seen as a shrewd move because the SOMA was effective in solving disputes in favour of the workers during the Republic, whereas previously in 1927 members had left in droves when SOMA was unable to defend the seven-hour day.

Strikes seemed to be the only effective weapon against companies unwilling to negotiate and a union leadership which refused to call strikes. Strikes by the grassroots were not necessarily envisaged as an attack on the Republic, but as a mechanism for obtaining demands, such as an increase in piecework rates, and strikes could even have seen themselves as contributing to the construction of the regime, in that they were fighting for the social justice with which the Republic was associated. However, stoppages were more than just the resolution of labour matters through conflictive means. Industrial action played an important role in reaffirming identities and the struggle to assert power at the workplace more generally—even as they were moments of tension—given that strikes were a performance of collective power which could serve to cement work-based identities and meant the deployment of a range of practices, including assemblies and the raising of strike funds.[[422]](#footnote-422) Everyday struggles in the mines with foremen and over working conditions were probably not seen through the prism of the Republic itself, though protest strikes could be interpreted as *aiding* the regime, as in the case of the strike in protest at the attempted coup against the Republic led by general Sanjurjo in August 1932. This was a military uprising with civilian backing and took the traditional form of a *pronunciamiento* in which the state of war was proclaimed by the local military authorities and a manifesto issued. Sanjurjo’s manifesto ‘proclaimed the establishment of a dictatorship’ and was sparked by the direction that the Republic was taking, including the ‘“dismemberment”’ of the country—a reference to Catalonia’s statute of autonomy, which would be signed into law a month later.[[423]](#footnote-423)

But strikes were also an erosive practice in that they affected not only the company, but also the local community, the *ayuntamiento*’s income and day-to-day family life. Longer strikes put the community under pressure. Shops often provided goods on credit, but if there seemed to be no end in sight shopkeepers mobilised in protest. Thus strikes were not just a bruising and conflictive practice of politics, but had more corrosive potential more widely for the local community. As a strategy they were unpredictable and potentially divisive. The support of the local community was appealed to in order to confer legitimacy on local conflicts. In Tudela Veguín in the midst of the cement factory strike a meeting was held so that the pueblo could judge the conduct of the strike committee, considered by the contractors to be ‘revolutionaries, troublemakers who the pueblo hate’. At the meeting, attended by 400 people, support was ratified in the strike committee and the contractors were criticised.[[424]](#footnote-424) Consequently, strikes had far greater reach than just the workplace or the workforce itself. While strikers may have been male, women were also heavily involved, including involvement in picketing. Labour issues mobilised and affected the wider community.

Strikes were complex and varied phenomena, involving contrasting attitudes towards what they meant as a strategy. Nevertheless, it is clear that they formed part of the conflictive practice of politics in the coalfields and demonstrate the combative manner in which workers defended their collective sense of dignity, pride and autonomy. This combativeness was part of mining identities and, would be the basis for a more radical shift in 1932.

## The Dynamics of a Radical Shift in 1932

While in 1931 socialists had proudly declared their sensible and moderate nature, there was a shift in 1932 towards a more militant stance amongst the grassroots in the coalfields. This change was due to a complex combination of factors including the economic context, the struggles over religion and secularisation at local level and a shift within the left more generally. Radical stances were the product of a wider dynamic in the coalfields than economic issues and need to be placed in the particular context of the coalfields communities. Even so, it was more of an attempt to reclaim the label of ‘radical’ than a shift in strategy.

Anticlericalism, as an ideology shared on the left, was already a prevalent feature on the left. It was described by Juan Pablo García, a young socialist lawyer from Mieres, as a ‘touchstone’ to test the ‘radicalism and democracy’ of individuals and political parties in the parliamentary debates on the draft Constitution and votes had served to unmask those who had presented themselves as radical.[[425]](#footnote-425) Parliamentary debate had begun on 8 October and was ‘emotional and divisive’, coming to a climax on 14 October; the following day the Agrarians and Basque-Navarrese minority left the Cortes in protest.[[426]](#footnote-426) The secularisation of rites of passage, whereby marriage was in the hands of the state and burials were civil by default, led to a growth in secular practices and added to the pressure on left to practise them.[[427]](#footnote-427) These were corollaries for radicalism and militancy, given that they were positioned in opposition to traditional Catholic rites. This had historically been the case with burials; civil practices had been used to express anticlerical identities. Pre-existing divisions over religion thus became more sharply marked in 1932, due to the surge in Catholic mobilisation in defence of Catholic practices and as the secularising legislation served to bolster anticlerical identities. This placed religion was at the centre of struggles in pueblos, not only in Asturias but all over Spain during 1932.[[428]](#footnote-428)

Catholicism was employed as a banner behind which criticism of the Constitution would be mobilised and unified by the right; revision of the Constitution was to be the ‘rallying cry’ of protest.[[429]](#footnote-429) In Asturias, a call was made for Catholics to unite by the Asturian AN on 8 October as the debate began in the Cortes on the role of religion. ‘We are in a time of struggle’, they declared, and unity was needed ‘because the attacks on our principles intensify every day and it is urgent that we fight them *en masse*’.[[430]](#footnote-430) The appeal was repeated days later and Catholics were asked to sign up to a ‘United front of Asturian Catholics’.[[431]](#footnote-431) It was the Constitution which galvanised *Región* and gave it a real sense of political purpose for the first time during the Republic, while provincial AN leader Fernández Ladreda’s appeal for a ‘united front with only one banner: reform of the constitution’ was met with letters and telegrams of support.[[432]](#footnote-432) In 1932 was a ‘massive recruitment drive’ of the strongly monarchist Asturian AN, re-baptised AP (Acción Popular) in spring, building on mobilisation against the Constitution. At a meeting on 9 January AN decided to extend the organisation throughout the province.[[433]](#footnote-433) Women were targeted explicitly and female sections of the AN, the Agrupación Femenina de Acción Nacional (AFAN—Female Action Women’s Group, later AFAP), were formed in in Gijón, Oviedo, Mieres and Avilés in January and February, followed by an intense campaign to propagate their ideas throughout the province.[[434]](#footnote-434)

Catholics mobilised at local level in defence of their beliefs, which they perceived to be under attack. This in turn sparked a reaction. The left criticised the more active, public role of priests. For instance, the mobilisation by parish priests and local Catholics to convince individuals not to marry outside the church wascriticised as an intrusion into private matters. The parish priest of La Cuesta (San Martín del Rey Aurelio) was singled out for criticising divorce, civil marriage and that ‘his servants go with a collection box from house to house’.[[435]](#footnote-435) The conflict straddled the division between private and public. Religion was now, according to the Republic, a private matter of conscience, but Catholics mobilised in defence of their beliefs and religion was very much a public struggle, with women often at the centre of it.[[436]](#footnote-436) Not only were they targets, but they were also protagonists in the struggle to convince individuals to follow Catholic rituals. Religious women were accused of ‘abandoning life in their homes in order to go and meddle in that of others’ in terms of civil baptisms and marriages.[[437]](#footnote-437) Clashes in the pueblos were bitter. In La Cuesta (San Martín del Rey Aurelio) and Carbayín women socialists were being ‘insulted’—and in the latter stones were even thrown at a young female socialist, while in Laviana Daughters of Mary were said to be targeting young female socialists.[[438]](#footnote-438) This added to pre-existing pressures that could inhibit political involvement; Mateos has identified the influence of the church and ‘*qué dirán*’—the preoccupation with local gossip that could damage an individual’s reputation—as obstacles to joining local socialist groups.[[439]](#footnote-439) Reputations were important at local level and gossip played an important role in this as a form of ‘community control’.[[440]](#footnote-440) But even as this served to police behaviour, it could also have radicalising effects, as individuals rebelled against traditional values and gender roles, and family pressures. The context of the Republic was key: it opened up possibilities for political engagement and new practices, such as civil marriage, but this clashed with tradition.

There was pride in opposing mobilisation in defence of Catholic traditions. A young socialist reportedly due to marry a Catholic woman managed to convince her to leave the ‘pack of wolves’ intent on using her to claw him back to Catholicism.[[441]](#footnote-441) Such narratives contributed to the strengthening of anticlerical identities, and also related to a vision of religion as feminised. Women were used—rather than acting of their own accord—to combat secular ideas. Thus anticlericalism had a clear masculine inflection, which was similarly present in the frequent description of the Catholic protagonists of everyday struggles as ‘*beatas*’—a pejorative term for religiously-minded older women. Catholic mobilisation was associated with the past and the uneducated, in contrast to youthful, masculine and educated secularism. A report from Carbayín captures the sense of stifling daily struggle in the pueblos:

As occurs in all pueblos so here in Carbayín. The *beatas*, motivated by their “good” feelings and to demonstrate they loyally obey the maxims of the crucifix, dedicate themselves to criticising and insulting young women whose eyes have been opened to the farces that take place in sacred spaces and who think freely, without superstitious prejudices.[[442]](#footnote-442)

While the term was pejorative, the ‘*beatas*’ encapsulated the social pressures of the local communities, with their potentially suffocating intimacy, and the desire of youths to differentiate themselves. Indeed, the association of religion with the old and traditional can only have contributed to their self-identification with youthful radicalism.

Crucifixes began to proliferate around the necks of Catholics in early 1932. This gesture was explicitly encouraged by the Asturian AP leader Cernuda in a speech on the inauguration of the new Catholic Youth centre in Sama—even as religious symbols were removed from schools.[[443]](#footnote-443) A ministerial circular in January had emphasised the secular nature of the state education system and accordingly *ayuntamientos* ordered the removal of symbols and demanded schools stop teaching religious education.[[444]](#footnote-444) Young leftists reacted in a critical and mocking manner to the proliferation of crucifixes. A young socialist from Tuilla attributed it to fashion rather than true faith—thereby rejecting the authenticity of religious expression. He called on young men to ignore them from now ‘when strolling, when dancing, in everything to do with daily life’.[[445]](#footnote-445) A frequent response was to mock those wearing crucifixes. In June, a group of people waited outside mass in La Felguera with a dog with a crucifix tied around its neck.[[446]](#footnote-446) In Mieres, youths adapted the practice of the *cencerrada* to criticise those who wore crucifixes: ‘a few youths’ in Mieres bought ‘some bells’ and sounded them as the women walked past on their *paseo*; similar scenes occurred in Sama.[[447]](#footnote-447) This practice was traditionally used to taunt individuals, often remarrying widows, widowers or someone marrying outside the local community on their wedding night and was a form of the wider European practice of charivari, a carnivalesque mocking denunciation of ‘apparent violation of the community’s standards for proper sexual behaviour’.[[448]](#footnote-448) The taunting in Sama and LF need to be placed in response to contravening of *ayuntamiento*’s ban on Catholic funeral processions by local members of the clergy. It was the adaptation of a traditional practice, ‘community’s way of making the bride and groom pay for “betraying” the previous family’, to the social and political context of the struggle over religion in 1932.[[449]](#footnote-449) It called attention to the individuals involved and publicly condemned their behaviour through ridicule, indicating their “betrayal”, or rather affront to anticlerical culture—as Muir comments, the charivariwas ‘basically a rite of intolerance employed in communities that were deeply threatened by any manifestation of difference’.[[450]](#footnote-450)

Such practices were traditional ways of policing the community, in which individuals took it upon themselves to patrol and enforce codes of conduct. Youth groups in particular took it upon themselves to report on religious expression in the pueblos of the coalfields, appealing for the enactment of the Republic, according to their own interpretation. This was not physical violence, but was nevertheless an aggressive assertion of anticlerical identity. Appeals and *denuncias* were published or sent to the authorities with demands for the Constitution and Republican legislation to be implemented—though in a more radical, secularising manner than the level-playing field envisaged by the legislation. The Juventud Republicana Radical Socialista reported the priest of Lavares (Santo Adriano) to the governor because of his criticism of the Republic. The Juventud presented themselves as the defenders of the local republican population, while the priest ‘bothers those local inhabitants who represent these ideas [...] offending also the Government of the Republic’.[[451]](#footnote-451) Similarly, in June ‘the idea of making sure the Constitution is fulfilled in education matters [was] taking shape’ in the working class organisations in Aller. Shortly afterwards the JS in Moreda asked the *ayuntamiento* to enforce article 27 of the Constitution, and ban funeral processions, warning of ‘greater evils [*males mayores*] that favour no-one as we youths are not going to consent to the trampling on any articles of the current Constitution, especially by those who merit the repulsion of all citizens of liberal spirit’.[[452]](#footnote-452) It was a stark warning, but nevertheless relied on institutional channels. Others, though a minority, took matters into their own hands. Empowered by the context of secularisation, individuals entered the municipal school in Loredo (Mieres) and demanded that the teacher hand over books and the image of Christ on the wall. The ‘startled’ teacher asked to keep the ‘few books’ the *ayuntamiento* had given to her.[[453]](#footnote-453) Towards the summer, the situation was becoming more urgent.

The authorities tried to tread a more cautious line. While Catholic processions were banned in certain municipalities, crosses on tombs were permitted. Similarly, the Deputation removed chaplains from provincial welfare institutions, but made it clear that chaplains were funded by private donations and that the religious service would be respected; the priority was the removal of public financing of chaplains, not the prohibition of religious worship. The Deputation was ‘non-denominational’ not ‘irreligious’.[[454]](#footnote-454) But this fine line was undermined by both the maximalism of Catholic rightist protest, and anticlerical pressures. A ban on Catholic funeral processions by the authorities in Langreo was contravened by the parish priest of Sama and he was arrested.[[455]](#footnote-455) Resistance led to a more radical and provocative response, but it was not only resistance, but also confrontation. The struggle was taken directly to the streets.

Nevertheless, resistance to secularisation was also denounced to the authorities by councillors themselves, as in the case of the Duro-Felguera subsidised school in Mosquitera (Siero).[[456]](#footnote-456) Councillors in Langreo threatened to take stronger action: a call was made for the removal of subsidies from teachers in Tuilla who continued to teach religion while Tomás asked for water paid for by the *ayuntamiento* to be cut off in schools where praying took place.[[457]](#footnote-457) A profound mistrust of religion meant that the staff of schools run by Duro-Felguera were accused of ‘forcing’ their students to attend church on Sundays. Whether students went of their own accord is, in fact, irrelevant; what is important is the suspicion harboured by the local authorities who ordered the friars to leave the children alone.[[458]](#footnote-458)

In 1932 the situation was much more conflictive than in 1931. The *ayuntamiento* of San Martín del Rey Aurelio tried to negotiate with Duro-Felguera over educational matters in January 1932, attempting to convince the company to cede the school closed by the company when the Dominicans had been banned from teaching for lacking qualifications. But the company refused.[[459]](#footnote-459) Protests from parents began to escalate and an assembly sent telegrams to the company threatening a strike if the schools were not reopened with secular education.[[460]](#footnote-460) In defiance, Duro-Felguera reopened the school, but with Dominicans who had the relevant qualifications.[[461]](#footnote-461) In response 2,000 workers went on a ten-day strike, demanding the substitution of the teachers as the Dominicans were ‘banned from teaching’.[[462]](#footnote-462) This was not strictly speaking true, as these Dominicans had qualifications, but was indicative of the interpretation of the Republic as not only secular but in consonance with more radical anticlericalism.

The Dominicans fled and the strikers demanded a signed guarantee that they would not be allowed to return.[[463]](#footnote-463) An investigation discovered that 11 of the individuals cited by Duro-Felguera as parents demanding the re-introduction of confessional education were single and 19 were neither workers nor employees of Duro-Felguera. As a result, they were fined for provoking the conflict.[[464]](#footnote-464) The strike was a victory for the workers: the school would reopen in September with secular teachers appointed by the company and optional religious education. However, this was the only battle won by the workers in this struggle. Other companies continued with confessional teachers, though with some concessions.[[465]](#footnote-465) It was clear that education for local citizens depended very much on the existing network of company-owned schools and the municipal authorities could only attempt to reason and negotiate rather than force change.

The companies’ hard line was clear and their resolve to maintain confessional education became even more evident at the beginning of the new school-year. Hulleras del Turón demanded evidence of baptism in order for children to attend their schools; ‘And this is occurring in a secular state?’ the correspondent of *Avance* asked.[[466]](#footnote-466) Two days before the SHE schools were due to open in Aller, the company presented families with a document indicating that the schools were confessional and parents would have to accept it. Protest erupted. A local socialist declared it was time to show the ‘reactionary companies’ that the Republic did exist, though he rejected strike action.[[467]](#footnote-467) Intransigence served to fan protest and radicalise the local workforce. *Avance* reported that it had been inundated with protests and congratulated the workers on their ‘clear comprehension’ and ‘sensitivity’ in the struggle between ‘a world which [was] passing away and another which fights to be born’, though it too hoped the situation would not go as far as a strike.[[468]](#footnote-468) This was radical posturing, rather than more militant action. Undeterred, the company refused to back down and closed the schools to force the issue.[[469]](#footnote-469) A rally took place on 25 September in Soto de Aller in defence of secular education; reportedly 2,000 attended. When a busload of those who attended were on their way back and passed through Cabañaquinta, their shouts in defence of secular schools was met with a cry of ‘down with the Republic’, and youngsters had to be restrained from leaving the bus to give the individual ‘what he deserved’.[[470]](#footnote-470) At the end of September the SHE schools were still closed, affecting 1,900 children.[[471]](#footnote-471) Florentino Palacios, socialist councillor, called on the government to seize the schools and appoint the necessary teaching staff.[[472]](#footnote-472) A further demonstration was held in Ujo on 2 October. The following day the civil governor announced the conflict had been solved: religious education would be optional, taking place after the end of normal school hours.[[473]](#footnote-473) But soon after the demonstration, the schools were closed.[[474]](#footnote-474)

The dynamic of conflict worked to propel more radical postures, but not just between Catholics and the left. Anticlericalism had a particular force *within* the left itself. Accusations of religious observance or non-practice of anticlericalism were frequently used to criticise left-wing rivals. One individual wrote to *El Noroeste* denying a report in *Avance* that he had given money to the parish priest of Baíña (Mieres), retorting that he would never do what socialists did: receive payments from the priest and then send their companions to confession as a way of thanks.[[475]](#footnote-475) Similarly, a PSOE member wrote to *La Aurora Social* in order to refute rumours he had taken his daughter to a different pueblo in order to baptise her.[[476]](#footnote-476) Policing within the left meant that involvement in religious practices could have important consequences. In Turón, Eduardo Pereira was judged and expelled from the PCE for signing a petition in support of confessional education. The article declared with pride: ‘That is how we communists react to those who humiliate themselves before the Church’.[[477]](#footnote-477) This patrolling of individual identities served to encourage greater radicalism through a race to reject religion.

The problem was that many had (unavoidably) been involved in Catholic practices in the past, such as marriage ceremonies and baptisms. José Estrada, replying to criticism, attacked the small number of ‘those who call themselves revolutionaries’ in Blimea and rejected criticism for having married in a church, explaining that it had been before the Republic when it was difficult to find women and their families who would have accepted it. He retorted, ‘[w]here is your radicalism now, when not long ago you offered your hand to a priest in the municipality of Bimenes?’.[[478]](#footnote-478) The fact that he was moved to defend himself indicates the importance that these rumours—a *qué dirán* within the left—could have on an individual’s reputation. There had clearly been a shift compared to previous years; the possibilities of the Republic had signified a need for individuals to redefine themselves with the changing meaning of being a ‘radical’. And this continued to change. At the Second Congress of the Asturian JS in 1933, ‘anticlerical policy’ was debated. Delegates proposed the banning of JS members from ‘attending and practising religious acts’ and that ‘atheist, antireligious and materialist tasks’ should be ‘obligatory’. The issue was hotly debated. The delegate from Oviedo rejected the proposal while another called for freedom of conscience. In the end the proposal was withdrawn after pressure from SOMA leader Graciano Antuña.[[479]](#footnote-479) The proposal would mean an explicit institutionalisation of an anticlerical attitude and was part of an increasingly militant attitude as the balance of politics shifted leftwards.

Meanwhile, the continuing struggles over religion at local level and an increasing sense of confrontation developed into episodes of iconoclasm in the summer of 1932. These incidents frequently coincided with the feast day of the local patron saint, in an attempt to disrupt the rhythm and structure of Catholic ritual.[[480]](#footnote-480) It was the governor’s role to authorise public displays of faith, in accordance with information provided by the mayor, who could cite public order as a motive for banning it.[[481]](#footnote-481) Cultural violence against objects was exercised in an attempt to ridicule or else to prevent the expression of religiosity during the annual fiestas. This was not a development specific to the coalfields; processions were often the centre of tensions and violence, with such incidents often taking place the day or days before a particular fiesta.[[482]](#footnote-482) As public religious performances in which symbols were exhibited, paraded and venerated, processions were easy to interpret as an attack on the Republic. Religious images were a particular target, as they were across Spain in 1932.[[483]](#footnote-483) On the night of 13-14 September an explosion took place at the hermitage in Turón the night before the local feast day destroying the image of Christ, with *Avance* reporting that it was rumoured the attack had been caused by the priest’s plans to hold an unauthorised procession, ‘which was opposed by the pueblo’.[[484]](#footnote-484) Attacks on churches and shrines before the feast days similarly took place in Sobrescobio and Santa Rosa (Mieres), and on both occasions images were targeted.[[485]](#footnote-485) This was a marked contrast to 1931, when there had been no problems in Turón and, despite threats prior to a procession in Valdecuna (Mieres), nothing happened.[[486]](#footnote-486) The situation had changed in 1932 and this shift to a more militant attitude can only be understood in the context of the struggles over secularisation in 1932. Direct action was used to place pressure on the authorities, and on the local Catholic community.

Sanjurjo’s failed coup took place in the context of these bitter and frequent struggles over the role of religion in public life in the coalfields. Given the association of Catholicism with mobilisation and opposition to the Republic in 1932 and its relationship to the political right, it is unsurprising that suspicions should centre on the local church. In Langreo, the communist councillors tabled a 15-point motion, which included a call for the dissolution of the Civil Guard and seven points which addressed religion and the church, combining a mixture of local and national policies. Other councillors agreed with some, but not all of the proposals. Tomás said that the socialists were ‘radical’, but were also in government and that accordingly they would follow the government’s decisions, which was also the decision of the republicans. Later on during the same meeting suspicions were raised about rightist propaganda, with a Duro-Felguera school in La Felguera and ‘churches and convents’ singled out as centres of ‘conspiracy’ against the Republic. The chairman assured the council that such centres had been under surveillance for a while.[[487]](#footnote-487)

While the failed coup did appear to point to a consolidated Republic capable of defending itself, ‘generating a wave of pro-Republican fervour’, it also tapped into fears and frustrations at local level.[[488]](#footnote-488) There was a need for *more* Republic in the eyes of the local authorities and the left. There were differing attitudes as to what this meant: councillors in Oviedo called for the Constitution to put into practice, which meant a deepening of the current regime, while *Avance*’s editorial demanded the Republic make ‘a sharp turn to the left’.[[489]](#footnote-489) The threat to the regime therefore bolstered a more radical stance, but a radical deepening of the current Republic—despite small differences—rather than its rejection. Similarly, there were militant calls for it to be defended. The SOMA grassroots were told by the union hierarchy to stay calm and continue working, but to be ready to defend the Republic.[[490]](#footnote-490) In Sama, workers were prepared to ‘take to the streets’ in defence of the Republic, empowered by the Republican project.[[491]](#footnote-491) Together, mobilisation and calls for “more Republic”, served to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the Republic, while also hinting at a more radical conceptualisation of the Republic as a project that needed to enact justice and change. The attempted coup sharpened such ideas.

This took place in a context in which there was a move to contest and reclaim the category of ‘radical’ and ‘revolutionary’ in the socialist ranks from communists and anarchists. In contrast to 1931, socialists now tried to reconcile their own strategy of restricting the use of strikes with a claim that they were ‘radical’ and ‘revolutionary’. This both recognised the combativeness of the grassroots in that they were willing to strike, while trying to bring it into line with SOMA’s strategy. While this can be interpreted as the ‘first experiences of radicalisation’ of the SOMA grassroots, it is necessary to nuance what this radicalisation actually meant.[[492]](#footnote-492) The stance was hardly militant; rather, it was a question of identity politics, which responded to a shift in the balance of the political spectrum at grassroots. In Ujo, for example, there were reports that being a communist was fashionable.[[493]](#footnote-493) In December 1932, several mine workers from La Cobertoria mine criticised the fact that in assemblies ‘he who says the most outrageous comments [*barbaridades*] is the one who comes out best’.[[494]](#footnote-494) The shift in the balance of politics appears to have been aided by newcomers to politics or those who had changed their political stripes in order to prove their political mettle. Since the implantation of Republic, workers who had never belonged to unions had become ‘the most revolutionary’ in Turón while in Bazuelo (Mieres) the most revolutionary elements were those who had previously belonged to Unión Patriótica.[[495]](#footnote-495) Even if fashionable radicalism was about posturing—an article critical of the ‘new revolutionaries’ in Turón claimed they had never read Marx and Engels and did not understand capitalism—this had the important effect of changing the balance and terms of political debate at local level.[[496]](#footnote-496)

Consequently, articles in *Avance* attempted to reconcile being ‘revolutionary’ with not striking. From Caborana (Aller), strikes were attacked and it was asked

Or is it the case that at each abuse and with each just demand that we will call a strike? [...] That would be a very revolutionary tactic for “simpletons”, idiots and the naïve, but it never will be for true revolutionaries and dignified workers conscious of their duty.[[497]](#footnote-497)

The insults towards their syndical rivals continued, but there was a stronger identification of socialists as ‘true revolutionaries’. The debate was framed about radicalism (and violence). Similar ideas to those in Caborana were explained later on from Hueria de San Andrés (San Martín del Rey Aurelio). Strikes were defended as a revolutionary act, but should not be overused:

The strike is the most revolutionary weapon which can be employed. Refusing to work is essentially a revolutionary act, even if it is an unconscious move that which determines the strike [...] But should it be used on every occasion? Are there not cases in which the use of strike action could be harmful [for the workers]? Undoubtedly there are.

The article warned that company bosses could use strikes as a pretext to dismiss workers and worsen working conditions.[[498]](#footnote-498) Graciano Antuña echoed such sentiments in criticism of a CNT-led strike at the Fondón pit in Sama, stating

One is not more radical or more revolutionary for being an early-riser and declaring strikes for trifling reasons. It is necessary to choose the right moment for the fight against capital. But it is also necessary to know what are the demands, because otherwise, instead of victories, there will be failures.[[499]](#footnote-499)

Being moderate, reformist was also radical and revolutionary. Nevertheless, beneath it all was an understanding that being radical meant the transformation of society. Socialists were radical but *within* the Republic itself. Such comments showed no real change in the socialist position, but could have been interpreted as legitimising a more radical position amongst the grassroots.

In contrast to 1931, therefore, being a ‘revolutionary’ was now construed as positive. Certainly socialists had believed themselves to have been participating in a revolution in 1931—that of the Republic as a revolution, as it was frequently described. This was not a revolution in a militant and voluntarist manner, but part of a wider movement. Nevertheless, in 1932 socialists began to compete with other groups on the left for the labels ‘revolutionary’ and ‘radical’. In Olloniego the socialists claimed to be the ‘true revolutionaries’, drawing a line between themselves and the republican bourgeoisie, ‘no matter if it calls itself radical’.[[500]](#footnote-500) But this was rhetoric rather than practice. Criticism of strike action aimed to underline socialists’ radical identity, but rejected combative political practice at local level. The repeated comments in this regard are indicative that there was a growing rebelliousness among the grassroots that the socialist leadership was attempting to channel.

Such a shift was part of the internal dynamics on the left, but was also influenced by a context of increased pressures in local communities due to increasing economic problems and their effects on local communities. From the beginning of the year, short-time working was introduced at some mines, unemployment increased and El Caudal went bankrupt, owing its workers five months of wages.[[501]](#footnote-501) Strikes erupted at the proposed reduction of piecework rates and shortened working weeks.[[502]](#footnote-502) The mining companies blamed the problems on stocks of coal, increased salaries and the seven-hour day, whose cost had not been compensated for by price rises.[[503]](#footnote-503) It was not just industry; the poor wheat harvest of the previous year had led to a rise in the price of bread, which reached its highest ever price in 1932.[[504]](#footnote-504) In Asturias, the price of bread in Laviana went up twice in two weeks in May, while a protest was staged by angry women in Mieres.[[505]](#footnote-505) Women were also agitating in Aller, petitioning the *ayuntamiento* for their husbands to be given work.[[506]](#footnote-506) The economic problems were beginning to have profound effects on local communities—protestors in Oviedo did not ask for work, but rather *demanded* it.[[507]](#footnote-507) The *ayuntamientos* were struggling to mitigate against the effects of the slowdown through public works. Public works had to stop in Oviedo in August 1932 due to a lack of money, which affected 250 temporary workers. Only forty were kept on.[[508]](#footnote-508) The Republic was not even protecting its own supporters. The problems were wider than in Asturias. National unemployment climbed from nearly 400,000 in 1931 to nearly 550,000 in 1933. Discontent and violence erupted in pueblos around Spain, with roots in labour matters, such as in Arnedo (La Rioja) and Palaciosrubios (Salamanca).[[509]](#footnote-509) Legislation was not respected by rural employers and there was growing frustration amongst peasants, with the socialist Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra (FNTT: National Federación of Agricultural Workers) under pressure from members.[[510]](#footnote-510)

Importantly, the economic problems were interpreted politically. The slowdown in the coal industry was denounced as being due to the hostility of the companies to the regime. Some in Turón considered the ‘abnormality’ as due to ‘the attitude of a certain person of great influence in the direction of the business of Altos Hornos de Vizcaya [the owner of Hulleras del Turón], who showed himself to be against the regime’ and similar sentiments were later echoed in Figaredo.[[511]](#footnote-511) And it was the workforce that was paying the price for the political attitudes of the company owners. There was a growing sense that they were the victims of ‘persecution’ by mining companies. In Carbayín demands were presented by mine workers on a daily basis due to the companies’ alleged ‘systematic and perhaps pre-arranged persecution’. The workforce was tired of engineers’ unfulfilled promises to solve problems. The same was said to be true of the arbitration committees. The key issue in Carbayín at the time was free coal, and a complaint was levelled at the procedures workers had to go through in order to obtain it.[[512]](#footnote-512) The daily struggle with the companies had increased to a level completely out of step with workers’ sense of fairness, which can only have had corrosive effects on relationships at the mine. Frustrations were exacerbated by the disregard for legislation. Workers from the Lláscares mine informed the mayor of Langreo of their intention to strike, following legal procedure, in protest at the company’s refusal to give their paid holidays, which they were due according to the law.[[513]](#footnote-513) A lack of liquidity to pay wages and for materials in Olloniego in the summer was interpreted as a way of disciplining the workforce.[[514]](#footnote-514) Not only was the economic situation having a detrimental effect on the coalfield communities, but this was understood as a targeted campaign refracted through the idea of the Republic.

By August, even the SOMA was beginning to talk of an ‘offensive’ against the improvements gained for the workers. It was a call to arms—the ‘bugle’ had sounded. Yet the union continued to stress the SOMA was not a union of ‘madmen, fanatics or the delirious’; rather, its members showed ‘responsibility’.[[515]](#footnote-515) SOMA acknowledged the situation in the mines, but its strategy did not change. Meanwhile, those on the frontline in the coalfields were beginning to feel trapped. An article from Caborana (Aller) in March was frustrated at the number of strikes:

I do not know why we seem to be mired in [*estar masticando*] an atmosphere of conflicts in this peaceful valley. Unusual is the week when one mine or another does not pose partial conflicts, whose causes sometime come from the flippancy of the workforce, though more often they are due to the clumsiness and impertinence of the bosses.

The author was critical of foremen and those who went on the strike. The former were called on to be more ‘respectful’ and ‘tolerant’ as ‘[w]e all want to avoid conflicts’. The article tried to show understanding for the propensity to strike—‘We already know that one is outraged too often, and that these same *jefecillos* contribute to this indignation’—but these ‘obstacles’ were part of the ‘capitalist regime’ and ‘if that were what makes us dance, we would be dancing at least once a day’.[[516]](#footnote-516) Such statements that the workforce simply had to endure the situation cannot have been much comfort. Similar sentiments were echoed months later from Hueria de San Andrés (San Martín del Rey Aurelio). Strike action was defended, but care should be taken, as it could be used against workers: ‘The tool that is not used rusts, but that which is used often wears out and soon loses its effectiveness’.[[517]](#footnote-517) Change should be sought through negotiation from within, not strikes, which were the last resort.

Meanwhile, mine workers continued to strike in protest at local conditions. In July, a twenty-four hour strike had been called in protest at a punishment in Barredos (Laviana) and *Avance* commented that ‘these cases are frequently repeated’.[[518]](#footnote-518) Not only were strikes frequent, but they also went against the orders of the hierarchy. Dissent towards the SOMA leadership was growing. At the Pumarabule mine (Siero) in July a strike, run by socialists, though not officially sanctioned by the SOMA, erupted over the ignition of dynamite while miners were still inside the mine.[[519]](#footnote-519) There was bitter criticism from the ‘Revolutionary Strike Committee’ towards *Avance*’s proposal that workers should refuse to detonate the dynamite.[[520]](#footnote-520) The leadership’s restraint and calls to use institutional channels offered little solace to those facing immediate—and dangerous—problems at the mines. In defiance of union orders, SOMA workers declared a twenty-hour hour solidarity strike in September 1932 with Industrial Asturiana workers faced with the threat of closure and the loss of 1,200 jobs.[[521]](#footnote-521) After two months of negotiations, a collective contract was negotiated via the arbitration committee (*Jurado mixto*).[[522]](#footnote-522) Elsewhere, Hulleras de Riosa was employing a third of its workforce, piecework rates were being lowered and short-time working was introduced in Hulleras del Turón.[[523]](#footnote-523) Calculations of the cost of living in Turón led to the conclusion that families were left with 4.40 pesetas per day for their needs, and bread alone cost 2.20 pesetas.[[524]](#footnote-524) Faced with this deteriorating situation, the SOMA decided to call a general mining strike in September, which was framed as ‘purely defensive’.[[525]](#footnote-525) The general strike was openly projected to put pressure on the government, demanding the regularisation of the working week and increased consumption of Asturian coal.[[526]](#footnote-526) Just as strikes had been interpreted in relation to the Republican regime, the union leadership expected politics to provide a solution to the crisis of the mining industry. The call to strike was suspended twice by the Executive Committee after companies made offers to improve the situation.[[527]](#footnote-527)

However, when Fábrica de Mieres, Duro-Felguera and Hulleras del Turón ‘announced that they were going to close indefinitely’ in mid-November, SOMA called another general strike. This time it went ahead and 25,000 downed tools for six days.[[528]](#footnote-528) Though called by the SOMA, communists and anarchists were drawn into the conflict. The weakness of the communists was patent in the relatively small number of those who followed a SUM call to prolong the strike, mainly in Turón—though reportedly only 25% of the workforce—and a small number in the Samuño valley in Langreo, La Felguera, Aller, and Ciaño-Santa Ana.[[529]](#footnote-529) In other words, the attempt to prolong the strike was a relative failure. While the anarchists and communists appeared unable to resist socialist strikes, the reverse was not true. When the CNT called a solidarity strike with the La Felguera metalworking strike in December, it was not backed by the SOMA and the workforces at the mines were again divided along union lines. In total, 7,000 were reportedly involved in the stoppage—approximately 25% of the workforce—though according to the civil governor this was due in part to sabotage.[[530]](#footnote-530) Compared with the SOMA strike, the CNT strike struggled to mobilise the same level of support. By 13 December, the strike had petered out, though support for it less than half were back at work in Turón, and support continued in Carbones Asturianos.[[531]](#footnote-531)

Nevertheless, even as the SOMA general strike appeared to cement the socialists’ hegemony in the coalfields, it had the effect of legitimising dissent. Thus while the union was pleased with the solution negotiated with the government—since the ‘strike had not been intended to harm the government’—the effect was different amongst the grassroots.[[532]](#footnote-532) There was understanding that the SOMA, through striking, had changed its stance with regards to strikes, and hence towards the other unions. Striking was thus interpreted as the union shelving its strategy of avoiding strikes and adopting a more radical and combative stance, in line with the grassroots. However, the leadership quickly shut the door on any possible collaboration with other unions, such as in the December La Felguera solidarity strike. Despite hope that the SOMA had changed its stance, the door to cooperation with other groups was closed. The November strike was envisaged by the leadership as responding to, but curtailing grassroots demands by channelling them through strike action, but for the grassroots, it had legitimised their growing militant stance. In Mieres, SOMA members were criticising the union. An article reflecting on the negative reaction sparked by proposals put forward by Amador Fernández attempted to tread a line between criticising him and welcoming debate.[[533]](#footnote-533) Dissent was not necessarily widespread and members were not leaving in droves, but criticism appears to have become more overt in the wake of the general strike in November. Similarly, the fact that SOMA had acted against its anti-strike strategy appears to have been interpreted as the union moving into line with the communists and anarchists. The socialist union even felt the need to respond publicly to quash rumours that they were going to collaborate with other unions in a general strike in Asturias.[[534]](#footnote-534)

However, even the growing militancy had limits. Dissent and strike action may have been more readily-embraced, but violence continued to be rejected by socialists and projected as a way of differentiating themselves (even if members practised violence) from others. While socialists reclaimed the epithets of ‘radical’ and ‘revolutionary’, this did not signify legitimation of violence.[[535]](#footnote-535) Revolutionary practice was about education and voting for progressive legislation, not violence.[[536]](#footnote-536) Non-violence was thus an expression of socialist superiority over the approaches of other groups, as was evident in the criticism of the violence employed in La Felguera in December during the metalworkers’ strike. Violence during strikes was presented as criminal and illegitimate, even though it was increasing.[[537]](#footnote-537) Radicalism was possible without violence, and this allowed socialists to distance themselves from other groups on the left.

The adoption of a more militant attitude did not mean the rejection of institutional channels, whether in labour matters—where the arbitration committee continued to function—or through pressuring local authorities into a more aggressive assertion of secular policies. Appeals were made to mayors and authorities to uphold more radical interpretations of the Constitution, and further pressure was placed on the authorities by incidences of iconoclasm. Months before the rectory in Casomera (Aller) was targeted with dynamite, an appeal had been made by the local Agrupación Socialista that ‘the persons responsible force the parish priest of this pueblo to follow the new law’.[[538]](#footnote-538) Even striking anarchists, who rejected the arbitration committees, were willing to negotiate via the mayor and civil governor during a lengthy conflict at the Fondón mine in autumn 1932. Indeed, it was the mayor who managed to negotiate a solution between the company and the workforce.[[539]](#footnote-539)

As a consequence, the translation of combativeness into more radical stances did not mean a rejection of negotiation. It was more a question of a style and manner of politics than outright intransigence. The development of more critical and confrontational stances was contingent on local circumstances and the wider context of the Republic itself. Indeed, the response was determined by local circumstances. Whatever the oratorical claims, demands were fairly limited. Even the proposals made by the *chamiceros* who elected a communist as their president and had run-ins with the local socialist-controlled *ayuntamiento* were far from radical: they wanted to be able to continue mining coal and to sell it back to the company. The emphasis was on autonomy and work, rather than socialising the means of production and they were willing to pay the mining company a fee.[[540]](#footnote-540) Similarly, the collective contracts frequently proposed as a solution to the problems faced by mines challenged the companies’ ways of managing production in the mines, rather than their property rights. Radicalism was essentially a militant and confrontational stance in response to the local context and particular local developments. It was not a fully-formed worldview, but a reactive attitude.

By the end of 1932, the situation was complex. An article from Mieres defended an interpretation of being a ‘revolutionary workers’ which ‘cannot be understood in the negative sense that certain individuals extol, for whom hold-ups and crime are fully justified’. Rather, the article defended ‘[p]ersevering action, daily conquests, consolidating positions taken from the bourgeoisie, in order to continue along the road to emancipation’ because ‘the opposite would mean cultivating our own ruin’. And so ‘[n]either is this bourgeois Republic our Republic, but in its constitution there is a path open to new advances’.[[541]](#footnote-541) The present situation was rejected as unsatisfactory, but the Republic was still presented as the solution. This was not a return to the fine line trodden in 1931. The Republican project defended in 1932 had a harder edge to it, in line with the more militant stance amongst grassroots. By the end of 1932 members of the Asturian JS were claiming Lenin for the socialists, indicating a desire to emphasise the radical, vanguard and progressive character of Spanish socialism.[[542]](#footnote-542) But this was not a linear, radicalising march through to 1934. The dynamics of radicalism, shaped by political practice and the struggles of 1931 and 1932, would be fuelled by the particular context and developments of 1933 and 1934.

Conclusions

By December 1932 the UGT Executive was tired of the grassroots calling strikes.[[543]](#footnote-543) In Asturias, the SOMA had organised a general strike for the first time, which had unintentionally served to legitimise the growing adoption of a more radical position among the grassroots. Such an attitude was moulded by the conflictive relationships in the mines and political practice in the coalfields, but depended on the context of wider political action—and reaction—and wider political mobilisation in 1932, particularly over religion. This combativeness and rebelliousness was not necessarily ‘radical’, though in 1932 the socialists increasingly began to contest the category of ‘radical’ and ‘revolutionary’ in response to a shift in the political spectrum in the coalfields, which cleared the way for further radicalism. Such radicalism was not a rejection of the Republic, but rather the sharper definition of a more radical Republic.

The shared spaces and practices of the pueblo and the workplace would be the foundation for unity initiatives in 1933 and 1934. The economic situation would continue to deteriorate but the leadership would still have its eyes firmly fixed on a moderate strategy and, in the face of the deteriorating situation, the rank-and-file would begin alternative strategies for refashioning a way of moving forwards. Furthermore, the particular spatial configuration of local politics in the coalfields and practices such as assemblies, which were part of a specific unruly ‘democratic’ practice at local level, were important factors in the articulation of unity initiatives in 1933 and 1934. While differences between unions were sharp and conflictive, other lines of division and co-operation existed, as was seen in the workplace and the pueblos. Politics needs to be understood as embedded in local communities. It would be the potent mix of the actions of the SOMA politics, community politics and a perceived external threat shaped by already existing divisions which would accelerate the adoption of radical attitudes in 1933 and 1934.

# Chapter II

**Radicalism and the Politics of Community, 1933-1934**

Introduction

1933-4 saw a marked change in the Republic. The year began with a failed anarchist insurrection during which several peasants were murdered by the security forces in Casas Viejas in Andalucía. Both the Radical Party and the CEDA—a rightist coalition which included AP formed in March—used the incident to put the governmental coalition under pressure and it finally collapsed in September 1933.[[544]](#footnote-544) Elections followed in November and resulted in defeat for the left republicans and socialists, who, in contrast to the right, were not united. The CEDA returned the highest number of deputies, though without a majority. A series of Radical governments followed, which depended on the support of the CEDA, and proceeded to re-channel and reshape the Republic. While it was not a case of wholesale derogation of previous legislation there was a marked change, including the return of state funding for some of the clergy, the removal of the municipal boundaries legislation and the reintroduction of the death penalty.

Between 1933 and 1934 the socialist movement underwent the process known as “radicalisation”, as Largo Caballero responded to the masses’ discontent and frustration with increasingly militant rhetoric. Largo Caballero demanded power for the socialists, which was to be achieved either through the ballot box or other means. This ‘double scenario’ was reduced to the latter after electoral defeat in November 1933 and Largo Caballero called for a revolutionary movement to be prepared.[[545]](#footnote-545) The socialist movement was far from united about the need for a revolutionary movement, but by the end of winter 1934 the *caballeristas* had managed to gain control of both the PSOE and UGT, and revolutionary preparations were underway.

In Asturias, radicalisation intensified between 1933 and 1934, but this was a complex process contingent on circumstances and shaped by an array of different factors. As in 1932, radicalisation needs to be rooted in local experience. Anxieties and frustration within the left would be exacerbated by the perceived eruption of fascism in the coalfields. Even if the party which ‘would become the most clearly identifiable expression of fascism in Spain’, the Falange (FE), was not formed until October 1933, fascism cannot be rejected as a factor in the coalfields.[[546]](#footnote-546) The term fascist became a crucial part of the way politics was lived and framed in 1933 and 1934.[[547]](#footnote-547) The point is not to determine the level of fascist threat; rather it is about understanding what this perceived threat meant.[[548]](#footnote-548) Fear of fascism was discursively constructed and experienced as an (existential) threat to the working classes—or at least to its institutions and politics. Moreover, fascism located Spain spatially in the wider European context; indeed, it was intrinsically linked to projecting this temporally. In other words, fascism was a powerful narrative which helped to structure political action. The identification of a fascist threat in the coalfields thus not only connected Asturias to wider international developments, but also expressed and transformed anxieties about community divisions and political rivals at local level.

Moreover, rather than the SOMA “radicalising into line” with the grassroots, it actually succeeded in alienating swathes of its members. With the SOMA incapable of solving the problems faced by its members and a growing self-identification with more radical stances, some turned to building unity as an alternative to traditional, union-based structures in order to find a way of moving forwards, in other words, of finding solutions to the problems they faced. Thus joint strike committees were formed, which built on pre-existing workplace-based solidarity and practices. Unity initiatives—which cannot explain the insurrection in and of themselves—thus provided a structure to propel activism and were thus an important grassroots mechanism.[[549]](#footnote-549)

Indeed, it was mobilisation in defence of the local community—their community—by leftists in 1934 which was crucial in the accelerating the process of radicalisation. The Radical governments of 1934 were understood in opposition to the working class left and consequently the actions of the security forces were interpreted as targeting the working class. The resultant fusion of left-wing and community politics in protesting at injustice was a powerful catalyst for collective action in spring 1934. Radicalisation was thus about power and the functioning of politics and society at local level—it was this that mobilised ‘protest identities’.[[550]](#footnote-550) Importantly, the security forces were unable to break this protest; rather, repression served to foment a growing confrontational and militant attitude amongst local leftists who were already stockpiling arms in preparation for a revolutionary movement.

## The Alienation of the Mining Workforce

The economic situation, already serious, continued to deteriorate in 1933 with unsold stocks of coal a major problem for the mining companies.[[551]](#footnote-551) *El Noroeste* observed thatmines were closing, workers dismissed and shops ‘ruined’ while in Aller the number of registered unemployed increased by a third between January and August.[[552]](#footnote-552) Faced with this situation, the SOMA balloted its members, who voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action—15,128 to 113 against. Nevertheless, even as the strike began, the SOMA was still trying to emphasise its support for the government, its limited demands and its disapproval of violence.[[553]](#footnote-553) For the SOMA, striking was still interpreted as undermining the government’s authority.

The strike received ‘extraordinary’ support, even without communist participation.[[554]](#footnote-554) The solution negotiated by the SOMA was ratified by mine workers by another overwhelming margin—15,105 votes to 410—and meant the investigation of companies’ accounts and a reduction in the labour force through both early retirement and a scheme which paid workers not to work.[[555]](#footnote-555) This solution would prove to be insufficient and would contribute significantly to the radicalisation of SOMA members and the workforce. Initially, however, the workforce was satisfied with the proposal. Retirement would be voluntary, but forced retirement would follow if the required number were not reached.[[556]](#footnote-556) Details of the plan revealed that those most affected were those over 55 and miners with little experience, meaning the young, while subsidies for those dismissed would be far lower than wages and the companies controlled who would be laid-off.[[557]](#footnote-557) It is difficult to see how this would have been palatable for the workforce; there were few volunteers for redundancy and retirement, strikes erupted and workers angrily remonstrated with one another.[[558]](#footnote-558) The socialists tried to arrest these fears: the SOMA published an explanatory note, *Avance* published reports of many joining the scheme voluntarily and the SOMA leadership went on a tour of the coalfields.[[559]](#footnote-559) Nonetheless, strikes continued in Siero and the Nalón valley, where there was indignation at the dismissal of young workers while mine workers over sixty continued to work.[[560]](#footnote-560) By the end of June 1933, 2,795 workers were either retired or receiving subsidy payments.[[561]](#footnote-561)

Not only was the reform superficial in that it failed to tackle the deeper problems facing the market and industry, but the workforce also had to bear the brunt of the solution. SOMA seemed incapable of defending its members. The union could organise mass strike action, but could not maintain discipline within its grassroots, who were willing to strike despite SOMA’s opposition. It was the solution negotiated by SOMA which prompted protest strikes, and so accelerated the process of radicalisation. Given that work was such an integral part of male working class identities, the emasculating effects of the removal of work must also be taken into account. Reports suggested that resentment prompted a turn to more radical ideas by those excluded, particularly young workers, who were disproportionately targeted by the measures—in Mieres the youth led the initial protests.[[562]](#footnote-562) Sabino Menéndez wrote that the levy on mine workers’ wages to pay for the subsidies had created such ‘resentment’ that ‘a revolutionary wave [...] is being born again in the depths of the mines’.[[563]](#footnote-563) A lyrical article in *El Noroeste* augured a threatening future: ‘[a] deaf and black storm of repressed courage, of restrained impetus, is dragging itself aggressively and obstinately, relentless and rough, intoxicated by explosions and liberated cries. Why this suffering?’ The author wrote that ‘young and strong’ mine workers discussed the situation under *hórreos* (granaries) and their desperation was manifest in plunge towards revolution and a desire for violence.[[564]](#footnote-564) The young *subsidiados* (those removed from employment and provided with a subsidy) had been rejected by the system, and in turn rejected the system themselves. Thus, a sense of alienation and resentment was serving to fuel a turn towards violence, as the union seemed to be incapable of offering a solution to their problems.

Young people spearheaded a shift to a more militant attitude, as in Spain more broadly, but, as yet, this was more directionless rebelliousness fuelled by frustration.[[565]](#footnote-565) At the plenary session of the Asturian JS in May, Mariano Rojo, deputy in the Cortes and who attended the conference in representation of the JS National Committee, criticised a telegram presented by several delegates who wanted it sent to the PSOE. Rojo, a moderate and supporter of Besteiro, accused certain members of the Asturian JS of being obsessed by ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ and using the language of the ‘secessionists’—a reference to the communist split from the socialist movement in 1921. In contrast, Sama and Ciaño vigorously defended the telegram and it was approved with a ‘slight modification’.[[566]](#footnote-566) Dissent was growing. Days later, SOMA members were thrown out of the section in Piñeres (Aller) for criticising the leadership.[[567]](#footnote-567)

Meanwhile, the problems faced by the coal industry only increased. SOMA called a third general mining strike in late summerwhen the companies‘cancelled their payments to the retirement fund’.[[568]](#footnote-568) This strike took place in a rapidly changing political situation. The republican-socialist government had fallen and was replaced by a Radical-led cabinet, which only lasted until the beginning of October. In Asturias, a new civil governor was appointed, Pérez de Rozas of the Radical Party, whose attitude towards industrial conflicts was markedly different to his predecessor’s. He later remarked in the midst of a conflict in Trubia that ‘the State has no other solution but to maintain the prestige of its authority above everything when there is an attempt to break it’.[[569]](#footnote-569) Strike action would be interpreted as an attack on political authority and would not receive the same conciliatory and negotiation-based approached pursued by previous governors, notably Alonso Mallol.

The general mining strike both demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the previous solution and provided another opportunity for a more radical stance. Despite tensions, the strike was relatively peaceful.[[570]](#footnote-570)Though ‘[t]his time both Communists and anarchosyndicalists supported the strike’, the CNT had been initially reluctant to become involved.[[571]](#footnote-571) The solution found was an extension of the March agreement: the subsidy system would be extended around Spain, the retirement scheme in Asturias would no longer be provisional and the subsidies would continue, while the government would continue to work towards a definitive solution.[[572]](#footnote-572) This did not leave the workforce entirely convinced: *El Noroeste* claimed that González Peña’s speech in Mieres was not met with the expected enthusiasm.[[573]](#footnote-573) Grassroots militancy soon manifested itself in strikes in October and November due to the non-payment of wages by mining companies in Mieres, Laviana and Aller.[[574]](#footnote-574) In late October, *El Noroeste* grimly asked what the last mining strike had been fought for as those on the subsidy and retirement schemes had still not been paid.[[575]](#footnote-575)

These wildcat strikes were the traditional response to problems at the mines, but they also need to be understood as protests at SOMA’s inability to solve the problems faced by struggling mine workers. The SOMA condemned the spontaneous strikes in its usual manner—the Mieres Regional Committee blamed strikes on ‘irresponsible elements’ who were ‘taking advantage of the discontent caused by the delays in workers being paid’—and advocated patience.[[576]](#footnote-576) Patience was small consolation for mine workers who were not receiving wages, particularly when strike action worked. Despite the Regional Committee’s opposition, 2,000 went on strike in Mieres in mid-November with some effect; on 17 November Fábrica de Mieres announced that October’s wages would be paid the following day. Strike action achieved what the bureaucracy seemed unable to negotiate. Importantly, however, two mines were still on strike on 18 November in solidarity with other mine workers despite having been paid. Frustrated with the deteriorating situation and SOMA’s inability to provide a vision or strategy to improve the state of affairs, miners were turning to one another for an alternative strategy—through grassroots unity—to defend their interests: ‘[t]he socialist and communist workers remain united in this resolute struggle [...] set on forcing Fábrica de Mieres to pay owed wages’.[[577]](#footnote-577)

SOMA’s criticism of ‘irresponsible elements’ was out of step with what was happening at mines. In fact, the September mining strike had been an important catalyst for both criticism of the union leadership and the acceleration of cross-ideology work-based solidarity. A strike committee was elected by an assembly at La Nueva with representatives not only from the SOMA, SUM-CNT and SUM-ISR, but also a representative for the unaffiliated, while in Ciaño-Santa Ana a ‘huge [*magna*] assembly’ was attended by workers of all ‘tendencies’ and at assemblies in Mieres and Sama mine workers criticised those leading the strike.[[578]](#footnote-578) Unity initiatives, building on pre-existing associational traditions, provided a framework for more action and fomented dissent. This had existed since the beginning of the year. During the February strike some joint strike committees had been formed, though *Avance* had poured scorn on such initiatives.[[579]](#footnote-579) Two months later, young *subsidiados* reportedly even created a ‘united front’ in Moreda.[[580]](#footnote-580) As such, SOMA’s failure stimulated a shift towards greater grassroots unity during 1933 while dissent continued to grow. At an assembly chaired by a SOMA member in September, workers agreed not to return to the mines until the SOMA solution had been discussed at the assembly and strongly criticised the socialist mayor of San Martín del Rey Aurelio for preventing them from holding meetings.[[581]](#footnote-581) The strike had made dissent more visible and vocal.

While such unity initiatives were piecemeal, the year had begun with a more concerted effort at overcoming ideological boundaries in Blimea via the Comité Pro-Unidad de los Trabajadores (CPUT: Pro-Workers’ Unity Committee).[[582]](#footnote-582) The initiative tapped into a desire for such strategies; José Estrada, the socialist representative on the committee, claimed that the CPUT had ‘enthusiastic backing’ in 21 of the 23 sections of the SOMA Regional Committee in San Martín del Rey Aurelio—a traditional SOMA bastion—and there was also support from the communist CGTU (Confederación General de los Trabajadores Unitaria—United General Confederation of Workers) in Requejo (Turón).[[583]](#footnote-583) But the socialist hierarchy was not interested. The Agrupación Socialista and SOMA Regional Committee met to discuss the ‘indiscipline’ of Estrada for conspiring with ‘external and enemy elements’.[[584]](#footnote-584) The SOMA quickly expelled Estrada, who hit back, criticising the ‘spiritual myopia’ of the SOMA bureaucracy.[[585]](#footnote-585) The CPUT was an outright challenge to SOMA’s strategy. The socialist leadership continued to position themselves in the centre of the political spectrum at the beginning of 1933, with extremism on either side, as an *Avance* editorial made clear.[[586]](#footnote-586) The far left was the same as the far right, and even in connivance with one another. This was hardly propitious for unity initiatives.

The CPUT was a reaction to the frustration at the socialist strategy; for Estrada, SOMA had become not a trade union of the class struggle, but one of class collaboration.[[587]](#footnote-587) Rather than expecting one union to swallow another, the Blimea committee proposed that unity could be formed through respect for different ideologies and a pragmatic and tactical alliance.[[588]](#footnote-588) This coalition strategy predated Joaquín Maurín’s Workers’ Alliance, which is generally cited as the first attempt to do so. Discussion of Workers’ Alliances usually begins with Maurín—with the initiative cited as his ‘brainchild’—but coalition strategies and Workers’ Alliances as emanating or stemming from one source exterior to Asturias is reductive and occludes the wider preoccupation of trade unions, political parties and individuals with unity.[[589]](#footnote-589) It is true that the first Workers’ Alliance per se was formed in Barcelona in March 1933, ‘spearheaded by the dissident communists of Bloque Obrero y Campesino [BOC: Workers’ and Peasants Bloc]’ as a response to the perceived fascist threat in the context of the ascension of the Nazi party in Germany.[[590]](#footnote-590) The Alliance was broadened in December to include the UGT and PSOE—though the CNT remained outside—and aimed ‘to achieve unity of action of the working class to fight in defence of the hard-won gains against the right’s plans and, at the same time, to offer an alternative to the anarchist “adventurism”’.[[591]](#footnote-591) In the wake of the November 1933 election defeat, the socialist leadership modified its attitude. The leadership publicly welcomed alliances, but in practice tried to subvert and control such initiatives, preferring to use the alliances as a way of strengthening the socialist movement in areas it was weaker, such as in Catalonia.[[592]](#footnote-592) Moreover, in Asturias it would actually be the anarchists of Gijón who would make the first move to propose a Workers’ Alliance with the socialists, who changed to a strategy of building alliances rather than confrontation in response to the changed context of 1934. The agreement signed in 1934 would be a pact between the leadership of the unions rather than emerging from below. In other words, the CPUT presaged the Asturian Workers’ Alliance signed between the anarchist and socialist leaderships by over a year, but the socialists were not yet interested.

While it is difficult to see the CPUT as the root of the Workers’ Alliance, it was an attempt to formulate a new, alliance-based strategy. Thus, grassroots frustrations led some to seek alternative strategies that challenged the principle of union politics, looking to horizontal collaboration, rather than respecting the vertical nature of syndical structures. The CPUT built on the mechanisms of grassroots democracy, but went beyond it, challenging the principles of the SOMA itself, and clashing with the communist policy of a ‘united front from below’.[[593]](#footnote-593) Correspondingly, the CPUT was symptomatic of a desire for change and a new direction, attempting to forge unity above the interests of individual parties and trade unions, and recognising that convergence was unlikely. The committee was formed by socialist, anarchist and communist delegates, and even had a representative for the non-unionised, and Estrada emphasised respect for other ideologies, calling for ‘the fusion of all workers for the defence of common interests and rights, without anyone giving up their ideology or tendency and without having to leave their respective Unions’.[[594]](#footnote-594) In effect, Estrada put his finger on the problem faced by the unions: how could the continual calls for unity be achieved if unions refused to negotiate with others? He declared it ‘absurd’ to expect that one union would absorb another. Consequently, ‘unity has to be made beyond ideological tendencies and beyond, moreover, all of your leaders’.[[595]](#footnote-595)

There was evidently a growing rift between the hierarchy and grassroots during 1933, which is frequently highlighted by historians.[[596]](#footnote-596) But in Asturias, even while the SOMA had lost touch with its members, it had not imploded or collapsed as an organisation: ‘militant miners remained *within* the union, even though they found themselves in conflict with its policy and its leadership’.[[597]](#footnote-597) Members did not leave the SOMA despite it failing to protect them or provide a viable strategy for the progress of the working class for two reasons. First, there was no viable alternative. While a few members did leave for other groups, the communists and anarchists were relatively weak. Secondly, while there was discontent, this was not strong enough to break away completely. This was patent in the debate at the FSA Extraordinary Congress over possible collaboration with the PCE during the coming elections of November 1933. A possible electoral alliance with communists proposed by the Sama delegate was hotly debated and supported to differing extents by delegates from the coalfields and Oviedo, while Mieres was against. After the Executive Commission came out against the proposal, some delegates changed their mind and a vote was taken authorising the Executive Commission to form an appropriate alliance if considered necessary, which was only rejected by Boo (Aller)—where socialists and communists were collaborating with one another—and Hueria de San Andrés (San Martín del Rey Aurelio).[[598]](#footnote-598) In the end, the hierarchy commanded enough authority and respect for the proposal to be rejected. Nevertheless, the socialists could not prevent local initiatives, and grassroots co-operation continued to be the vehicle through which the rank-and-file sought to find and organise a strategy to move forward and solve their problems. Moreover, unity initiatives were suffused with the emotional charge that broader solidarity meant within Marxist ideology: unity was progressive, forward looking and fuelled enthusiasm for a better tomorrow. Accordingly, unity was a vehicle for the expression of radicalism and it was through these initiatives that radical, militant stances were channelled, rather than through the implosion of the SOMA.

The more frequent use of violence in 1933 was indicative of both the increased tensions and a culture of confrontation in which the use of violence against opponents was legitimised. There were skirmishes in the streets of Oviedo in late August. ‘Fascists’ were now in the streets ‘in a challenging manner’, to which ‘several lads who were peacefully strolling around the plaza de la República’ responded and punches were exchanged.[[599]](#footnote-599) Nevertheless, in the midst of the mining strike in September, the SOMA Executive Committee distanced itself from the use of violence by strikers in Mieres to stop the union-authorised transportation of coal to Fábrica de Mieres, declaring ‘violence is solely for the weak’, while at the same time using the violence as a warning to the mining companies: ‘the companies and authorities would do well to interpret it as the firm resolve and intent to take the movement to the limits of resistance’.[[600]](#footnote-600) In a similar way to Largo Caballero’s use of revolutionary rhetoric in 1934, the union instrumentalised violence as a bargaining tool while also condemning it. This was a fine line to walk. Over the coming months the combination of radical rhetoric with the actions of the government would forge a dynamic that legitimised and mobilised followers in favour of revolutionary alternatives.[[601]](#footnote-601)

The sporadic use of violence was symptomatic of a wider militant stance. Increased rebelliousness and militancy in Asturias coincided with Largo Caballero’s increasingly radical rhetoric and the collapse of socialist-republican governmental collaboration. The JS from Hueria de San Andrés (San Martín del Rey Aurelio) called for more *controversias* as they were ‘the best way of propagating socialist ideals and educating the masses in a Marxist and revolutionary way, inciting, thus, the rebellious spirit innate in all proletarians’.[[602]](#footnote-602) This was not simply contesting the categories ‘radical’ and ‘revolutionary’, but actually trying to take this further in a more energised, radicalising fashion. Rather than identity politics and jostling for position, this was now action with the JS in the vanguard. The emphasis was no longer on revolutionary as sensible and moderate, but as proactive and militant, which should be understood in the urgency of the rapidly changing political context of 1933.

In a similar way to Largo Caballero’s strategy of advocating obtaining power through elections *and* other means, this new radicalism was not positioned in opposition to the Republic, but was rather a more aggressive approach to and definition of the regime. The day before the socialist-republican government fell, *Avance*’s editorial called for a more aggressive imposition of the regime:

All that of “Republic for all” is for all those who want a Republic, but there are people who do not want it, as occurs with every new regime. Well, these people should not be taken into count in the progress of the regime. The Republic has to be introduced against them.[[603]](#footnote-603)

The struggle against the Republic’s enemies was framed in more aggressive terms. The Republic had to be introduced in a more radical manner, disregarding the enemies of the regime. The language was more militant, but it was far from a decided rejection of the Republic, still less a call for imminent revolution. Striking anarchists in La Felguera were ridiculed for thinking they could defeat Duro-Felguera or carry out social revolution.[[604]](#footnote-604) Greater militancy and radicalism did not mean that the revolution was imminent and despite their radical rhetoric, the socialists were still open to gaining power by electoral means. Even when Lerroux formed a government, the Turón JS’s militant call for action was not a rejection of the republic:

Before they change the course of the Republic towards the right, we will exhaust ourselves in the struggle to prevent it. This is not a threat. We are determined to throw ourselves into the struggle, no matter how hard it is, before they take the direction of the current revolution away from us.[[605]](#footnote-605)

The militant, radical stance was a question of confrontational positioning rather than a rejection of the regime.

During the election campaign, the socialist rhetoric in *Avance* became increasingly militant. The radical vision of the Republic was conceptualised in class terms:

IF THEY SPEAK TO YOU OF REPUBLIC FOR ALL, REPLY (sic): Republic for me, because I work. Not for everyone. Not the capitalist who lives at my expense. No to equal defence for his misappropriation [*usurpación*] and my rights. I want my Republic, the Social Republic.[[606]](#footnote-606)

This was polarising rhetorical brinkmanship ahead of the elections, but nevertheless it illustrates the recovery of the future: the economic situation was deteriorating and with the socialists freed from the responsibility of national government, they could begin to project a new future, beyond the limits of the governments of the first biennium in which they had participated. This new Republican future was more strongly defined: it would be a ‘social Republic’. Evidently, this aggressive assertion of a particular vision was a means of distancing themselves from electoral rivals, but the effect was to reject the present and project an alternative future.

Such rhetoric cannot be understood without the frustrations of the previous months, which were not limited to the mine workers and the deteriorating economic situation. Struggles in the pueblos were wider than trade union politics. Agitation by Tenants’ Leagues and opposition by landlords continued in 1933. Tenants in Oviedo were critical of the lack of work carried out by landlords to sanitise dwellings while in Sama, the League warned landlords to stop evicting tenants and to follow the procedures established by the law.[[607]](#footnote-607) In Aller, Cerviño, a SHE doctor and well-known local rightist (he had previously been a councillor and had been re-elected in 1931 but lost out when the elections were re-run), was taken to court over his refusal to pay a fine over water.[[608]](#footnote-608) There were wider tensions: *Avance* criticised Cerviño for not treating the injured properly in Aller, he was taken to court again and fined over water charges, and accused of co-authoring a pamphlet attacking the mayor of Aller.[[609]](#footnote-609) The struggle in Aller with local landlords got to the stage that a boycott of a theatre was organised by the local League.[[610]](#footnote-610) Three explosives [*petardos*] were thrown onto the roof of the home of a lawyer who advised property owners in Langreo.[[611]](#footnote-611) There was speculation that a court judgement that had decided on two evictions was the cause, though the Tenants’ League immediately distanced itself.[[612]](#footnote-612) Such conflicts served to widen the fault lines in local communities, even as the League tried to emphasise moderation. Similarly, conflicts over religion continued. In 1933, Hulleras del Turón schools were investigated to find out if it was true that they demanded baptism certificates from those registering. The district mayor reported that the staff took children to mass against the orders of the school inspector, which led to a well-known local socialist being threatened by the company.[[613]](#footnote-613) A short time later at the Santiago de Apóstol school, there were rumours and investigation into inappropriate sexual conduct with pupils by members of staff. True or not, it served to strengthen pre-existing suspicions.[[614]](#footnote-614)

The *ayuntamientos* were frustrated by the obstinacy of landlords, but also at the drawn-out struggles with the mining companies, such as over the failure to fulfil promises to the authorities and local communities of repairing water supplies. For the *ayuntamientos*, this was not how the relationship should work; not only were companies breaking their social contract with the local community, but they were refusing to pay heed to the authorities. When they did, however, the *ayuntamientos* declared their satisfaction, as in the case of the vote of thanks by the *ayuntamiento* of Aller to SHE for its aid in building the water supply.[[615]](#footnote-615) But the *ayuntamientos* faced problems in their role as guarantors and defenders of not only the local community, but also their own workforces, due to financial problems. The *ayuntamiento* of Oviedo had to dismiss workers due to the lack of funds and the *ayuntamiento* of Langreo reduced the working week, blaming it on a lack of income due to strikes.[[616]](#footnote-616) This was a marked contrast to previous years when municipal authorities had taken on those dismissed by the private sector. The determination to use municipal resources to implement reform and help those struggling in a difficult economic situation was under threat. At the request of SOMA, the *ayuntamiento* of Aller contributed to paying the debt the SOMA had run up with local shops through its aid to the unemployed, while the *ayuntamiento* in Mieres distributed a cash payment to the unemployed on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Republic.[[617]](#footnote-617)

The municipal authorities also felt increasingly embattled by the continued attacks from the right-wing press, with rumours of the bankruptcy of Oviedo and Langreo.[[618]](#footnote-618) The *ayuntamiento* in Langreo was put under considerable strain due to the major conflict between metal workers and Duro-Felguera which started in November 1932 and lasted almost ten months.[[619]](#footnote-619) The situation was tense from the start; clashes at a meeting of the *ayuntamiento* of Langreo had led to the suspension of the communist councillors.[[620]](#footnote-620) Negotiations were hamstrung by both the intransigence of Duro-Felguera and CNT fears over arrests, given that the union refused to conform to the 1932 Law of Associations.[[621]](#footnote-621) The civil governor also contributed to the pressure by ringing the mayor to say that the CNT ‘elements’ did not ‘officially’ exist and ‘the [strike] committee should not be addressed at all’.[[622]](#footnote-622) Pressure on the local authorities had been further increased by the level of violence, which included the use of bombs used against businesses, members of the commercial elite, and even the shop belonging to the mayor of Langreo, Celso Fernández.[[623]](#footnote-623)

The language of the councillors became more radical as a result of their impotence. The *ayuntamiento* of Langreo, after months of battling with Carbones La Nueva, decided to take the mining company to court for not repairing damage to public services (such as the water supply), while there was a call for the director of Carbones Asturianos to be arrested.[[624]](#footnote-624) Socialist and radical-socialist councillors even presented a motion in the context of the September mining strike in September that now questioned property rights. They demanded ‘new legislation’ on ‘property of mines’, with mine workers taking precedence over the owners, with one councillor reasoning that ‘mining concessions represent a leasehold contract and when one of the parties fails to uphold the agreement, the contract is broken and should then be receded’. The motion surprised communist councillors, who claimed that it would not achieve anything and that it failed to answer the demands of the working class.[[625]](#footnote-625) Property rights were being questioned in the context of the local community with the mining companies understood as having broken a social contract with the mine workers and local communities.

Indeed, the economic situation only deteriorated. At the beginning of 1934 the mining companies publicly declared that delays in payment to the retired and *subsidiados* were not their fault; they were fulfilling their obligations.[[626]](#footnote-626) Nonetheless, complaints continued over the following months about non-payment and in late August, it was announced that *subsidiados* would be paid what they were owed for April, May, June and July, with the SOMA having managed to avoid the strike it had felt obliged to threaten at the beginning of August.[[627]](#footnote-627) It was not only the *subsidiados*; Fábrica de Mieres was struggling. At the end of March the company, which employed six thousand workers in its workshops and mines, went into administration. Pedro Pidal, the primary shareholder, blamed the Republic for the bankruptcy.[[628]](#footnote-628) Workers had not been paid for months and shops in Mieres threatened indefinite closure, which was delayed and later cancelled when the company declared it would soon pay the owed wages.[[629]](#footnote-629) At the same time, in mid-April, workers at Industrial Asturiana had not been paid for the previous three months, and a month later bakeries closed in Mieres and Aller as workers had not been paid—IA workers received bread via vouchers.[[630]](#footnote-630) At the Santa María mine in Laviana, mine workers were owed three months of wages and the contractor went bust. Workers took the matter to the arbitration committee, hoping that the mine would be handed to them to run. They looked for support from the civil governor who, far from doing so, threatened to arrest them.[[631]](#footnote-631) The workers’ attitude that work and their families should be the priority clashed with the civil governor’s suspicion that such a strategy was an attack on property rights.

While it is difficult to be measure the exact effects, delays in payment of wages or unemployment subsidies, along with short-time working, can only have added to the frustration and discontent in the coalfields. Non-payment did not automatically lead to ‘great disturbances’ in terms of strikes, as Castejón highlights, but the longer term effects of the unpredictability of pay probably had more important effects for fomenting radicalism than unemployment on its own in that basic expectations—that the workforce, or former workforce—would be paid went unfulfilled. [[632]](#footnote-632) Such expectations were part of the broader social contract between the companies and their workforce. These economic factors did not determine the revolutionary insurrection, but they were important for the wider experience in the coalfields in 1934 and fuelled resentment and radicalism through the attack on mine workers’ dignity and identity as a ‘worker’.

## The Emergence of ‘Fascism’ and Community Anxiety

The Falange was only founded in Madrid in October 1933 and would not become a mass party until 1936. Nevertheless, during the months prior to October, fascism “appeared” and became part of the language of politics in the coalfields of Asturias. The first posters identified as fascist were plastered up in Oviedo in March 1933 and days later communist-organised ‘antifascist’ rallies took place in the mining valleys.[[633]](#footnote-633) Communists seemed to take the lead, with the SUM-ISR electing representatives to send to the antifascist conference in Paris and arranging a demonstration in Turón, though Erice highlights that antifascism was not central to the PCE in Asturias in 1933. Rather, internal criticism and infighting were the main feature of the regional conference in April.[[634]](#footnote-634) *Avance* ridiculed the first ‘visit’ by fascism, which included posters plastered up next to their offices and ‘death to *Avance*’. However, as yet there was no sense of threat and socialists do not seem to have talked about fascism at rallies.[[635]](#footnote-635) While the conference of the Asturian JS in July did create a three-person antifascist committee to organise the antifascist struggle, the programme for the JS summer school in August did not contain any references to fascism.[[636]](#footnote-636)

The term was vaguely used and the left did not have a clear idea of what fascism actually was in 1933.[[637]](#footnote-637) Fascism had previously been an ‘epithet’ in struggles within the left, but Hitler’s coming to power changed the situation, though the term would continue to be used pejoratively against rivals.[[638]](#footnote-638) The flexibility of the term was such that in 1933

many Spaniards labelled as fascistnot only self-proclaimed followers of Mussolini and Hitler, but also suspected *enemies* of the *Republic* and the *people*, including the entire political right (ranging from Falange, the party of the young Primo de Rivera, to Gil Robles’ CEDA, often described as ‘Vaticanist’ or ‘clerical fascism’) and rival groups within the left, as well as the aristocracy, the employers, the army and the Catholic Church.[[639]](#footnote-639)

Even the UGT newspaper had declared that Spanish ‘indigenous fascism’ would be ‘monarchist-clerical-capitalist’.[[640]](#footnote-640)

Fascism became increasingly part of the language used in the coalfields in 1933. Notions of a fascist threat were not necessarily foregrounded, but they were present, forming a crucial part of the political atmosphere in 1933 and 1934 and influencing the understanding of situation in the pueblos themselves. The lack of “real” fascism combined with the desire to combat fascism led to the identification and “creation” of fascists in the coalfield communities. As such, the identification of fascism was symptomatic of pre-existing political divisions but also of the sense of being under threat. The idea of fascism reworked divisions in the pueblos: fascism and Catholicism *could* be consubstantial, though this was not necessarily shared by all leftists.

In Asturias, fascism was seen as linked to other forces on the right such as the ‘reformist-federal (?) (sic)-conservative-fascist-monarchist’ majority in the coastal *ayuntamiento* of Candás or as a way of describing the members of AP in Infiesto.[[641]](#footnote-641) The lines on the right were blurred: José Antonio Primo de Rivera, leader of the Falange, was elected in November 1933 on a rightist list which included the CEDA, Carlists and monarchists. The CEDA had an ambiguous relationship with fascism, oscillating between a ‘prudent distancing and an admiration which was not always hidden’.[[642]](#footnote-642) García acknowledges that ‘many in the left probably used the word as a “bogeyman”’ but highlights that ‘the CEDA and other right-wing groups were experiencing varying degrees of fascistisation’.[[643]](#footnote-643) The line between Catholic organisations and the Falange in Asturias was also far from clear. The ‘most active elements’ of the Falangist student union came from Catholic Action, there were forms for joining Falange at the offices of *Región* and at Catholic Centres, canon Manuel Gutiérrez was at the heart of Falange in Asturias and in Moreda the SCOM would become a centre for the Falange.[[644]](#footnote-644) The perceived association between fascism and the church is clear in the attack on the Catholic Youth centre in Oviedo in the wake of the handing out manifestos of the Movimiento Español Sindicalista (MES: Spanish Syndicalist Movement)—a forerunner of Falange and ‘another step in the process of the maturing of the Spanish radical right’.[[645]](#footnote-645) The following day, *Avance* claimed Catholicism and fascism went hand-in-hand.[[646]](#footnote-646) Other reports followed which linked the church to fascism, such as when the parish priest of Blimea had reportedly called for a Spanish Hitler to solve the country’s problems.[[647]](#footnote-647) *Avance* tried to clarify the situation by declaring that fascism was a ‘reactionary movement’, which was different from others in that it emphasised a strong centralised state which could ‘absorb communist elements [with ease]’. It should not be confused with the other force of reaction, ‘clericalism’. The article then muddied the waters by predicting that Spanish fascism would be based on Catholic elements, given that Spain did not demonstrate the ‘combination of circumstances’ necessary for ‘authentic fascism’.[[648]](#footnote-648) Meanwhile, wider socialist discourse began to describe Catholicism and fascism as ‘the two sides of the same coin’, which developed from the projection of the church as enemy of the socialists.[[649]](#footnote-649) Interpretations of fascism were thus entangled with pre-existing anticlerical suspicions.

While some articles tried to describe and define fascism, others used it as a derogatory epithet. Evidently, the situation was complex and the term ‘fascist’ flexible. What was important was that the term was understood fundamentally as a threat to and an opponent of the working class left. Fascism was to be a ‘warning’ for the ‘conscience’ of the working class.[[650]](#footnote-650) Indeed, the widespread interpretation on the left was of fascism as the last ‘bulwark’ of the capitalist bourgeoisie, and the situation in Germany and Italy was interpreted accordingly.[[651]](#footnote-651) In the coalfields, with resistance to legislation at local level often centring on religious issues, such as cemeteries and education, the church had already been identified as, if not an enemy of the Republic, then resistant to the Republic’s attempts at modernising Spain. A JS note publicising an ‘antifascist event’ which would take place at the end of August in Oviedo described the JS as ‘always alert to the ploys that attempt to hinder the revolutionary march of the Republic’.[[652]](#footnote-652) The growing sense of fascism as a future possibility was steadily sharpening the idea of the threat, which made calls for action more urgent. The interpretation of fascism as linked to reaction and counter-revolution meant that it was frequently and consciously contrasted with social revolution, bringing the latter into sharper focus. Options were reduced and fear grew. This contributed to the radicalisation of politics as these fears contributed to a search for a new way for the left to move forward. More militant rhetoric was espoused in response to the perceived emergence of fascism. Consequently, militancy was bolstered by fascism and the perceived threat helped to stimulate the turn towards more radical possibilities—either a more radical Republic, as previously noted, or a more revolutionary future.

The anxiety over the hidden nature of fascism fed a sense of its creeping growth. Fascist propaganda in La Felguera had been slipped into a magazine at an *ateneo*.[[653]](#footnote-653) The JS in Trubia criticised the throwing of ‘fascist propaganda’ from a car and linked it to the priest of Udrión and alleged secret meetings.[[654]](#footnote-654) This subterfuge also drew on existing ideas of ‘Jesuitical’—understood as hidden or underhand—methods even as it demonstrated that ‘fascism’ only existed on the margins. Warned of the threat of fascism and its possibility, people were on the lookout for it at local level. Thus, as Souto argues, though there were few fascists in Spain in 1933, the use of the term needs to be grounded in the particular historical context, with fascism understood as a ‘threat’.[[655]](#footnote-655) And identified fascism needed to be fought. Seven were arrested at a skirmish after the MES manifestos were handed out in Oviedo and the JS reacted strongly, issuing a pamphlet in response to the manifesto, though it was banned by the civil governor.[[656]](#footnote-656) The force of the term fascist was such that it required an immediate response.

With such a malleable term, groups and individuals were identified as fascists by others according to their own criteria and understanding of fascism, despite the lack of actual fascist organisations. Fascism was thus used to denominate existing community divides over religion and politics and drove fears about left-wing hegemony in the coalfields. The foreman of the Cadavío mine (Langreo) strenuously denied accusations that he was a ‘true fascist’ and had drawn swastikas on payslips.[[657]](#footnote-657) The term fascist heightened fears and was an effective call to arms. Complaints were levelled in Sotrondio at the woman who rented the cinema space at the Casa del Pueblo for putting on fascist and ‘Jesuit’ films. Not only was this fascist propaganda, but it was also taking place in the Casa del Pueblo of the ‘*pueblo* with most socialist faith of the province’.[[658]](#footnote-658) The left understood itself as victimised and under attack; militancy was a backlash.

Unsurprisingly, the notion of fascism was present in the election campaign. It proved to be a way of structuring and denigrating the opposition, and mobilising the left. However, during the last week of elections it was more frequent for the language of fascism to be used in reports from the pueblos, where it was often framed as a warning and call to action, than in editorials exhorting readers to vote.[[659]](#footnote-659) Nevertheless, the day before the election *Avance*’s headline read ‘[e]lector: In a few hours you are going to decide the destiny of Spain, between fascism and socialism’ and on the polling day, 19 November, *Avance* described fascism as the ‘last bastion of capitalism’, though the emphasis was on a socialist victory and proclaiming social revolution.[[660]](#footnote-660) Fascism had become part of the prism through which politics was seen at grassroots.

The situation was certainly tense in the pueblos, where the political lines dividing local communities came under pressure in the election campaign. In Sotrondio, shopkeepers were identified as at the centre of rival political campaigning, recruiting supporters for the right through the use of customers’ debt, which again indicates the existence of rightists at local level. The article appealed to the working class not to vote for the ‘cacique’ and warned the shopkeepers that if they continued along the same road ‘we will need to take steps’ as ‘we will not consent to any of the pressure you have been putting on the working class whatsoever’.[[661]](#footnote-661) Even so, rightists were still presented as a negligible presence not representative of the local communities and the prominence of women in campaigning for the right was commented on derogatorily. In San Martín del Rey Aurelio, they were the ‘those catechising ladies’ while in Santullano (Mieres) rightist campaigning was attributed to ‘four women’ and two teachers.[[662]](#footnote-662) The use of ‘four’ is more likely to be a linguistic trope to indicate scarcity than a precise description of the number of women involved. This reinforced the claim that these individuals were not representative of the local community. Indeed, rightist campaigners were frequently projected as either a minority or from outside the pueblo; ‘*beatas*’ arrived in the village of Sinariegos (Aller) directed by ‘friars and priests’ to criticise socialists.[[663]](#footnote-663) Such comments that belittled rightist female mobilisation were underscored by an undercurrent of misogynism and masculine work-based identities on the left. Women were presented as puppets of the church and the church was identified as the centre of propaganda and political activities during the election campaign.[[664]](#footnote-664) Despite anxieties about the threat of fascism, the right was still understood as a marginal, numerically inferior force and frequently feminised. This was not considered representative of the Republican pueblo.

However, such framing of the election campaign did not tell the whole story. Women were at the forefront of the election campaign for both sides as for the first time they were able to vote in national elections. The socialist candidacy in Asturias included two women, and Mateos has meticulously uncovered how socialist women—who often young—were heavily involved in the election campaign, often giving speeches.[[665]](#footnote-665) The criticism of the ‘*beatas*’ was indicative of the level of female mobilisation on the right. There were tensions inherent in the need for the mobilisation of Catholic women combined with conservative attitudes; activism was justified in that they were engaging with politics ‘to defend their husbands and children: they had come of the home in defence of their home’.[[666]](#footnote-666)

Despite the frictions and radical rhetoric, the elections were reported to have been calm in Sama, Aller and Mieres.[[667]](#footnote-667) Yet tensions were evident. *Avance* denounced vote-buying, coercion and that 800 names were missing from the census while *El Noroeste* reported coercion by socialists in Aller.[[668]](#footnote-668) The final results showed that AP-PRLD candidacy had clearly won. Teodomiro Menéndez, the most successful PSOE candidate, received 85,386 votes. The socialists were followed by a centrist list with 39,220 and the communists, led by Dolores Ibárruri with 17,399.[[669]](#footnote-669) Despite the importance of ‘fascism’ before the elections, little was said in their wake, except on the occasion of the attempted constitution of Falange in Asturias, which was blocked by the civil governor.[[670]](#footnote-670)

Nationally, the CEDA obtained the highest number of deputies followed by the Radical Party, while the PSOE’s number of seats practically halved and the left republicans were severely reduced. As the electoral law favoured coalitions, the governmental parties of the Constituent Cortes paid a high price for their fragmentation. The ‘results were a catastrophe’ for left Republicans and the socialists, who even went as far as demanding the dissolution of parliament and the convocation of fresh elections.[[671]](#footnote-671) The election results were interpreted broadly by the socialists as threatening the Republic itself. Suddenly, the Republic was not how they had imagined it to be. The Republic was, for them, intimately linked to the modernising, reformist project. How therefore could the right govern the Republic? This is not to go as far as to describe the legislation of 1931 as ‘sectarian’ or affirm that the left had a ‘permanent position’ whereby ‘they would accept only the permanent government of the left’, as Payne asserts. Rather, the left was unwilling to countenance a right-wing government that refused to declare its outright loyalty to the Republic. This is quite different to the socialist belief that they were the only ones capable of carrying out *real* reform.[[672]](#footnote-672)

At a meeting of the UGT and PSOE executives in late November Largo Caballero called for a revolutionary movement against fascism; the press release from the meeting did not mention fascism, but did explain the need to be on the alert due to the danger of ‘reactionary elements’ taking power.[[673]](#footnote-673) Calls for revolution continued, though there was a lack of clarity about where it would come from, what the trigger would be and what objectives it would have.[[674]](#footnote-674) In other words, the general threat to the left was heightened and the legalistic route to power had been blocked. It was at this point, according to Shubert, that the Asturian socialists rejected the Republic for the first time when *Avance* denounced democracy.[[675]](#footnote-675) This was the narrowing of the ‘double scenario’—of either power through elections or via other means—to that of taking power through non-electoral means after the elections. The socialists had talked themselves into a corner, but *Avance*’s declarations were no point of no return. Rather, they were a further example of the radical funnelling towards revolutionary options.

The election results drew the political situation in the pueblos (and more widely) sharply into focus. In the mining valleys of Asturias, the socialists were clear victors, as the following table shows, yet a significant number voted for the AP-PRLD and the communists. Aller, for example, was divided between socialists in the lower valley and the AP-PRLD in the mountains, though ‘the communists obtained many votes in the whole municipal district’.[[676]](#footnote-676)

Table 3. The national election results in Asturias (1933)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Socialists | AP-PRLD | Communists |
| Langreo | 5,560 | 2,916 | 2,119 |
| San Martín del Rey Aurelio | 4,330 | 1,092 | 470 |
| Laviana | 2,673 | 1,201 | 448 |
| Mieres | 10,117 | 4,963 | 4,332 |
| Oviedo | 13,587 | 11,750 | 2,442 |

Sources: *El Noroeste*, 25, 26 November 1933; *El Carbayón*, 25, 26 November 1933; *La Voz de Asturias*, 25, 26 November 1933.The centre vote, which received less than a thousand votes in Langreo and only 25 in Laviana, has not been included.

The elections worked as a barometer of local politics and suddenly socialists were revealed to be under pressure, and even in a minority. Different groups tried to make sense of the situation according to the conditions in their villages and towns. The strength of the rightist vote disconcerted socialists even if they had obtained most votes at local level, and so the elections provoked a certain amount of head-scratching. Calculations in Trubia could not account for the number of AP-PRLD votes and blamed workers who were ‘traitors’ and women, both the ‘*beatería*’ and the daughters of workers.[[677]](#footnote-677) Women, having voted for the first time in national elections, were identified as a significant contributory factor to the result, underlining the assumptions voiced during the parliamentary debate in October 1931 on female suffrage that women were more likely to vote for the right. Indeed, the conclusions drawn in 1933 were underscored again by misogyny: men who had voted for the right were ‘traitors’, while women were under the control of the priest—a clear denial of female agency.[[678]](#footnote-678) Prior to the 1933 elections the ‘*beatas*’ had been ridiculed as unrepresentative of the local community, but such assumptions had now been shaken: suddenly it seemed that they were more representative than had previously been imagined. The political divide was not necessarily gendered in practice, but it was understood in gendered terms. In the case of Murias (Aller)—‘the largest centre of reactionaries you will ever come across’—votes for the right were attributed tothe ‘disorganised and disoriented’ workers, the influence of both women (‘you do not get fed [by your mothers] if you do not go to mass’) and a SCOM-run cooperative, while abstention was ascribed to threats.[[679]](#footnote-679) Voting for the right was not interpreted as representing democratic choice: voters had been duped or coerced.

Social pressures appear to have intensified. An article written by Julia, ‘widow of Rico’ (who had been a notable local socialist), published in *Avance* indicated that as a socialist woman she felt isolated and embattled. She declared combatively that ‘[i]n Laviana, like everywhere else, it seems that being a socialist is a crime’. She proudly reclaimed the label ‘revolutionary’ other women were using to criticise her, writing ‘I state [*hago constar*] that I am a socialist revolutionary and I am not ashamed of it’. The pressures of the pueblo were translating into militant expressions of personal identity and were such that she publicly rejected rumours which were circling about a family issue with her brother-in-law, after her ‘self-respect was hurt’.[[680]](#footnote-680) Political action and social pressures were entwined and heightened in the wake of the elections, and she took the option of appealing to the wider socialist movement via the pages of *Avance*.

The election results had repercussions locally in the form of isolated episodes of violence and the organisation of boycotts, which also served to reassert the authority of the left in local communities after the elections. Some pressure was placed on those who had voted for the left, but most reports detail action directed at the right. Boycotts were organised in San Martín del Rey Aurelio, Turón and Aller.[[681]](#footnote-681) Shots were fired at the house of Francisco Álvarez Buylla in Oviedo, an address that had been previously denounced publicly as associated with electoral fraud in a possible revenge.[[682]](#footnote-682) In early January socialists of Orillés (Aller) threw stones and fired shots at the homes of young Catholics in the nearby village of Serrapio (Aller).[[683]](#footnote-683) Weeks later shots were fired at a meeting behind closed doors at ten o’clock at night in Felechosa (Aller), leading to the wounding of the local president of AP.[[684]](#footnote-684) These two episodes took place in areas with a higher percentage of votes for the AP-PRLD, but they should not be interpreted purely in the context of the elections. Rather, the election results had increased fears around fascism, and its hidden or marginal nature; the shots fired in Felechosa should be interpreted as a reaction to fears of conspiracy and a nebulous ‘fascist’ threat.

Fascists were reported to be ‘emerging’ in pueblos around Asturias, including in Turón.[[685]](#footnote-685) There were reports that a Marist in Trubia was giving ‘fascism classes’ while a ‘travelling salesman’ was singled out as propagandising for the *fascio*, selling its newspapers to fellow rail passengers and working for the ‘the supreme fixer [*hacedor*] *señor* Gil Robles and Company’, in addition to not paying his taxes.[[686]](#footnote-686) He was not only a threat to the left, but also damaging to the Republic through his tax avoidance. His professional activities were intimately linked to his political ideas and the implication was that readers should avoid any kind of contact with the ‘fascist’. Community divides were thus exacerbated by the election results, with fears of fascism playing an important role in the expression of this. Fascism could be found and identified, and even had a name and a face. In a similar case to the salesman, Cerviño, the SHE doctor who had already clashed with the *ayuntamiento* in Aller, was accused of discharging injured miners before they were healed—unless they were AP members—because of his ‘hatred’ of socialists. This was labelled a ‘fascist procedure’ in the headline.[[687]](#footnote-687) The doctor’s actions were understood through the prism of his political involvement. Similarly, a priest in Laviana was accused of planning a ‘fascist trade union’ via preparing lists of workers for road construction work.[[688]](#footnote-688) This was probably just an epithet, but shows the extent to which fascism was fixed as a term understood in opposition and as a rival to the left.

This identification of fascism in the pueblos was related to the international context. The left repeatedly drew Spain into this international narrative, which implied a threatening future. Events in Austria made things more immediate as Gil Robles was plausibly compared Dollfuss, serving to confirm Largo Caballero’s ideas to the rest of the socialist leadership.[[689]](#footnote-689) In Oviedo in February, the Asturian socialist leader González Peña declared that there were only two ‘roads’ which could be taken: ‘Germany and Italy, or Russia’. The audience, asked to choose, rose to their feet, applauded, and many shouted ‘viva *la revolución*’.[[690]](#footnote-690) Spain’s future was framed as narrowed to two opposing choices through comparing national politics to the international context. By mid-February *Avance* was beginning to talk of Austria as an example of what could happen in Spain.[[691]](#footnote-691) Talks were given in the *ateneos* about the international context and an excerpt from the French communist Doriot’s call for unity of action was published in *Avance*.[[692]](#footnote-692) Telegrams were sent from local political groups protesting at the treatment of Ernst Thaelmann as they had been over the Reichstag trial.[[693]](#footnote-693) This international consciousness was not limited to Asturias nor was it new, but there was a more immediate interest and consciousness due to the perceived fascist threat, to the extent that words were said at a civil wedding in Olloniego in memory of the ‘brave Austrians’.[[694]](#footnote-694) Nevertheless, a strike called in protest at what was happening in Austria was unevenly supported.[[695]](#footnote-695) The understanding of fascism based on what was happening abroad sharpened the reading and interpretation of the everyday realities in the coalfields and more widely and helped to structure action, even if it did not provoke as strong a response as what was happening on their doorsteps.

Fascism, and a nascent antifascist identity, galvanised the left. In June, antifascist propaganda rallies took place around Asturias, attended by thousands.[[696]](#footnote-696) An article from Tuilla (Langreo) tried to convince local inhabitants that fascists did exist locally, claiming that previous enemies had adapted to the ‘political circumstances’ and become fascists:

There are those who think that in Tuilla there are no fascists, and this is a serious mistake as this pueblo cannot be an exception, especially taking into account its political history. What is happening is that those individuals are so comfortable that they adapt to political circumstances admirably, as we have had occasion to see when the Republic arrived [...] Tuilla, we must not cross our arms deluding ourselves that is a paradise, as our enemies are taking up positions cautiously and astutely, taking advantage of our excessive confidence and good faith.[[697]](#footnote-697)

Fascism *needed* to exist because historically there were rightists in Tuilla. The article was a call to mobilisation through trying to forcibly identify the local forces of reaction with fascism. But even as fascism was said to exist and *would* exist, fascism as incarnated by the Falange was not present within the mining valleys. Indeed, in early 1934, the Falange was still without a centre in Asturias and struggled to mobilise support, as in the rest of Spain.[[698]](#footnote-698) The first official rallies did not take place until May, and even then they took place outside the mining valleys, for example in Infiesto and Luanco.[[699]](#footnote-699) It was CEDA that was firmly in the sights of the socialists. In September in the wake of the JAP rally at Covadonga, *Avance* claimed that ‘true fascism’ was CEDA, not the movements led by Primo de Rivera or the monarchist Goicoechea.[[700]](#footnote-700) Indeed, the CEDA was identified by antifascists as ‘the strongest anti-Republican coalition’.[[701]](#footnote-701) This is unsurprising given the increased prominence of the JAP since the rally at Escorial in April 1934, with its fascist style, and the CEDA’s key role in the parliament—even if it was not yet in government.[[702]](#footnote-702) Moreover, the JAP had started to organise in Asturias in the summer of 1933, at the same time that the language of fascism had begun to emerge amongst the left. However, the JAP would fail to create an effective network in the coalfields even by December 1935 only three sections—none of them in the coalfields—were ‘working effectively’ in December 1935.[[703]](#footnote-703)

The Republican state that the socialists had supported in the first biennium was now re-interpreted as a menacing threat, which could act as a midwife to fascism. As in Europe, fascism did not necessarily need to gain power by force. In the context of 1934 the left could draw parallels between the ascension to power ‘through stages’ of Dollfuss and Salazar with what was happening in Spain.[[704]](#footnote-704) In March, *Avance* had already declared that the modification of strike legislation meant the step from ‘hidden fascism’ to ‘open [*declarado*] fascism’.[[705]](#footnote-705) Fascism was interpreted as an as yet unconsummated future in which the state was projected to play a key role. Opposition to fascism and opposition to the government could easily be linked, and they would increasingly be so during the months leading up to October. However, while fascism informed worldviews and the expression of collective identities, it did not monopolise them as a frame of reference. State violence was not understood as necessarily fascist, but in directing itself against workers, it could easily be interpreted as such.[[706]](#footnote-706)

## Community, Control and Conflict

The coalfields went through an intense period of mobilisation and protest between February and April 1934, far greater than at any period to date so far during the Republic. A new cycle of protest and repression involved the state security forces and the working class in the coalfields. The conflict quickly escalated due to the actions of the security forces and the left’s determination to reaffirm its role at local level in what it considered to be disruption to the existing socio-political order.

Historically, the relationship between the left and the Civil Guard had been tense at best. The Civil Guard’s role in suppressing protest and the fact that they were recruited from outside the municipality (‘and looked upon as foreigners’), exacerbated the dividing line between the local community and the civil guards, who in turn ‘viewed the population in which they had to police with a mixture of sympathy, condescension and fear’.[[707]](#footnote-707) In the context of the Republic, there was ‘an underlying sensation that the corps was incompatible with the new political order’ and the republican-socialist government disagreed on what to do with the Civil Guard, even as the government used them to deal with protest.[[708]](#footnote-708) These tensions were fed by incidents of police brutality such as in Palaciosrubios, where two were dead as they celebrated the end of a strike, and Castilblanco, where four civil guards were killed in revenge for the killing of an individual during the breaking-up of a demonstration. The Assault Guard were created by the republican-socialist government as a modern, Republican police force which would show ‘hardness without brutality’ but despite being organised along different lines, armed with pistols—as opposed to the rifles of the Civil Guard—and mobilised in larger groups, they failed to offer a fundamentally different policing strategy, most infamously at Casas Viejas where 23 peasants were shot.[[709]](#footnote-709)

There were strong links between the Civil Guard and the mining companies. SHE had paid for the construction of Civil Guard barracks in the coalfields and many company guards were ex-civil guards.[[710]](#footnote-710) At the beginning of the Republic, councillors tabled motions calling for an end to the municipal authority’s role in paying the Civil Guard’s bills and even the dissolution or replacement of the corps, while in Mieres the Civil Guard post was removed from the town centre, though the *ayuntamiento* did agree to install and maintain Civil Guard telephone lines.[[711]](#footnote-711) Targeting the Civil Guard was not just down to the uneasy relationship between the corps and the local authorities or the pressure on municipal budgets as it also built on a sense of autonomy and that the left could police itself. The comments of a socialist councillor in Langreo in January 1932 during the discussion of the communist proposal for the *ayuntamiento* to stop paying the telephone bill are illuminating. The councillor declared that ‘the socialists are those who need the Civil Guard the least’.[[712]](#footnote-712) By extension, the *ayuntamiento* did not need the interference of other bodies in the management of municipal affairs. It should be down to the municipal administration to look after the needs of local inhabitants. These tensions were evident in a dispute in May 1934 between the *ayuntamiento* and the local head of the Civil Guard over a fence, with the latter accused of coercing councillors.[[713]](#footnote-713) His actions touched a nerve in the wake of repression in March and April, but the protest by coucillors was also about the principle of authority and control over local communities.

The Radical Party was now in power and early 1934 saw bills presented the Cortes that modified or derogated previous legislation. The situation was tense in rural areas and the FNTT appealed to the government for existing legislation to be respected, while a CEDA delegation, including Gil Robles ‘visited [Prime Minister] Lerroux to complain about disorder’, demanding a stronger response.[[714]](#footnote-714) In February 1934 the government began a campaign to disarm citizens. *Avance* interpreted the operation in political terms, declaring that the ‘persecution of workers’ organisations’ was beginning through the searching of Casas del Pueblo.[[715]](#footnote-715) *Cacheos* (body searches) of those identified as workers began to proliferate and searches were conducted every morning on the Oviedo-Campo de Caso road, the main road through the Nalón valley.[[716]](#footnote-716) Tensions boiled over quickly in Laviana over the arrest of two individuals for carrying knives. They were released after hundreds of people went to the prison in Laviana, but a subsequent influx of civil and assault guards led to a protest strike and the withdrawal of the security forces. Tensions were high: as rumours spread of orders for the arrest of trade union leaders, mine workers reacted with a strike to the arrest of socialist councillor Luis Camblor, accused of having headed the demonstration which freed the prisoners. As a consequence, the number of assault guards in Laviana increased.[[717]](#footnote-717) The situation in Laviana had quickly escalated, indicating the climate of tension in the coalfields. In the face of arrests and the arrival of state security forces, popular pressure had worked to force an outcome which defended local autonomy and control, though this exercise of power challenged the role of the state security forces to police the local community.

The Radical Party did not have a majority in the Cortes and was both under pressure from the largest party, the CEDA, and struggling with internal cohesion. Two ministers, who were the most critical of the right, were ‘increasingly isolated’ and then removed at the beginning of March.[[718]](#footnote-718) Martínez Barrio, the former Minister of the Interior, was replaced by Salazar Alonso, which led to ‘a new turn of the screw in the authoritarian control of public liberties’, as he ‘pursued a strategy of confrontation and conquest’.[[719]](#footnote-719) He had a ‘Manichean view of politics’, showing ‘sympathy for the right’ while treating the FNTT strike in the summer as revolutionary, during which he violated parliamentary immunity and wanted to declare a state of war.[[720]](#footnote-720) The minister used his authority to come down hard on those who showed opposition.[[721]](#footnote-721) The Civil Guard returned to tactics previously seen under the monarchy, including the targeting of workers’ centres and acting in a ‘heavy-handed’ manner.[[722]](#footnote-722) A state of alarm was declared in the whole of Spain due to construction, printing and metal strikes, which meant the suspension of constitutional guarantees and the application of the Law of Public Order.[[723]](#footnote-723) In Asturias an edict issued by the civil governor banned the assembly of groups in public places, ordered the arrest of anyone if deemed necessary for public order and authorised the use of article 47 for the searching homes.[[724]](#footnote-724) Searches increased, contributing to a climate in which the working class was being ‘persecuted’; it was ‘exclusively the Casas del Pueblo and the centres for the working class’ which were being searched. This, combined with the fact that arms were not found, contributed to the sense that left-wing politics was being criminalised, with the government explicitly targeting the left.[[725]](#footnote-725) Between 22 and 24 March, Casas del Pueblo and other union centres were searched throughout the coalfields and strikes erupted in protest.[[726]](#footnote-726) Fraternidad Republicana, the republican centre in Sama, complained to the prime minister via a telegram that the searches were ‘counterproductive’ with regards to the ‘calming of spirits’. This complaint arose from an understanding of the local leftist community. Fraternidad Republicana had stepped in as a mediator to bridge the difference between the government and the local left. However, in a show of force, Fraternidad Republicana’s centre was searched by the Civil Guard a couple of days later.[[727]](#footnote-727)

Unsurprisingly, protest erupted at the way the working class was being treated. On 27 March, miners’ food baskets and homes were searched in Laviana, and mine workers left work early in protest.[[728]](#footnote-728) Homes were searched too, and four women (three from Cuesta de Arco and another from Las Piezas, both in Langreo) were arrested for protesting at searches of their homes, which led to a demonstration.[[729]](#footnote-729) Further protest erupted as the state went beyond the traditional political sphere and entered the home, with female mobilisation reacting in defence of their homes and local community. Such protest was political, as it contested the boundaries and actions of state power in its searches of individuals’ homes and built on a longer tradition of female and community protest, including food riots and picketing over strikes.[[730]](#footnote-730) The searches also targeted prominent individuals: the home of the republican mayor of Langreo was also searched.[[731]](#footnote-731) Entering homes and opening food baskets was an escalation in tactics that was humiliating for those targeted, and it is the indignation caused by such humiliation that sparked the protest. Moreover, residents of the coalfields were now personally experiencing the political changes at national level through the actions of the state security forces, or this was how it was interpreted. The Republic was being used against its supporters. At a meeting of the *ayuntamiento* of Langreo a complaint was made over damage to furniture and locks broken by the security forces: ‘[w]hat is most disgraceful is that those who are the target of body and house searches are those people and social and political organisations who worked the hardest and sacrificed the most in the service of the Republic’.[[732]](#footnote-732) This was not a statement of ownership of the Republic, but rather of the betrayal of those who identified with the regime. This breaking of what was understood as almost a contractual bond was a powerful motivation for protest when combined with protest in defence of the local community.

The socialist motion in Langreo described the situation as one in which ‘peaceful citizens’ were the victims of a persecutory state. Ideas such as inequality and unfairness were deployed, as was the sense that the citizens were being betrayed by those who did not believe in the regime. Moreover, this was occurring in Langreo ‘whose loyalty to the regime has been proved’. Councillors came to the defence of their citizens as ‘the genuine popular representation’ of the spirit of 14 April, which they defended through opposing the government.[[733]](#footnote-733) Similar sentiments were echoed in Oviedo.[[734]](#footnote-734) The state was no longer the Republic for which they had worked; the working class and the left had been betrayed. Nevertheless, *ayuntamientos* in the coalfields continued to defend the spirit of the Republic of the first biennium, sending telegrams in protest at government legislation, such as re-introducing state funding of the church, the amnesty of those involved in the Sanjurjo coup of 1932 and the re-establishment of the death penalty, despite warnings by secretaries that this political stance over-stepped their role.[[735]](#footnote-735) It was certainly risky. The governments of 1934 were not adverse to removing *ayuntamientos* who opposed them—the *ayuntamiento* of Langreo protested about this too—and there were rumours that the governor would intervene to remove the *ayuntamiento* of Langreo.[[736]](#footnote-736)

While protestors were defending local communities, union centres and even homes, as well as the spirit of the Republic, the provincial authorities saw protest as a question of public order and the civil governor refused to back down, declaring that searches would continue and he ‘was sure that this excitation would not have any consequences’.[[737]](#footnote-737) And so the measures continued, and the tense situation escalated into April. Correspondingly, *Avance*’s rhetoric increased,describing how workers in Sama felt they were in a ‘full state of war’ on being searched on their way out of work and the ‘*razzia*’ carried out at the Casa del Pueblo.[[738]](#footnote-738) The sense of humiliation was compounded by reports of abuse of those arrested.[[739]](#footnote-739) Anger was channelled into strikes. Fifteen hundred mine workers at the Mariana mine in Mieres went on strike in protest at arrests (which included that of BOC and PCE leaders); this spread to other industries and the municipalities of Aller and Lena the following day, with the number of strikers increasing by tenfold. As the situation started to move out of control an appeal was made for calm and in Mieres representatives from the three trade unions called for a return to work.[[740]](#footnote-740) The arrests had been in response to the events of the previous Friday. After there had been rumours there would be a religious procession—it was Good Friday—the JC and JS had convened a protest, which turned into a ‘peaceful demonstration’ that was broken up by the Assault Guards, who fired more than 100 shots on the demonstrators, leaving four injured, including a thirteen-year old. Later that evening there was a minor explosion behind the church, which did not cause any damage.[[741]](#footnote-741) A similar chain of events occurred days later in the Nalón valley: a general strike erupted in San Martín del Rey Aurelio over the ‘arbitrary’ arrest of individuals accused of targeting a chapel in Cocañín with explosives.[[742]](#footnote-742) The trigger for strikes and mass protest was the actions of the security forces. Nevertheless, iconoclastic incidents, often explosions, formed part of the pattern of protest. The left’s reaction was to accuse the right of organising the iconoclastic violence, which was, at best, implausible.[[743]](#footnote-743) However, it did fit into the general narrative of a conspiracy against the left, especially as those arrested were often local leftist leaders, such as Manuel Grossi, Simón Díaz and José Barreiro, who could have been seen as having an example made of them.

The fact that the unrest coincided with Holy Week contributed to the iconoclasm as protest. In Sama, dynamite was thrown into the patio of the parish church late on Holy Wednesday; youths tried to disturb the ceremonyon Maundy Thursday leading to a skirmish with young Catholics, and stones were thrown at a parish priest.[[744]](#footnote-744) Further attacks followed on church property in San Martín del Rey Aurelio in April, presumably in response to the arrests—one attack occurred in the same place as the original.[[745]](#footnote-745) Other churches and chapels in the coalfields were targeted over the following weeks. In May, for example, the chapel in El Condado (Laviana) was targeted days before the fiestas.[[746]](#footnote-746) In line with traditional patterns of collective action, these targeted attacks were symptomatic of social tensions in the coalfields which were clearly much more serious than previous years.[[747]](#footnote-747)

Anticlerical attacks were part of a wider culture of confrontation and conflict in 1934. This included violent rhetoric, which was far from restricted to firebrand phrases uttered by left and right leaders at national level; the woman who led the AFAP in Sama was described by *Acción* as in her ‘combat post’.[[748]](#footnote-748) The same newspaper described the JAP’s September rally in Covadonga as a battle ‘for religion and the patria’.[[749]](#footnote-749) Political stances and attitudes were thus framed in violent and confrontational terms, which formed part of the struggle over civic space and control the public sphere.

As part of this wider culture of confrontation and assertion of authority, there was an increase in violence between 1933 and 1934, particularly against symbols of the right in 1934. The first copies of *FE* were burnt as they were sold on the street in Oviedo and during the strike in solidarity with the events in Vienna, the pastry shop of Camilo de Blas—who was closely linked to AP—was targeted in Oviedo and the window smashed.[[750]](#footnote-750) In September, the same fate befell the window of café Niza, the only café that remained opened during the protest strike against the JAP rally in Covadonga, while de Blas’ pastry shop was guarded.[[751]](#footnote-751) This was not crowd-based, ‘mob’ violence, but directed and aimed at intimidating the opposition often on or prior to symbolic occasions. At 11 o’clock at night on 1 May 1934 there were explosions at the church in Tuilla, which meant its complete destruction according to a later account by local priest Senén Noval.[[752]](#footnote-752)

Previously, in November 1933, the national newspaper of the JS, *Renovación*, hadjustified the use of violence to fight fascism, and, after the elections, paramilitary organisations were created, though the militarisation of youth politics did not become ‘widespread’ until spring 1934.[[753]](#footnote-753) But such developments only served to legitimise the use of violence for political ends. The revolutionary movement planned by Largo Caballero involved obtaining arms and training militias, which were detailed in secret instructions issued during 1934.[[754]](#footnote-754) In Asturias, guns were being smuggled out of the arms factory from late 1933 and hidden in the coalfields. Over the following months, arms would be obtained from a variety of sources, including pistols from Madrid and Éibar, as ‘armament fever’, to use Taibo’s term, increased. At the Asturian JS’ congress in 1934 the fee for the summer school was actually destined to be used for arms, as the delegates were aware.[[755]](#footnote-755) Despite the range of operations, few weapons fell into the hands of the police, testament to the movement’s organisational capabilities. Such operations must also have had an important effect amongst those involved, tying them together in clandestine networks that attempted to keep ahead of the security forces.[[756]](#footnote-756) The other effect was the role of violence in political struggles; it is difficult to see how obtaining arms could have done anything else except legitimise the use of violence. Within this process, the youth played a key role. It was the JS which formed the backbone of the militias in Asturias and more widely; summer trips into the mountains were used for training on the instructions of the national JS Executive Committee.[[757]](#footnote-757) By the summer members of the JS were parading in their red shirts outside the prison where Javier Bueno, the editor of *Avance*, was detained. This was an aggressive show of force and a performance of the militarisation of politics. The authorities responded with force, arguing that the demonstration was illegal, and 12 were arrested.[[758]](#footnote-758)

Two investigations into violent incidents conducted by the authorities in September 1934 underline how violence was used. At the beginning of the month, Casimiro Domingo was stabbed late at night outside a bar in El Entrego at the beginning of September 1934, in a fight after a political argument. He had been taunted over whether he was going to Covadonga to the JAP rally and whether he had applied to join the Assault Guard. The case is somewhat unclear given that seven months later one of the attackers claimed that he was pursued for being a rightist and was a follower of the Asturian AP leader Fernández Ladreda.[[759]](#footnote-759) These claims were made in May 1935, after the revolutionary insurrection and the assailant was trying to present himself on the side of the authorities and a victim of the left. Nevertheless, the tensions over the role of the security forces were clear. Casimiro denied the accusation he wanted to join the Assault Guard. Like supporting Gil Robles, it meant the betrayal of the working class community.

Several days after the stabbing in El Entrego, violent coercion was used on a train to prevent Jaime Casal, a forty-four year old businessmen and known rightist who had been denounced in *Avance* previously, from travelling to attend the JAP rally at the emblematic religious site of Covadonga. According to the report prepared by the magistrate, Herminio Vallina, a shop assistant in a pharmacy (and *Avance* correspondent in 1932), boarded a train bound for Gijón with several other individuals, and asked where the passengers were going. Upon hearing their reply, he demanded that they get off the train, drawing a pistol to underline the command. Jaime refused and pulled out his own pistol. The train lurched into motion, shots were fired and Herminio and his companions jumped off the train. No one was injured and during the investigation Herminio maintained that he had been in a bar all afternoon; this alibi was corroborated by several others.[[760]](#footnote-760) What the version offered by Jaime nevertheless demonstrates is the threat of violence to consolidate the leftwing hegemony in the Asturian *Cuenca*. Individuals thought it legitimate and morally acceptable to police the actions of others in defence of the community’s interests. Jaime Casal was later arrested during the revolutionary insurrection.[[761]](#footnote-761) The fact that Herminio’s statement was backed by a number of individuals is potentially testament to the hardening of lines at local level and evidence of the strengthening of solidarity and unity within the left.

This militancy was fed by more radical political rhetoric. The radical language of *Avance* intensified, channelling virulent criticism of the government. The sense of disempowerment and victimisation became channelled through the ‘war’ (as described by Taibo) between the socialist daily *Avance* and the civil governor, who banned the socialist daily 94 days out of 186, fined it 25,000 pesetas and jailed its editor on three occasions.[[762]](#footnote-762) This was more than a proxy war over a symbol; *Avance* was a powerful legitimising force for militancy in 1934. It was the main source of news and a symbol of the leftwing working class movement, with a daily circulation of almost 25,000 copies. Building on the growth in opposition and protest in March and April, the targeting of *Avance* by the authorities only served to grow support. Collections were held to pay fines, allowing individuals to invest themselves in the struggle, quite literally, with small donations while the ‘mass visits [...] while he [Bueno] was in prison in Oviedo became a regular feature of Sunday life’.[[763]](#footnote-763) Mine workers in Barredos (Laviana) even went on strike when the Civil Guard seized the newspaper in July.[[764]](#footnote-764) At the same time, *Avance* increased the intensity of its radical and incendiary rhetoric. By 21 July *Avance* was speaking of a ‘war of extermination’ on the ‘working class press’.[[765]](#footnote-765) The paper confronted censorship directly, addressing the reader and appealing to a sense of complicity which fed the feeling that *Avance* was the confidant of the working class.[[766]](#footnote-766) The newspaper actively engaged with the censor via its pages, framing this as a battle between the press and the state, at the same time as it radicalised political language and debate.

As the symbolic—yet real—struggle over *Avance* continued, a new battle erupted in August. At the end of July the government banned trips by uniformed individuals.[[767]](#footnote-767) Arrests began, but the JS was defiant, declaring that there was no

legal precept which prevents us from dressing in the colour that we choose and as such this Executive Commission recommends all young socialists to wear your red shirts, at least on Sundays and holidays, and going to bars, theatres and *romerías*, etc., fulfilling, thus, your duties.[[768]](#footnote-768)

Arrests continued in August.[[769]](#footnote-769) For those protesting at the measures, this was the criminalisation of their politics; the security forces were not simply enforcing the law. The decree restricting the political involvement of those under twenty-three was seen through the lens of the fascist threat and the state as a possible “midwife” to fascism. The age restriction on political involvement was described as ‘another of the fascist measures dictated by the monarchising conglomerate’.[[770]](#footnote-770) The JS launched a defiant manifesto, accusing the Samper government of offering the ‘sacrifice’ of the JS to ‘capitalist fascism’.[[771]](#footnote-771) For the socialists, the situation was worsening and the government was turning the screw by restricting their freedoms. Indeed, Salazar Alonso later admitted that the measure had been ‘designed to circumscribe the left’.[[772]](#footnote-772) Restrictions on political involvement were perceived as a further step forward towards a threatening future.

This threat contrasted with the alternative future presented by *Avance*, whose radical rhetoric centred on the coming revolution. The state was pushing the working classes to act. In mid-August, *Avance* warned that ‘[t]he country, [was] on a war footing’ because of the mobilisation of the army and rejected Gordon Ordás’ proposal to return the Republic to its ‘primitive position’; this was not what the working class wanted as their eyes were fixed on the future, on building a better future via revolution.[[773]](#footnote-773) It was an idea they reiterated:

Capitalism does not tolerate infiltration. Liberal democracy is a miserable fiction. The enormous working class mass which, with different nuances in its nuclei and people, had placed its confidence [in it], has lost even the shadow of its confidence. For the transformation of the property regime towards socialism [*en sentido socialista*] there is only one path, without pauses or hesitation: the Revolution.[[774]](#footnote-774)

And the revolution would not fail: ‘[t]he only disastrous revolution would be that which is not attempted’, *Avance* declared and, comparing Spain to Austria and Germarny, it concluded that ‘[t]he case of Spain is, essentially, the same’. The decision had to be made between ‘declining rapidly towards disappearance and trying to save either everything with victory or a great deal through the fortitude of the action’.[[775]](#footnote-775) For *Avance* fascism was poised to take over; the threat was imminent. Two diametrically opposed futures were drawn, fascism and revolution, and action was needed in order for Spain to move towards the latter, not the former.

## Unity

At the beginning of 1934 the political atmosphere was thick with talk of unity. *El Noroeste* remarked that ‘[n]ot a single day passes without the Madrid press—like the provincial newspapers—printing news about the United Front (sic)’[[776]](#footnote-776) while *Región* declared that there were ‘tendencies towards the creation of united fronts. Red, white, yellow and flesh-coloured’.[[777]](#footnote-777) A Workers’ Alliance had been signed in Catalonia in December by groups including the PSOE and UGT, though not the CNT, FAI or communists, and the socialist leadership was broadly—publicly, at least—in favour of such alliances, but privately had a more critical and restricted attitude towards them. Despite the reservations of the socialist leadership, between February and September Workers’ Alliances were signed in different parts of Spain, though ‘Asturias was the only place in Spain where the Alianza Obrera became a reality’.[[778]](#footnote-778) Tellingly, however, Largo Caballero was later critical of the relative autonomy of the Workers’ Alliances which became ‘independent cantons’ which were ‘tolerated’ despite their indiscipline.[[779]](#footnote-779) The socialist leadership in Asturias continued to be suspicious of collaboration initiated from below, as demonstrated in their unequivocal condemnation of an initiative which emerged in Langreo in early 1934. Whereas the leadership was suspicious of such initiatives due to their prioritisation of the socialist union, for the grassroots forging unity was a way of channelling protest.

The Comité Pro-Frente Único de Langreo (Langrean Pro-United Front Committee) was an attempt at forging a cross-union alliance from below and thus echoed the CPUT of the previous year. It was formed as a ‘revolutionary bloc’ against fascism at a time and tapped into enthusiasm for collaborative initiatives.[[780]](#footnote-780) Rallies held in Sama and Mieres—with the latter reportedly attended by 6,000—were respectively described as of ‘extraordinary importance’ and ‘one of the most transcendental events for the future of workers’.[[781]](#footnote-781) The organisers were important local figures: speakers at the rallies included candidates in national elections, the note published in *Avance* was signed by Manuel Otero on behalf of the Casa del Pueblo and Agrupaciones Socialistas, and the rally in Sama took place at the Manuel Llaneza theatre, pride of the SOMA.[[782]](#footnote-782) The initiative quickly spread, with other unions discussing the joint communist, socialist and anarchist committee’s proposals, and even applying to join.[[783]](#footnote-783)

This was not the only collaborative initiative at local level in early 1934. In January, a committee with socialist, radical socialist, communist, SU and metallurgical union was appointed to negotiate with Fábrica de Mieres over pay, while a joint socialist-communist candidacy was elected to lead the Ateneo Popular of Mieres.[[784]](#footnote-784) In Piñeres (Aller) the SOMA and SU organised a joint boycott and in Laviana socialists and communists organised a joint meeting to nominate a delegate to go to the USSR for the 1 May celebrations.[[785]](#footnote-785) At provincial level, a Workers’ Alliance against Unemployment was formed, with a committee formed by representatives of the socialists, communists, anarchists and the dissident communists of the Federación Comunista Ibérica, and which called for the creation of local committees across ideological boundaries.[[786]](#footnote-786) As such, there was widespread collaboration at the beginning of 1934 between anarchists, socialists and communists, and particularly between the last two. Historians have tended to focus too heavily on the Workers’ Alliance signed between socialists and anarchists at the end of March, overlooking the number and variety of occasions in which socialists and communists worked together.[[787]](#footnote-787) Although these were often short term or local initiatives, they nevertheless provide an important indication of the atmosphere and attitudes at local level, pointing to a more flexible situation, which takes the emphasis away from communist rigidity and an entrenched rejection of collaboration until September.

The socialist provincial leadership did not know how to respond to the surge in enthusiasm for united action. *Avance* acknowledged that it was continuously receiving letters and had not published them, but in January it offered a response, firmly rejecting local initiatives.

The united front (sic) of the workers is to be found in such clear terms that it can already be considered to be a reality. Given that it has taken shape in a general way, which was what was hoped for, and is effective now that it is so, it need not emerge, therefore, from any private or local initiatives. It is not the proposal by anyone that is needed, rather the support from everyone; support which each should give in their place [...].

This woolly response swept the issue under the carpet with the hazy idea that unity was ‘already [...] a reality’; the only clear message in the article in *Avance* was that unity depended on discipline and obedience of the grassroots to the leadership.[[788]](#footnote-788) The situation in the socialist movement was changing at the time. Besteiro, of the moderate wing of the socialist movement was defeated and the *caballeristas* took control of the UGT. In February Largo Caballero went to Barcelona and spoke with representatives of the Workers’ Alliance. Largo’s position was one of support for alliances, yet he was only really interested in maintaining the socialists’ independence and influence.[[789]](#footnote-789) This restrictive view of the Workers’ Alliance and suspicion of grassroots initiatives was expressed in early February by Amador Fernández, the SOMA leader. He declared a need for a ‘single and uniform’ foundation for the united fronts in the whole country, if they were to be introduced, and rejected local committees formed on local terms as ‘inadmissible’, declaring ‘[r]ecently we have seen spectacles that leave a lot to be desired’. He maintained the traditional socialist emphasis on organisation and need for methodical co-ordination.[[790]](#footnote-790) A couple of days later, the UGT executive agreed to set up a special commission to study the United Front.[[791]](#footnote-791)

For the socialist hierarchy, it could only ever be their responsibility to condone and negotiate collaborative initiatives for the good of the organisation as a whole. As such, the formal Workers’ Alliance would actually be an agreement between the regional hierarchies of the CNT, UGT and FSA, with negotiations instigated by the anarchists of Gijón.[[792]](#footnote-792) It would be organised hierarchically: the Workers’ Alliance Committee would appoint local delegates and everything had to pass through the Committee.[[793]](#footnote-793) The initial announcement was short, describing its objectives as fighting war and fascism, which was a way of being able to work ‘freely, without raising the authorities’ suspicions’ at a time of great tension.[[794]](#footnote-794) In actual fact, the pact proclaimed an objective of working together towards ‘the triumph of social revolution in Spain, establishing a regime of political, economic and social equality, based on socialist and federalist principles’, which was more palatable to the anarchists than the socialists’ original proposal of a ‘Federal Socialist Republic’.[[795]](#footnote-795) Though the Alliance was restricted to Asturias, it was imagined in wider terms.[[796]](#footnote-796) The Asturian CNT continued to try to convince the CNT National Committee of the need for collaboration with the socialists through until September.[[797]](#footnote-797)

The Alliance was met with an avalanche of criticism from communists who defended the ‘[u]nited front from below’, and a vehement argument took place over the following months via the pages of *Avance* and *El Noroeste*. This served to separate the two concepts of ‘Workers’ Alliance’ and ‘united front’, which had previously been interchangeable.[[798]](#footnote-798) Even Largo Caballero had used the term ‘united front’ during a speech in Madrid in January without mentioning the Workers’ Alliance.[[799]](#footnote-799) Similarly, Asturian socialist leader, Ramón Gonzalez Peña, gave a speech outlining a favourable opinion of the United Front.[[800]](#footnote-800) It was only after the formal Workers’ Alliance was signed that the terms were drawn sharply into focus.

Opposition did not only come from the communists; the Workers’ Alliance was far from universally welcomed by Asturian anarchists. It was from anarchists in the mining valleys themselves, particularly from La Felguera (where the hard-line FAI was very influential) and Sama, that opposition was strongest.[[801]](#footnote-801) There was criticism at the regional plenary of the CNT in May, and though a vote of confidence was given to the Regional Committee, opposition grew during the summer.[[802]](#footnote-802) At the regional plenary on 16 September the Workers’ Alliance was narrowly approved by three votes, with union delegates from Oviedo and the coalfields voting against the pact.[[803]](#footnote-803) The FAI in La Felguera declared their satisfaction at the narrowness of the outcome, which they claimed was the result of their agitation against the Alliance.[[804]](#footnote-804)

The SOMA was also struggling to control its members. The common view is that the socialist leadership radicalised in line with the grassroots, but there was still friction over strike action. This was a continuation of attempts by the socialist leadership at restricting grassroots combativeness and a battle to control the rank and file. Thousands had supported a strike called by the PCE to protest at the JAP rally at El Escorial, which was opposed by the SOMA.[[805]](#footnote-805) However it was over the issue of a mining deputythat a serious conflict really tested SOMA’s influence. A strike erupted in May at the Sotón mine and turned into a lockout, with the security forces preventing mine workers from entering the mine. Solidarity strikes spread through the Nalón valley and assemblies and demonstrations were organised. Shots were exchanged between strikers and the civil guard while jeering female demonstrators were hit by civil guards.[[806]](#footnote-806) Again, strikes mobilised beyond the male workforce, extending to their families and local community. In a separate conflict in Trubia, a demonstration of forty women on their way from Trubia to Oviedo to protest at the arrest of two men was forcibly halted halfway to the capital.[[807]](#footnote-807) The Trubia strike, which had been ongoing for a while, involved the evacuation of children, so that their parents could fight ‘more freely’—further evidence of the level of both organisation and militancy.[[808]](#footnote-808)

The SOMA ordered the end of the Sotón strike, but two weeks later a new strike erupted after the same deputy was transferred to the María Luisa mine and 15,000 ended up on strike in the Nalón valley and in Siero.[[809]](#footnote-809) Again women were involved: a female picket which tried to stop maintenance workers from entering the María Luisa mine was broken up by the security forces, who fired a shot in response to a stone thrown by a child.[[810]](#footnote-810) The strike committee issued a note in which it referred to itself as the ‘Alliance Committee’, though the SUM-CNT in Sama distanced itself from it.[[811]](#footnote-811) The situation was complex, but it was clear the SOMA was under pressure. Even Amador Fernández had to vehemently defend himself in *Avance* from rumours that the deputyin question had his support.[[812]](#footnote-812) The SOMA was critical that a committee ‘had proclaimed itself leader’ without the authorisation of other ‘reliable [*solventes*] organisations’. The socialists were irritated that the committee had not been able ‘to re-establish normality, saving the dignity of the workers [...] It thus seems that what is pursued is nothing more than to provoke an encounter with the security forces to justify revolutionary attitudes in which those who start them are never those who end up worse off’.[[813]](#footnote-813) Nevertheless, SOMA did manage to find a solution to the strike and asked the mine workers to return to work in order to not weaken themselves further.[[814]](#footnote-814) Most returned the following day.[[815]](#footnote-815)

The socialist leadership thus continued to criticise the combative nature of mine workers in spontaneous protest strikes. As González Peña declared in a speech in Sama, the ‘abuse of strike action is not in our interest’, while Graciano Antuña called for ‘now more than ever, discipline’ in an article aimed at the JS.[[816]](#footnote-816) But the grassroots were frustrated with this attitude. An article from Tudela Veguín described how mine workers were ordered to go home as they were on their way to work in a ‘fascist tone [...] without giving us more explanations. It seems the *jefecillos* of the Mining Union [SOMA] had ordered it to be so’. The author criticised the ‘dictatorship they [the SOMA leadership] want to impose on us while talking of democracy’.[[817]](#footnote-817) This was far from perfect synchronisation between hierarchy and grassroots, who had ‘radicalised’ into line with one another. The grassroots were still more radical, desiring the freedom and autonomy to respond to the local context as they saw fit.

Meanwhile, despite frequent emphasis on the entrenched and dogmatic resistance to the Workers’ Alliance by the communists, grassroots co-operation between communists, socialists and anarchists continued.[[818]](#footnote-818) Certainly, the official position of the PCE of rejecting Workers’ Alliance did not change until September, but the situation was much more complex in the coalfields, with regular episodes of co-operation.[[819]](#footnote-819) Indeed, the fact that PCE in Asturias—and more widely—was weak and disorganised means that members at grassroots could act with more autonomy than has often been emphasised. Thus, stressing the discipline, hierarchy and ‘extreme rigidity’ of the communists and citing instructions from Moscow does not tell the whole story.[[820]](#footnote-820) Co-operation with other groups was widespread, and the remark that there was a ‘timid change of attitude’ during the El Sotón strike and 1 May celebrations needs to be couched in more decisive terms.[[821]](#footnote-821) The festivities were certainly an important test for the relationship between them, given the possibility for clashes. In Mieres there was one joint demonstration while Maurín shared a stage with a socialist and two PCE members.[[822]](#footnote-822) In Pola de Lena a united front had been formed prior to the celebrations and in Oviedo the socialists were authorised to make an agreement with the communists, though in the end there was a separate socialist rally and demonstration in the provincial capital.[[823]](#footnote-823) There were also plans for joint action by socialists in other places.[[824]](#footnote-824) But even separate demonstrations did not necessarily mean antagonism. At the end of the socialist rally in Laviana a

group of communists from Ciaño-Santa Ana arrived with red flags. They were enthusiastically received by our comrades. The flags saluted one another on the stage and three communists spoke. The first two were very much applauded, but the third was interrupted by the crowd for expressing himself in inappropriate [*fuera de todo lugar*] terms.[[825]](#footnote-825)

Only if respect was shown would they be welcomed, in line with the pre-existing mechanisms of grassroots democracy. Grassroots unity depended on mutual respect in order to flourish, which depended on how groups and individuals related to one another.

Collaboration and joint action between groups on the left continued during the summer. This included the Asturian Regional Committee against War and Fascism, which included Izquierda Republicana, a CNT-CGTU-UGT boycott in Turón, in which syndical independence was respected while unity was maintained: ‘[t]o obey the orders of your respective Unions is to show discipline’, joint strike and even mixed-union committees.[[826]](#footnote-826) The JS, in contrast to the FSA, was certainly making an effort to reach out to the JC, repeating its appeal to organise a ‘national united front, with antifascist and anti-war ends’ and also for the JC to join the Workers’ Alliance ‘for the good of the Revolution’.[[827]](#footnote-827) The JC ‘spontaneously’ helped the JS at an event in Llantrales (Grado).[[828]](#footnote-828) By September, joint action was routine even if the communists were not officially within the Workers’ Alliance. It was this unity in joint action which would be the basis for the revolutionary committees in the pueblos.

One of the difficulties was that these initiatives at local level could be undermined by the official positions and attacks launched in the press. Internecine struggles could be overcome, but then dynamited by national cleavages. In Figaredo (Mieres), there was an assembly at which the delegate who had gone to Madrid to the Congress against War and Fascism was to recount his experiences. The communist chair of the meeting lamented that there were no representatives of the JS and that they had failed to respond to a letter. The president of the local JS stood up and asked whether the JC were going to reply to a letter the JS had sent, in which they had asked the JC to ‘rectify’ a recent manifesto issued by the national JC that had recently arrived in Figaredo which said, purportedly ‘textually’: ‘[t]he JS are the same as the JAP’. A member of the JC stood up and asked if this was true. An argument ensued, before the local JC leadership ‘de-authorised’ the manifesto. The assembly could then move on.[[829]](#footnote-829) National politics had threatened to torpedo local collaboration.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary movement planned by Largo Caballero with the aid of a mixed commission formed by JS, UGT and PSOE members continued to be organised, though the extent of real preparations in many places is doubtful.[[830]](#footnote-830) Instructions, later published by Largo Caballero, were sent from Madrid to the provinces. They emphasised secrecy and discipline, and detailed how power could be seized in the pueblos. The state security forces were very much a point of focus, while female participation was reduced to an afterthought. The plans issued by Largo Caballero were more about organisation and taking control at local level than what to do once the socialists were in control. He does mention briefly that food should be seized, but it seems that local militias should take power and then wait. Tellingly, an ‘Administrative Junta’ was to be appointed at local level, not a “revolutionary committee”. Other instructions were sent, according to Largo Caballero, but he did not detail them.[[831]](#footnote-831) But given the lack of clarity about the objectives of the movement as a whole, which will be discussed in the next chapter, it is not likely that more “revolutionary” instructions were given.

Arrangements were made for financing the movement, militias were trained over the summer and arms stockpiled, despite searches and efforts from the authorities.[[832]](#footnote-832) Pistols from the Basque country were sent hidden in boxes of sewing machines and dynamite was taken from mines.[[833]](#footnote-833) Nevertheless, the socialist militias, which had been training over the summer, were far from well-armed.[[834]](#footnote-834) There were 14 arms deposits, but even during the insurrection itself there was a lack of munition.[[835]](#footnote-835) The militias appeared better armed than they actually were.

In September tensions rapidly increased in the coalfields, due to the role and actions of the security forces, mobilisation in response to the JAP rally in Covadonga and a botched socialist delivery of arms via boat. *Avance* continued to fan revolutionary flames by challenging the state’s authority to impose its own order on the coalfields. The combination of these events pushed the situation to a critical point, though it would be the socialist order for the revolutionary movement to be unleashed that would spark the revolutionary insurrection in October. The force of the response, however, can only be understood in the context of the events of September, and of the previous months, which served to stimulate the radicalism and militancy of the left.

The month opened with a flashpoint in Sama which fomented the gulf between security forces and the local left, illustrating the fears, feeling of disempowerment and humiliation of the local community. A peaceful female demonstration against war and fascism in Sama was brutally broken up, resulting in one fatality and seven people injured, none of whom had taken part in the protest. The council suspended its session in protest.[[836]](#footnote-836) The sense of humiliation was apparent in *Avance*’s report: ‘[e]veryone with their arms raised. Seven- and ten-year-old children too. Everyone with their backs to the security forces, walking in the direction that the latter want.’ The feeling of humiliation, alienation and disempowerment was complete: ‘It seems as though we are in the middle of a war. In reality it is an invasion. In reality it is the army of a power foreign [*extraña*] to the pueblo which is corralling, flogging and shooting at it’. Again, local communities were invaded by what was described as an external force. The statement was both a criticism and a claim to autonomy and self-governance, without state intrusion—a state that was understood by September 1934 as fundamentally repressive and contrary to the values and ideals of the working class.

Meanwhile, the channel of communication with the governor was closed: the governor refused to speak by telephone to the socialist deputy Matilde de la Torre, who was in Sama at the time, or the mayor of Langreo.[[837]](#footnote-837) *Avance* underlined the feeling of disempowerment and the undermining of the authorities:

The mayor of Langreo is the representative of the Government in the *concejo*. Matters concerning public order fall within the responsibility of the mayor conferred upon him. At five o’clock in the afternoon, hours before the *sucesos* took place, civil guards and assault guards were in Sama. The mayor of Langreo had no knowledge of the gathering of these forces.

*Avance* raised questions about what the role of a mayor was, in the light of the intervention by the security forces, and emphasised that local mediation was important, but on this occasion lacking: ‘[o]n other occasions, his intervention was requested by other governors to prevent things which were about to happen, which were about to turn into tragedies like yesterday. And the tragedy was avoided’.[[838]](#footnote-838) Moreover, the capacity for the municipal authorities and their supporters to maintain order—*their* order—was proudly contrasted to the violent actions of the state security forces. For the funeral of Basilio Fernández, Celso Fernández, the mayor of Langreo, had requested the withdrawal of the security forces and assumed responsibility for public order. And ‘nothing happened’.[[839]](#footnote-839) The following day, the security forces returned to the streets of Sama and conducted body searches. In response, as in March-April, workers went on strike in a protest which, organised jointly by the UGT, CNT and UGTU, affected the Nalón valley, Olloniego and Mieres. Demonstrative of the tension was the appeal made by the strike committee for people to leave Sama.[[840]](#footnote-840) The coexistence of the security forces and the working class left was impossible. Tensions could spill over; the situation of striking workers and security forces conducting searches was potentially explosive. That the intervention of external authorities was understood as leading to violence was also evident in the rejection of their involvement in a planned JS-JC rally in Oviedo (‘Let us give a day of peace [*Demos paz*] to the gravedigger, jailer and hospital staff’’).[[841]](#footnote-841) The state’s role in policing local communities and the left was openly challenged again.

The same week, a serious conflict broke out at the Fondón mine in Sama, after five mine workers were sacked by Duro-Felguera for demanding a minimum wage. The situation very quickly escalated on both sides. The 430-strong morning shift declared a sit-down strike at the coalface, taking two deputies hostage. The mine workers resorted to a radical tactic and the authorities had responded by treating the labour issue as one of public order. The governor sent assault and civil guards to the mine and a SOMA commission was banned from visiting the strikers.[[842]](#footnote-842) The governor interpreted the conflict as a challenge to his authority, labelling it as ‘an intolerable rebellion’ that ‘will be punished as it deserves’. He echoed the language of the mining companies’ organisation—the Sindicato Carbonero—in considering the strike a question of indiscipline, which required authority to be imposed. The Sindicato Carbonero called on the governor to stamp down on the ‘subversion’, and threatened a lock-out.[[843]](#footnote-843)

The conflict at the Fondón mine erupted the day before the general strike organised by the Workers’ Alliance committee in reaction to the JAP rally began, which was the ‘most unanimous strike seen in the province’.[[844]](#footnote-844) The Covadonga rally, interpreted as a ‘fascist provocation’, ‘closely resembled’ the fascist aesthetic of El Escorial months earlier.[[845]](#footnote-845) Correspondingly, the rally was contested by the left: a strike and a rally were planned, though the latter postponed by the organisers.[[846]](#footnote-846) Covadonga was to be a symbolic battleground and its degree of success perceived almost as a litmus test of the character of Asturias. Both left and right claimed victory in the wake of the JAP rally. Denouncing ‘coercion’ in the mining valleys, *Región* emphasised that the rally had been ‘outstanding [*brillantísima*]’ and that ‘[n]othing impeded the gathering of ten thousand people’.[[847]](#footnote-847) Indeed, the newspaper fed off the sense of persecution. In an image with powerful religious connotations, *Región* told of a member of AP who had to walk to Covadonga.[[848]](#footnote-848) On the other hand, *Avance* claimed that the strike had been ‘absolute’ and had been a ‘demonstration of unity, the effects of which the concentration of forces from five provinces could not weaken’, as the headline of *Avance* read. It had been a victory not only over the JAP but also the state. As in Madrid during the JAP rally at El Escorial in April, efforts were made to sabotage transport to the rally at Covadonga.[[849]](#footnote-849) The rally had served to intensify not only the identification of the CEDA-JAP with fascism, but also the need for unity and discipline (as was also emphasised by the left). Unity was therefore a necessary structure that provided a framework for combatting opponents and also of working towards social revolution. The Workers’ Alliance Committee issued a note stating ‘[u]nited we will always triumph whenever we try. United we will be able to introduce a society of justice, of workers emancipated from the capitalist yoke’. The ‘block’ that was forming was ‘indestructible’, but ‘hours of rough struggle’ were ahead. Immense pride was taken in the ‘thousands’ who had stood up to the ‘fascists’: both Gil Robles and Falange were cited, though the event was a JAP rally. Pride was also taken in the victory over the ‘excess of security forces at the service of the enemies of the regime’.[[850]](#footnote-850) The state was now in the hands of the enemy. The working class would defend itself against attacks and it was through unity, as a collective and defiant expression of identity, that “fascism” would be fought.

Coinciding with the JAP rally, an attempt to ship arms into Asturias by the socialists on a ship named *Turquesa* was botched and discovered by the authorities.[[851]](#footnote-851) Of the 329 boxes of arms and munitions on the *Turquesa*, nearly half remained on the boat, 73 were seized by the authorities and 98 were saved by the socialists, though the boxes saved only contained munitions.[[852]](#footnote-852) The shipment had immediate political effects. Twenty-three individuals were arrested and the governor stripped socialist mayors of their responsibilities with regards to public order, and appointed his own delegates (including for the important mining districtsof Aller, Mieres, San Martín del Rey Aurelio, Siero and Laviana).[[853]](#footnote-853) In addition to the arrests, a car with Amador Fernández and Ramón González Peña had been stopped, and there were rumours Valentín Álvarez, vice-president of the Deputation would be arrested.[[854]](#footnote-854) Over the following days, searches were carried out at the socialist-run San Vicente mine, the *ayuntamiento* in Mieres, the Casa del Pueblo in Oviedo and houses in Sama, while arrests were made in Sama, including councillor Belarmino Tomás.[[855]](#footnote-855) Protest erupted. Councillors in Sama and Mieres protested at the arrests of councillors, and Izquierda Republicana in Mieres condemned the partiality and methods employed by the government.[[856]](#footnote-856)

As in March-April, with the rising tensions, the church was again a target. Stones were thrown at a group of students of the Passionists in Mieres.[[857]](#footnote-857) The rectory of the parish priest of Villallana (Lena) was targeted with explosives and the isolated Chapel of the Holy Martyrs in Tiraña (Laviana) was destroyed (under two weeks before the feast day of Saint Cosmen and Saint Damián).[[858]](#footnote-858) On 28 September 1934, shortly before the patronal feast day, the shrine, retable and the image of the saint were burnt at the shrine dedicated to the Guardian Angels in San Martín del Rey Aurelio.[[859]](#footnote-859) The increased use of violence was symptomatic of the loss of control and the desire to recover it—and consequently of the increased fracturing of community—but also of a more militant attitude on the part of the left as individuals and groups proceeded to police behaviour and political divides with violence.

A further wave of searches followed on 21 September, which were fruitless except in Turón, where bombs were found.[[860]](#footnote-860) On 23 September, the state of alarm was declared. The return to mass-searches in the streets was similar to March and April, and the situation was fractious and tense. A wave of localised strikes erupted—some in protest at searches others in response to local conditions—while the governor complained that ‘many strikes are being declared on one pretext on one day and a different one the next’, and declared them illegal.[[861]](#footnote-861) Meanwhile, *Avance* continued to fan the revolutionary flames, emphasising that Spain was occupied by an army and warning that armies were the causes of wars.[[862]](#footnote-862) The situation was claimed to represent the whole of Spain and the state was firmly placed as provoking the working class into what seemed like inevitable war. Three days later *Avance* declared that ‘[t]he working class considers Spain to be at the door of a proletarian revolution with a very good chance of triumphing’. Not only this, but the article actually tried to define how the revolution, after taking power, should be organised. Its discussion of ‘libertarian communism’ and ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ was clearly addressed to anarchists and communists, and attempted to find middle ground for collaboration between all left-wing ideologies, two days before the PCE asked to join the Workers’ Alliance.[[863]](#footnote-863)

Yet the rhetorical certainty of revolution was not necessarily shared. Even Largo Caballero, whose idea of the ‘revolutionary movement’ was different to what would happen in Asturias, was not certain of victory on 4 October.[[864]](#footnote-864) The civil governor was concerned enough such that he ordered arms and munitions to be moved from the Vega arms factory to the Pelayo garrison in the early hours of 4 October.[[865]](#footnote-865)

Conclusions

The Samper government fell when the CEDA removed its support and negotiations began to form a new government in an ‘atmosphere of extreme political tension’. Alcalá Zamora tried to prevent the entry of CEDA into government but when the government was announced on 4 October three CEDA members were included.[[866]](#footnote-866) It was the entry of the accidentalist CEDA which sparked the revolutionary insurrection in Asturias. But to understand it, attention needs to be paid to the specific developments in Asturias over the previous months.

It was not unemployment which accelerated the adoption and expression of more radical and militant attitudes in 1933 and 1934. The process was complicated, depending on a variety of factors. There were the struggles of 1931 and 1932, which became increasingly sharp in 1933 and 1934, and viewed through the prism of fascism, which itself added a sharper edge to the understanding of the threat itself. The gulf between the socialist leadership and the grassroots was also key, particularly in terms of contrasting attitudes and strategies. However, the inability of the SOMA to protect its workforce and the alienation of mine workers through the lack of solutions to the mining industry was crucial, in that the situation in the coalfields continued to deteriorate, without hope of recovery. As such, grassroots activists turned to alternative strategies to rearticulate and provide a vehicle for this hope, which was done through the creation of unity initiatives, building on pre-existing links at local level.

Finally, the actions of the state security forces should not be underestimated, insomuch as they served to alienate the communities of the coalfields from the Republic. Local autonomy was undermined and threatened by a state increasingly perceived as oppressive and threatening. Radical opposition to this was legitimised, and the cycle of protest and repression served to accelerate radicalisation still further. The fusing of protest built on the idea of the local community and on syndical politics served to reinforce protest still further. It is only through the combination of these factors that the force of the revolutionary insurrection, sparked by the orders given by the socialist leadership in Madrid, can be understood.

# Chapter III

**The Revolutionary Insurrection of October 1934**

Introduction

In the early hours of 5 October the coalfields of Asturias exploded into a revolutionary insurrection. Ignited by the socialists, the insurrection was an attempt at social revolution, entailing the creation of a new society and a new revolutionary ‘community’. The insurrection was overwhelmingly an Asturian phenomenon, though there were protests and strikes elsewhere, including the short-lived declaration of a Catalan state within a federal republic.[[867]](#footnote-867) In Asturias the insurrection lasted for two weeks—though the revolutionaries were on the back foot less than a week after it began—and mainly affected the central area of the province, particularly the coalfields. Yet, despite the brevity and geographical circumscription, revolutionary action was framed in wider terms.

The first accounts of the insurrection emerged in its immediate aftermath. Participants, eyewitnesses and commentators published their own interpretations of the events from differing political perspectives in a struggle that formed an important part of the ‘post-revolution’. There were martyrological accounts from clerical victims and right-wing commentators, eyewitness accounts from those who had lived through the insurrection, such as Aurelio de Llano, or who visited the region afterwards, and leftist accounts which drew political lessons from the events or tried to contest the version published by the Catholic right.[[868]](#footnote-868) Several left-wing accounts were printed in the press in 1936 once censorship was lifted; for example, the “official” Asturian socialist interpretation was serialised in *El Socialista*.[[869]](#footnote-869) The particular context of the aftermath of the insurrection shaped these accounts and this struggle over the recounting of the insurrection has recently been the subject of study.[[870]](#footnote-870)

The events of October 1934 have been described variously as a strike, insurrection, revolution and commune. It is difficult to reduce the events in Asturias to a succinct label, given their scale and nature—they were far from uniform.[[871]](#footnote-871) The Asturian October went beyond a strike and was not “just” an armed insurrection. It was more than a protest against the entry of the CEDA into government yet as a revolution it failed—even if it was politically useful for both left and right subsequently to define the events as a revolution. Avilés recently identified what he labelled as six different interpretations of the events of October 1934, but which can be better classified as four interpretations—a ‘defensive insurrection’, ‘revolutionary insurrection which started the Civil War’, ‘antidemocratic insurrection to rescue the Republic’ or an ‘insurrection to conquer power’—and three factors which caused the revolution: the ‘discontent of the workers’, it was a product of ‘socialist political culture’, or indeed down to a ‘plurality’ of factors.[[872]](#footnote-872) This is a feeble assessment of the historiography and which shows a markedly static and simplistic approach to the socialists and the Republic. Nevertheless, it does demonstrate how any explanation is intimately related to the context of the Republic itself. Indeed, in this way, it is unsurprising that there has been disagreement over to what extent the insurrection can be characterised as defensive or offensive. The extent to which it constituted an attack on the Republic has important ramifications for our understanding of the relationship of the socialists to the regime.[[873]](#footnote-873)

However, as Vega notes, the conceptualisation of a ‘defensive revolution’ is ‘paradoxical’.[[874]](#footnote-874) Given the attempt at an “authentic” social revolution, it is extremely difficult to see the Asturian revolutionary insurrection as circumscribed by the confines of the Second Republic. In other words, as a social revolution, it was not limited to replacing the government with one led by the socialists. Indeed, there was a lack of clarity about what the movement would be at the different levels of the socialist movement. The socialist leadership at national level was more agreed on when it would take place than what the ‘revolutionary movement’ would actually be.[[875]](#footnote-875) According to Aróstegui, the order was for a ‘general strike’—not an insurrection—or at least a strike which would turn into an insurrection, while Taibo claims that the words used were ‘general revolutionary strike’, which could have meant a movement closer to the failed plot of December 1930.[[876]](#footnote-876) Andrés Saborit, a former PSOE deputy for Oviedo identified with the conservative Besteirist wing of the socialists, reportedly later admonished imprisoned revolutionaries in Oviedo, ‘“[n]obody ordered you to make the revolution. The order was for a strike”’.[[877]](#footnote-877) While the leadership in Madrid envisaged some sort of gesture aimed at removing the government, or the president of the Republic, this was not the vision in the streets and plazas. That the Asturian JS had not been made not fully aware of the nature of the movement until after it had ended became clear in bitter arguments during the Asturian JS’s congress in April 1936. The JS suspected that the committee had wanted to give power to Azaña, whereas they had wanted it to be ‘totalitarian’; in other words, truly revolutionary.[[878]](#footnote-878) If there were differing perceptions prior to the events, it was impossible that such conflicting perceptions would be resolved as the insurrection exploded into action.

## The Revolutionary Insurrection

On 4 October 1934 a new national government was formed, which included CEDA ministers for the first time. In response, the socialist leadership in Madrid ordered the beginning of the ‘revolutionary movement’ in accordance with prior—though incomplete—plans, which mainly concentrated on the taking of power at local level.[[879]](#footnote-879) As planned, Teodomiro Menéndez took the train to Oviedo with the coded order hidden in his hatband and arrived at the offices of *Avance* late on 4 October.[[880]](#footnote-880) From there, messengers were sent out to towns and villagers to spread the order for the movement.[[881]](#footnote-881) In the early hours of 5 October the sound of dynamite explosions signalled the beginning of the revolt in the coalfields.[[882]](#footnote-882)

Initially it was a socialist movement, though other groups quickly joined it. In Mieres, roughly 1,300 individuals were involved in the training and taking of power according to Arturo Vázquez, a socialist, while in Sama and San Martín del Rey Aurelio, approximately 400 and 500 respectively were entrusted with the uprising.[[883]](#footnote-883) Even then, arms were scarce—Rodríguez Muñoz estimates that only half of the militias, which numbered under 5,000, had weapons.[[884]](#footnote-884) Other groups were in an even worse situation. The anarchists of Gijón lacked weapons promised by the socialists.[[885]](#footnote-885) The communist militia—the MAOC (Milicias Antifascistas Obreras y Campesinas: Workers’ and Peasants Antifascist Militias)—had only begun to organise days before the insurrection and were ‘almost numerically insignificant outside of Madrid before the triumph of the Popular Front’, though 150 quickly mobilised in Oviedo to support the movement.[[886]](#footnote-886) Anarchists and communists were either informed shortly before the movement began—Vega claims the communists were notified two hours before—or else were unware of what was happening—someone was sent from anarchist-dominated La Felguera to Sama to investigate. With no orders and having heard the explosions, the anarchists decided to take up arms anyway.[[887]](#footnote-887)

The first target was to defeat the Civil and Assault Guard. Forty Civil Guard barracks and posts were attacked and 92 guards died in the assaults, the majority in Sama, where the struggle lasted for thirty-six hours.[[888]](#footnote-888) The only other armed resistance was that shown by SCOM members who barricaded themselves into their union centre in Moreda and were later joined by the parish priest sent to negotiate with them by revolutionaries. Several died or were captured while others managed to escape.[[889]](#footnote-889)

By the morning of 6 October, revolutionary militias were in control of the coalfields. Local rightists and members of the clergy were arrested and temporary prisons, including churches and a theatre, were used to hold those identified as a threat to the revolutionary order. Arms were seized and churches and homes searched while religious images and legal documents were burned. Several died or were killed as the revolutionaries took control, including the parish priest of Valdecuna (Mieres), who was killed in the early hours of 5 October, and Venancio Prada, the parish priest of Sama, who died in unclear circumstances as the Civil Guard barracks was under siege.

As power was secured, the area controlled by the revolutionaries expanded and attention turned to Oviedo. Due to a problem with sabotaging the power supply, revolutionaries had not risen in Oviedo on 5 October, though a general strike had meant the streets were deserted and silent.[[890]](#footnote-890) Columns left the coalfields and marched on the capital, though those led by González Peña took a detour to Las Regueras to obtain arms. Militias entered Oviedo from the south on 6 October and fought government forces in the streets. That same day, the revolutionaries gained control of most of the city, with government forces controlling strategic areas in the centre.[[891]](#footnote-891) Fighting would take place over the following days, but the revolutionaries never managed to gain complete control of Oviedo. Nevertheless, the geographical reach of the insurrection went beyond the coalfields and the capital, stretching as far east as Cangas de Onís, as far west as Grado, to the coast—though it was only relatively brief in Gijón and Avilés—and south to the border with the province of León, where the frontline remained relatively stable until the end of the insurrection. There was a distinct difference in the experience of the insurrection in Oviedo, on the frontline of the fighting, and the relative peace in the rear-guard of the mining valleys themselves.

Revolutionary committees forming ‘the organizational heart of the revolution’ were constituted in the coalfields on 5 and 6 October, while a provincial revolutionary committee used the *ayuntamiento* in Oviedo as its headquarters.[[892]](#footnote-892) These committees organised the revolutionary struggle, co-ordinating efforts between themselves. While the rising was socialist, committees at the level of the pueblo involved other unions, and groups were often given representation greater than their proportionate numerical strength. In Mieres, the committee was formed by two PCE members, two socialists, two anarchists and a member of the BOC.[[893]](#footnote-893) Organised at the level of the pueblo, these committees looked to more important urban centres for guidance and there was certainly a degree of co-ordination and communication.[[894]](#footnote-894) Committees organised their own affairs, most emblematically in the case of the anarchist stronghold of La Felguera, which is often treated separately in studies of the insurrection. The provincial revolutionary committee in Oviedo—predominantly socialist but with anarchist and communist participation—was essentially a figurehead; the term provincial committee confers a sense of coherence, stability and continuity that overstates the reality of the situation. In the pueblos, the local committees re-organised life at local level, banning money, creating hospitals, requisitioning food and transport and organising a revolutionary police force. A rudimentary war industry developed to provide munitions and armour-plate vehicles, and foremen were placed in charge of the mines.[[895]](#footnote-895)

Meanwhile fighting took place in the streets of Oviedo and Gijón. By 11 October the situation was more desperate. On 10 October, Gijón fell to government forces. The fighting had been hindered by a lack of arms, though a general strike continued until 16 October.[[896]](#footnote-896) Revolutionaries had been unable to gain complete control of Oviedo and government forces led by general López Ochoa and colonel Yagüe were nearing. Moreover, the capture of the arms factory on 9 October had not remedied the lack of munitions.[[897]](#footnote-897) Aware the Asturians were on their own, the provincial revolutionary committee ordered a retreat on 11 October, distributing money taken from the vault of the Banco de España to aid the leadership’s flight. Local committees also fled, but militias did not retreat.[[898]](#footnote-898) A second wave of committees emerged with younger members, who showed more radical zeal, even arresting members of the first committees, such as Manuel Grossi.[[899]](#footnote-899) The second committee in Oviedo is said to have been short-lived, though there is disagreement as to its duration. According to the socialist account, the second committee lasted eight hours. Benavides increases this to ten, while Shubert declares it lasted a day. Taibo describes the second and third provincial committees as coexisting for a few brief hours, before the former collapsed.[[900]](#footnote-900) The third provincial committee in Sama was headed by the socialist leader and councillor in Langreo, Belarmino Tomás, and formed by socialists and communists.[[901]](#footnote-901)

11-12 October marked a change. From then on, accounts point to greater disorder and chaos in Oviedo, and panic; people fled from Sama into the mountains.[[902]](#footnote-902) Churches were burnt as militia columns returned to Laviana in retreat, though they regrouped and returned to fight again. The intensity of fighting on the southern front diminished between 15 and 18 October, though militia forces were still leaving for the front until 17 October.[[903]](#footnote-903) Belarmino Tomás sued for peace: he crossed the lines and parleyed with general López Ochoa, negotiating the surrender of the revolutionary forces. On 18 October, the last proclamation was published announcing the end of the insurrection. Prisons were opened and a transitional authority was established in Mieres. Leaders and militias fled into the mountains; some would go into exile until 1936. Many more were captured, imprisoned and suffered torture after government forces entered the valleys on 19 October.

Without wider support the insurrection was doomed to failure. The government was not in crisis and the armed forces were not divided (as they would prove to be in 1936) and were prepared to defend the regime (as they had not in 1931). The majority of those who died in 1934 were killed in the fighting and it is impossible to give an exact figure of the number of dead, especially as the fighting blurred into repression. Nevertheless, ‘civilian deaths’, which include revolutionaries and civilians killed by bombing—government planes dropped bombs on urban areas controlled by the revolutionaries—are generally thought to number between 1,100 and 2,000.[[904]](#footnote-904) In contrast, there is general consensus that between 300 and 350 members of the armed and security forces died. Thirty-three clergy, male religious and seminarians were either killed by revolutionaries or died in the context of the revolution. Díaz Nosty counts another eleven individuals who died at the hand of revolutionaries, including rightists, company bosses, a magistrate and a student.[[905]](#footnote-905)

The study of the revolutionary insurrection is hindered by the available sources. The accounts published in the wake of the events present their own difficulties due to the post-revolutionary context in which they were produced. Unfounded lies were widely disseminated by the right-wing press, such as the alleged displaying of a dead priest in a butcher’s shop with the sign ‘pork for sale’, the murder of the children of civil guards and the story of three young women reportedly raped and killed, but which turned out to be a fabrication.[[906]](#footnote-906)

Few revolutionary publications survive, despite reports that the proclamations and orders were produced during the insurrection by printing presses (that functioned ‘continuously’ from 10 October), cyclostyle, typewriters and even by hand, and fixed in public spaces in every pueblo.[[907]](#footnote-907) These revolutionary proclamations (*bandos*) provided ‘news’, demanded greater efforts for the good of the revolution and dictated orders to the local population. Historians have been critical of these proclamations. For Taibo, the information was ‘lamentable’ and consisted of ‘triumphalist rumours’, which he contrasts to the quality of the Asturian left-wing press prior to the insurrection.[[908]](#footnote-908) However, the proclamations are a valuable source as they enable us to study how revolutionaries sought to explain their revolution and their relationship to its wider context through framing the insurrection and constructing stories and narratives. Such stories are an essential aspect of revolutionary moments because ‘while stories clearly serve many purposes, they are, at base, tools by which we build and organize to maintain and develop our lives into the future. Thus it seems reasonable to construct them as a form, perhaps even the primary form, of socio-political struggle’.[[909]](#footnote-909) The revolutionary *bandos* produced during the insurrection demonstrate this ‘storying’ process and this forms an important part of this chapter, which engages with the revolutionary process by exploring the attempt to form a nascent revolutionary community and the (contested) lines used to define it. The revolutionary imaginary is used to understand the way in which revolutionaries interpreted and explained their actions, imagining the Asturian revolutionary insurrection as a broader phenomenon and acted accordingly. There were frequent allusions and references to the Russian Revolution of 1917, which was the closest revolutionary reference point, and on which the Asturians drew (imaginatively) to inform their own actions.[[910]](#footnote-910) The *bandos* formed part of the institutionalisation of the authority and structures of the revolution through projecting an image of the revolution—even if it was an ideal and not necessarily shared by all participants. As fragments of the narrative of the insurrection as an ongoing process, the *bandos* provide valuable insight into the revolutionary imaginary. Alberto Fernández recognised forty years later that the propaganda produced was ‘absurd’, yet it was ‘effective in accordance with the enthusiasm of the moment’.[[911]](#footnote-911) In this way the *bandos*, with their ‘clear revolutionary spirit’, captured and drove the revolutionary process.[[912]](#footnote-912)

The revolutionary proclamations pose problems as to their authorship, the name in which they were created—the communist Carlos Vega claimed he wrote a *bando* in the name of the committee in Oviedo to stop looting—as well as their circulation and relationship to the ‘reality’ of the situation itself.[[913]](#footnote-913) And there is also the question of whether the committee’s desires translated into what was actually published; Solano Palacio, an anarchist, claimed that communists modified the texts before they were printed in order to present themselves as being in charge.[[914]](#footnote-914) Though given the strong desire to control news—with militias destroying newspapers dropped by planes and threats made to those who propagated ‘false news’—it seems implausible to suggest that the *bandos* were produced without the consent of the local revolutionary authorities.

Solano Palacio offers the most astute analysis of the *bandos*, from an anarchist perspective. He observed political differences in *bandos* produced in Grado, which he attributed to anarchist and communist differences, and claimed that a *bando* produced in Oviedo was written by the second committee, explaining that ‘it can be seen that it was written in a state of nervousness and overexcitement which is clear in what it says’ and was an attempt to ‘fool the workers’.[[915]](#footnote-915) But these are retrospective *political* readings and while there were certainly political differences, things were not so clear-cut in the heat of the revolutionary moment. The *bandos* do not fit into a neat chronology with regards to the short burst of revolutionary, communist-influenced zeal on 12-13 October: a *bando* from Oviedo on 9 October used the communist terms ‘Workers’ and Peasants’ Alliance’ while another from 16 October continued to use radical rhetoric appealing to the heroism of the workers—‘the revolution continues on its onward march’—even when the third committee is generally identified as seeking a negotiated end to the struggle.[[916]](#footnote-916) It may have been simply that the *bando* was written by communists, but it seems strange that it would have survived. The *bando* also references the League of Nations and human rights, suggesting that the author was aware of the failed attempt to send telegrams to the League of Nations, League of Human Rights and the government on 10 October, thus indicating it was far from an isolated individual who produced a radical *bando* without the knowledge of the committee.[[917]](#footnote-917)

## Revolution, Community and Violence

The insurrection was a genuine attempt at social revolution at the local level. This entailed the creation of a nascent ‘revolutionary community’, but which built on pre-existing relations and ideas of community. The revolutionary insurrection emerged from the pueblos themselves and process and practices of inclusion and exclusion, including violence, helped to define this collective subject under construction. This is not to say that the community was static or homogenous—there were different experiences at local level within the wider insurrection.[[918]](#footnote-918)

Local revolutionary committees were organised at the level of the pueblo and were formed by representatives and leaders of the trade unions and political parties. The insurrection’s leaders thus emerged from the pueblos themselves, and represented an assertion of local power. Many leaders on the committees were prominent local or regional politicians or syndical figures, such as Ramón González Peña, Bonifacio Martín, Belarmino Tomás, Silverio Castañón and José María Martínez. Militias were drawn from local communities, even if not all were involved in the initial preparation or fighting. Rather than destroying the *ayuntamiento*, social revolution was proclaimed from it in Mieres and the insurrection’s end was declared from it in Sama.[[919]](#footnote-919) Elsewhere, the red flag flew over the *ayuntamiento* of Grado and the revolutionary committee in Siero was housed in the *ayuntamiento*, though the fragmentation of power below the level of the municipality meant that other buildings were used, such as the Ateneo in Turón, and the Civil Guard post and Ateneo in Moreda.[[920]](#footnote-920) The use of the *ayuntamiento* nevertheless shows how the revolutionaries drew on its symbolic power as a building invested with authority—the *ayuntamiento*’s stamp was even used in Oviedo and Mieres to validate revolutionary vouchers.[[921]](#footnote-921)

There was a strong emotional attachment to local representatives, building on prior senses of community. In a later recollection, militias were described as departing Laviana for Oviedo, leaving ‘the capital of their municipality, the whole municipality, in the hands of [*regido por*] the representatives of the revolution, in many of whom they had placed their confidence and mandate of popular revolutionary will through their votes’.[[922]](#footnote-922) This was a romanticised image, but shows the extent to which the revolutionary committees were linked to the re-empowerment of local communities during the revolution of 1934, as they were to the spirit of 1931 and the popular desire for change. It was now the hour of the working class: Vega, in his report to the PCE, remarked that ‘reactionary elements’ in Oviedo hid, while at their doors ‘workers and women’ raised their voices, saying ‘[n]ow it’s our time’ and ‘[c]ome out, let us see your faces’.[[923]](#footnote-923) Though the insurrection was consciously connected with 1931, it should also be understood in relation to the struggles with state security forces in 1934 and a desire to reclaim control and agency. Without the experience of 1934 it is difficult to understand the force of the insurrection, yet at the same time the latter superseded, by far, the process of local re-empowerment.

The commitment by local committees to allow groups proportionately greater influence on the committees than their actual numerical strength also demonstrates the importance of the construction of unity in 1933 and 1934. In Mieres, socialists only had as many representatives on the committee as other groups, despite a socialist’s claim that the pueblo was ‘eminently socialist’.[[924]](#footnote-924) The make-up of the committees thus depended on local dynamics and represented a desire to foment collaboration, though this commitment to plurality and collaboration was not without its internal struggles.[[925]](#footnote-925) This was not only a reflection of the Workers’ Alliance; it also built on collaboration in struggles and shared experiences in previous years, without which it is difficult to comprehend the relative ease with which joint committees were formed. The (initial) tendency was towards grassroots and local-based co-operation rather than conflict.

The local working class community were invoked as the subject and agent of the revolutionary insurrection. Revolutionary *bandos* justified the movement as working in the name of the ‘people’. That is, the people as the working class—the term did not extend to those who were arrested. In Mieres, the *bando* spoke of the committee as the ‘interpreter of popular will’.[[926]](#footnote-926) In Valdesoto (Siero) and La Felguera the respective ‘pueblos’ were presented as actively involved; it was the ‘pueblo’ who had decided to abolish money, according to the CNT revolutionary committee.[[927]](#footnote-927) Indeed, the revolutionaries declared themselves to be channelling the pueblo’s desires; from Grado it was claimed that ‘the pueblo in general has to feel intense satisfaction on seeing their ideal realised’.[[928]](#footnote-928) This ‘pueblo’ was identified as those active participants in the revolutionary process and thus mapped onto the working class as understood by the left, whose revolutionary aspirations were being realised. Moreover the insurrection was centred more on urbanised areas than rural hamlets. There were problems with peasants who resisted revolutionary authority, to the extent that they threatened to throw away milk rather than allow revolutionary patrols requisition it. Some were forced to hand it over.[[929]](#footnote-929)

The revolutionary insurrection was not just a recovery of local control. The imperative of the revolutionary effort forged closer ties through this intensification of political action. Young women, for example, were active participants in the insurrection, though traditional male-domination of political activity translated into the revolutionary insurrection itself. Women who were active participants were more likely to be involved in support work than fighting.[[930]](#footnote-930) Grossi and Benavides claimed that women did fight, though the former concentrates mainly on how they performed a heroic duty in aiding the revolutionaries’ effort through food supplies and munitions manufacturing, while Vázquez recounted that women who asked to fight were not given arms by the committee in Mieres.[[931]](#footnote-931) There is some evidence of female involvement in violence: eighteen-year-old Dolores Vázquez carried two pistols and dressed as a man on the frontline, according to the authorities who arrested her afterwards, while female participation in violence scandalised Francisco Martínez, who denounced it in his martyrology of two Jesuits.[[932]](#footnote-932) Nevertheless, direct female participation in violence seems to have been limited and the armed struggle for the revolution was predominantly masculine. It was probably easier to eulogise female participation afterwards than accept it in the context of the insurrection itself. There were limits to the revolutionising of society; societal gender norms remained relatively resilient, though there are hints that some women were involved in violence. Aida Lafuente, the mythologised “red rose” often represented as dying with a machine gun in her hands, was more likely executed after having spent the previous days working in food preparation or as a nurse.[[933]](#footnote-933)

Even if women were not combatants, the context offered an opportunity for active involvement in a revolutionary process. In September 1935 a young woman was arrested near Madrid. A member of the JC, she had participated in the insurrection as a stretcher-bearer and by transporting dynamite, before hiding in the mountains of Quirós until June 1935.[[934]](#footnote-934) The parents of a young woman arrested in the mountains with a member of the revolutionary forces after the insurrection lamented the ‘double disgrace’; not only had she run away with a man to whom she was not married, but she had participated in the revolution.[[935]](#footnote-935) The insurrection thus provided the opportunity for more active participation in radical political activities, particularly for youth, who played a key role in the militias and the wider revolutionary insurrection. A later report from *El Noroeste*’s correspondent inOlloniego was scandalised at the ‘maddened youth’ and ‘sixteen-year-old rascals [*pilluelos*] armed with dynamite and a rifle slung over the shoulder’.[[936]](#footnote-936) But the revolutionary community would also be forged through social pressure—dependant on existing social ties—and force in addition to enthusiasm. Besides willing participation, the revolutionary forces used a mixture of social pressure and or coercion to fill their ranks—*El Noroeste* later reported that some were forced to ‘do guard duty or go to the frontline’.[[937]](#footnote-937) Conscription was introduced, though it is likely that this was little more than an objective rather than reality.[[938]](#footnote-938)

Participation in the revolutionary insurrection was regulated by new codes of communication which sought to control revolutionary areas—centred mainly on the urbanised centres of the coalfields and roads. These codes also served to foment the sense of a revolutionary community through mutual recognition of involvement. When individuals or groups met in the streets, clenched fists were raised and ‘*salud*, comrade’ or ‘UHP’ (*Uníos, hermanos proletarios—*unite, proletarian brothers) pronounced.[[939]](#footnote-939) Vega explained that ‘[e]verywhere the password UHP was demanded’; without it an individual would be ‘arrested and identified straightaway’.[[940]](#footnote-940) The password and gesture functioned as a way of defining revolutionary space, invoking the Workers’ Alliance and principle of fraternity which would underpin the new social order, in addition to transmitting the sense of collective power. The force of the collective, as Vega noted, was interpreted as leading to triumph.[[941]](#footnote-941) As in previous months, working class unity functioned on an emotional level to foment and propel collective action. In a similar way, *The Internationale* was sung in a reaffirmation of leftist identities, but it was now linked to action and victory rather than simply ‘hope’.[[942]](#footnote-942) It was sung after defeating the Civil Guards in Olloniego, as militias departed for the front and when the arms factory in Trubia was captured.[[943]](#footnote-943) The leftist anthem was part of a wider desire and enthusiasm to express revolutionary identities. Other gestures and symbols were also used to create a revolutionary community. In Barros (Langreo) the red flag was flown from the church.[[944]](#footnote-944) Cabezas recalled that ‘all of the armour-plated vehicles had big red letters which said: “¡viva *la revolución*!” “Asturias is under our control. UHP!”’ and there were ‘no walls in Asturias in which there is not a viva to Russia scrawled or inscriptions like “Let’s save Russia!”’ as described by the Catalan journalist Josep Pla.[[945]](#footnote-945) The enthusiasm and creative outpouring included the stamping of urban spaces with the expression of revolutionary identity.

As the revolutionary committees took power, they proceeded to organise subcommittees in a torrent of organisational practices at the level of the pueblo.[[946]](#footnote-946) Committees seized transport, distributed food and clothing, arranged medical care, and even organised a rudimentary arms industry.[[947]](#footnote-947) There were local variations, but in general the systems—or at least the projected ideals—were remarkably similar. For food and clothing distribution, vouchers authorised by the revolutionary committees were used instead of money.[[948]](#footnote-948) In Oviedo, inhabitants would take vouchers to shops, whose owners were forbidden from accepting money, while in Mieres a sophisticated system was organised with cards for each family giving a daily allowance of food—though it was attributed a monetary value.[[949]](#footnote-949) *Bandos* proclaimed and detailed the new systems, but despite the emphasis in subsequent accounts on “perfect” organisation, there were problems, as in La Felguera, where food distribution was reorganised on 11 October with the ‘few scruples of some people’ blamed by the committee.[[950]](#footnote-950) Nevertheless, these proclamations were a vision of what the revolutionary process *should* be, and in this brave new world under construction, money would be abolished. Revolutionaries were acting out what they believed revolutionaries should do, creatively implementing what they considered a revolution to look like. Abolishing money was understood as a way of destroying capitalism, striking a blow against the socioeconomic underpinnings of society itself, even if banning money was little more than a symbolic measure, as in Mieres and La Felguera, where food was assigned a monetary value.

The situation was more chaotic in Oviedo, which was on the frontline, than in the coalfields. Alfredo Mendizábal, professor at the University of Oviedo, described his ordeal in the midst of the fighting in Oviedo as consisting of ‘nine interminable days, with their terrible nights. We could only hear gunfire […] and the incessant thunder of dynamite, handled with insuperable dexterity by the miners’, though he only had ‘praise’ for the miners who risked their lives to look after them.[[951]](#footnote-951) In contrast, in areas away from the front there was relative order and peace once revolutionary authority was established. In Mieres, ‘normal life carried on as always: a bit disturbed by the fear of the aeroplanes’ and there are similar reports for the Nalón valley and Grado.[[952]](#footnote-952) According to Díaz Nosty, life was ‘much more normal’ in many places ‘than many hastily written accounts have suggested’.[[953]](#footnote-953) This relative order, indicative of the rapidity and relative ease with which it had been built, broke when the situation turned against the revolutionaries and placed them under increasing pressure.

The attempts at capturing the foundation of a new society were not only an attempted leap towards the future; they were also directly related to the experience of the past. The different systems of food distribution introduced show differing attitudes towards the local community. According to Grossi, a stronger class element was introduced into the food distribution system in Pola de Lena. Whereas the working class used vouchers, the middle class had to pay with money and it was their meat that was butchered and distributed to all.[[954]](#footnote-954) The new revolutionary order meant the privileging of the working class over the bourgeoisie. Slaughtering cattle belonging to the middle class was a simple form of re-distribution of wealth by bringing the middle class into line with the workers. In contrast, in Laviana, greater emphasis was placed on the importance of safeguarding the relations that formed the local community. Here, food distribution was organised by the socialist mayor and his deputy using a voucher system. A collection was made so that the local populace could contribute money, which would be given to the shopkeepers ‘so that the modest business owners did not suffer losses’.[[955]](#footnote-955) According to the report in *El Noroeste*, the funds, managed by a third party, had continued to grow even in the wake of the insurrection.[[956]](#footnote-956) This was an attempt to ‘make revolution’ and restructure local relations on revolutionary lines—in other words, a non-monetised economy—with the desire to not cause damage to local commerce which was an integral part of local communities. It was a careful attempt to avoid fracturing social relations in the local community. Indeed after the insurrection a letter was sent in protest to the president of the Republic from Laviana, which was signed by local inhabitants ‘of all classes’ and defended the town’s reputation in the press, claiming that no pillaging or violence had taken place in Laviana. This was an exaggeration, though *El Noroeste* did observe in the wake of the insurrection that the town seemed to have been untouched by the ‘rebellious hordes’ in contrast to the ‘destructive traces’ left by the revolutionaries in other pueblos.[[957]](#footnote-957)

Defining the appropriate use of violence, its relationship to property and how goods were to be distributed went to the heart of the definition of the revolution. Accounts in the wake of the revolutionary insurrection condemned violence and attempted to draw a line between the revolutionaries and looting. For Grossi, looters were not revolutionaries but the ‘dregs of society’, such as prostitutes and beggars, and looting took place in Oviedo ‘as it was the capital’.[[958]](#footnote-958) Certainly, Oviedo did suffer more than the coalfields, due in part to its being on the front line. Revolutionary authorities in the coalfields had a greater capacity to control and prohibit looting—even as they justified requisitioning—though it did take place. Indeed, the threats of punishment for looting certainly point to it as a problem and Grossi recognised that while the *bando* worked to a degree in Mieres, pillaging was never eradicated.[[959]](#footnote-959) But the situation was more complex than tales of general revolutionary “barbarianism” or blanket accusations of personal gain.

Looting was targeted. *La Voz de Asturias* reported that when the gun shop in Oviedo was broken into at the beginning of the insurrection the revolutionary militias left the money behind; the ‘mob’ had taken everything else.[[960]](#footnote-960) Vega reported that in Oviedo there was initially no looting, except of gun shops, due to an excessive respect for private property and that he had had to encourage militias to take goods from the shops of known reactionaries.[[961]](#footnote-961) Indeed, goods, including shoes, were taken from shops.[[962]](#footnote-962) Over 14 million pesetas were taken from the Banco de España and distributed by the revolutionary committee, with some given to members of the first committees who fled.[[963]](#footnote-963) However, in Mieres only one shop was looted, ‘of a bourgeois hated by the town’, in what seems to have been a case of community vengeance comparable to episodes in Gijón analysed by Radcliff.[[964]](#footnote-964) This was not widespread rioting or generalised, untargeted looting, particularly in the coalfields. As Pla notes, ‘[i]n the mining zones—despite the tension incited by the Madrid newspapers with unprecedented irresponsibility—as in Trubia, so in Mieres and Sama, the industrial superstructure of the Asturian economy has not only been respected but maintained’.[[965]](#footnote-965) The mines and factories were not destroyed; indeed, foremen were charged with conserving the mines and metalworkers made sure to keep the blast furnaces functioning so that they did not cool and crack.[[966]](#footnote-966) The insurrection did not descend into an orgy of bloodletting aimed at destroying the foundations of local communities as groups on the left understood them, despite the fears of the foremen and mining deputies who had frequently been at the centre of strikes and bitter conflicts.[[967]](#footnote-967)

The use of violence can thus tell us much about the definition of the revolutionary insurrection. After fighting the Civil and Assault Guard, the first step taken by the revolutionary militias was to assert a monopoly on arms to secure the revolution and obtain more weapons for the revolutionary effort.[[968]](#footnote-968) Houses of those identified as ‘enemies of the revolution’ were searched for arms, as were churches and rectories, and in Mieres and Oviedo, the first shops to be assaulted were gun shops.[[969]](#footnote-969) Linked to the search for arms was the arrest of those perceived as enemies of the movement. In Olloniego, the priest and judge were targeted straight after the targeting of the Civil Guard.[[970]](#footnote-970) In Mieres, the mining boss José Sela, engineers, members of the clergy, pharmacists and religious were all arrested, and similar figures were detained around the coalfields.[[971]](#footnote-971) Preventative arrests of those perceived as potential enemies merged with taking advantage of the situation to settle political scores. Given that revolutionaries drew on their own experiences in the pueblos when making arrests, the two were virtually consubstantial—a later account of the events in Olloniego attributed many of the arrests to the fractious relationship between the PRLD and the socialists.[[972]](#footnote-972) Nevertheless, the revolutionary militias and committees did not arrest everyone who had voted for the CEDA and PRLD. Indeed, it would have been impossible given the thousands who had voted for the rightist candidacy. Rather, they targeted the most significant ‘elements’ amongst those regarded as reactionaries. In this way, the arrests were, to an extent, symbolic, part of the process of underlining who was identified as an enemy in the new context of the revolutionary insurrection. The delineation of the nascent revolutionary community required the exclusion of enemies, regarded as potential threats or as incompatible with the new order.

The local church, particularly the parish priest, was invariably a target. Religion was clearly conceptualised as antithetical to the revolution and part of the old order which had no place in the new revolutionary community and in the context of the insurrection there was a shift to the use of violence against members of the clergy. Revolutionaries were convinced, it seems, that priests would be involved in possible right-wing conspiracies and demanded keys to the church to search for arms.[[973]](#footnote-973) The church was not only a common enemy for those on the left, but its presence was ubiquitous. The searches and arrests provided the opportunity for revolutionaries to prove their revolutionary zeal and served as social “glue” within the group. They also demonstrated authority, affirming the place of these individuals above the church.[[974]](#footnote-974) As Canel described, detaining the priest was ‘doing something revolutionary’.[[975]](#footnote-975) Searching the church and detaining the priest became a ritual part of the revolutionary process in many areas. The birth of the new order required the destruction of the old, or its ridicule: in Tuilla images publicly were burnt and vestments worn in the street.[[976]](#footnote-976)

Revolutionary violence targeted male members of the clergy, religious and seminarians, as well as members of the industrial and social elite, such as the magistrate Adolfo Suárez, and thus demonstrates a clear political, class-based framing of the enemy. Female religious were unharmed and well-treated, and revolutionaries even asked them to provide food and medical care, underlining that they were not considered a threat.[[977]](#footnote-977) Not all clerical victims were executed. At least two appear to have been killed in the crossfire or similar circumstances.[[978]](#footnote-978) Similarly, motives are not always clear. An individual nicknamed ‘Pichilatu’ was executed in 1935 after a military trial which found him guilty of killing members of the security forces. For Taibo, the circumstances are unclear, whereas for Ruiz, Pichilatu killed them for no apparent reason at all.[[979]](#footnote-979) Violence thus depended to a degree on contingency, the circumstances of the moment and the individuals involved.

There is no clear chronology in terms of the exercise of violence and there was certainly an amount of contingency. Nevertheless, several died at the beginning in amongst the fighting and before revolutionary authority was established, such as Venancio Prada (parish priest of Sama), seminarians in Oviedo, the parish priest of Valdecuna, and Passionists in Mieres, who were killed as they tried to escape from their convent. The seizure of power opened the door to the settling of political scores as the revolutionary violence could either subsume or offer a veneer of justification to this extrajudicial exaction of popular justice, before committees had often been constituted. Adolfo Suárez, a magistrate, was shot in cold-blood by a militiaman in Oviedo reportedly having been identified as implicated in the Sanjurjo coup.[[980]](#footnote-980) Violence was used against mining bosses, though not against all. Rafael Rodríguez Arango, director of Carbones La Nueva (who had previously been targeted in September 1934), was killed on the first day in what seems to have been a case of score-settling, taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the insurrection.[[981]](#footnote-981) As part of this initial wave of violence church buildings and images were destroyed in Mieres, Langreo, Siero and Aller.[[982]](#footnote-982) Archives and legal documents were also destroyed.[[983]](#footnote-983) In addition to those killed, there were wider calls for summary justice to be enacted on civil guards who were captured; later testimonies explain how prisoners were protected from the “mob” by revolutionary militia and committee members—in Mieres the ‘masses’ wanted the handing over of two civil guards who were known for repressing demonstrations.[[984]](#footnote-984) As the chaplain of Duro-Felguera was taken through the streets, there were calls for him to be killed, while others defended him and he was imprisoned.[[985]](#footnote-985) Reprisals were taken against captured Civil Guards in Sama in the wake of the fall of the Civil Guard barracks, though revolutionaries tried to protect them from the wrath of the crowd.[[986]](#footnote-986) A later report attributed the killing of the parish priest of Moreda, who had escaped from the siege of the SCOM centre, to an attempt to avenge a militiaman killed during the siege.[[987]](#footnote-987) The boss of the explosives factory in La Manjoya (Oviedo) was killed once the factory was taken by the revolutionaries, for which different reasons have been mooted, including that it was due to blacklisting and dismissals in the past or to a foreman who wanted to ingratiate himself with the revolutionaries.[[988]](#footnote-988) The act nevertheless served to underline the exclusion of such individuals from the revolutionary community.

Once revolutionary authorities were established, debates began on the degree to which violence was to be used and different lines were drawn. There was no neat chronology and the situation was not stable. The assertion of revolutionary authority articulated through committees did not eliminate violence. In Turón the most infamous killings took place, including that of eight de la Salle brothers, a passionist and two *carabineros* (customs guards), who were shot at the cemetery on the night of 8-9 October, though the local parish priest, also imprisoned, was spared. Days later, Rafael del Riego, head of Hulleras del Turón, and two others figures linked to the company and the political right were killed. Different explanations have been put forward: blacklisting tactics by the individuals, revenge for the killings by government forces of non-combatants in Villafría (Oviedo), and even, though less plausibly, that Riego was a dangerous liability as he knew who had been involved in the previous killings.[[989]](#footnote-989)

Although enemies were arrested and excluded, the use of violence was disputed. Interestingly, the foremen, who had been at the centre of strikes and conflicts in the mines were not targeted. While there were episodes of score-settling, it seems that the violence of the revolution was projected to be grander and more targeted at fighting the army. The extent to which revolution meant actual physical destruction of the church was questioned. The use of the Cathedral tower by government forces led to fierce debates over the targeting of the Cathedral with explosives, to which the socialists on the provincial revolutionary committee were firmly opposed.[[990]](#footnote-990) Religion was to be excluded—and imprisoned—but individuals should not necessarily be killed. Young women interceded on behalf of a priest, shouting ‘[b]lood, no. Blood, no. Revolution, only revolution’ when some wanted to kill him.[[991]](#footnote-991) When the hiding place of the local FE leader of Mieres was discovered, he was protected by revolutionaries.[[992]](#footnote-992) A revolutionary admonished ‘a few children with primed [*aparejados*] sticks of dynamite’ who remained in the church in Ciaño after it was searched, telling them not to touch anything, saying: ‘“I’m not a believer, but my mother and father always have and continue to be. Don’t damage anything”’.[[993]](#footnote-993) Such episodes underline the hegemonic character of anticlericalism but show that the level of violence was questioned. A different approach was taken by others: some prisoners, including clerics, were taken to the front and used as human shields.[[994]](#footnote-994) Francisco Sanz Baztán, a canon, was killed when he could not keep up with the revolutionaries as they retreated.[[995]](#footnote-995) There were no clear lines with regards to revolutionary violence, it depended on the circumstances of the moment and the committee, or militias themselves, and the attitude towards what the revolution meant. According to the chaplain of Duro-Felguera, an individual intervened when calls were made for him to be killed and declared that he should be spared, as was a ‘liberal priest’.[[996]](#footnote-996) An individual’s previous actions could be enough to save them from anticlerical fury. Such an appeal shows a more inclusive interpretation of the new revolutionary community, upheld by ideals and a more nuanced sense of exclusion. The boundaries of community drawn through violence were also complicated by personal relationships; members of the clergy were offered protection by local leftists.[[997]](#footnote-997)

Arrests and imprisonment were the most common features of revolutionary justice. The victims of violence were relatively small in number, given the large proportion of the local population under revolutionary control in the rear-guard. It does seem to have generally been the case that revolutionaries did try to reduce and limit violence behind the lines. What was most important for the revolutionaries was the assertion of revolutionary control, not necessarily purging. Hundreds were imprisoned in churches, theatres and other buildings. A rudimentary system of justice was institutionalised via revolutionary committees: militias arrested and brought individuals before the committee who judged their conduct. In Oviedo, Teodomiro Menéndez went through the motions of judging those arrested. Some were imprisoned but many were freed, leading to criticism from the revolutionary youth.[[998]](#footnote-998) That such a system existed indicates a desire for a ceremony and motions of interrogation, and that the authority of the committee as the primary executor of popular justice was respected. According to Martínez’s martyrology of two Jesuits, they were arrested and taken to the committee in Mieres, which refused to take charge of them. It was only afterwards that the two Jesuits were murdered by their captors at a roadside.[[999]](#footnote-999)

In the wake of the insurrection, accounts directly addressed the question of violence. Those such as Benavides *La revolución fue así* sought to combat the image of bloodthirsty and violent mine workers, emphasising that prisoners were treated well. Participants reflected on violence and their relationship to being ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ the pueblo, which went to the heart of defining the insurrection itself. Violence, or the threat of it, was attributed to ‘outsiders’. According to a report in *El Noroeste*, people in Mieres feared that the presence of revolutionaries from Langreo meant they had come to ask the committee to kill their prisoners, which it refused to do.[[1000]](#footnote-1000) The trope of violence as external was common, too, in accounts of violence from the Civil War, not least as it allowed subsequent accounts to distance themselves from what had happened.[[1001]](#footnote-1001) From Olloniego it was claimed that the ‘genuine’ pueblo had not participated in the insurrection. Rather, the mass participation in Olloniego was explained by the dismissive comment that the ‘majority of residents’ were ‘foreign elements’ brought by the ‘muddy tide’ of industrialisation had brought to the town.[[1002]](#footnote-1002) This distancing was both exculpatory and an attempt to re-define and re-position the pueblo in the new and very different context of the post-revolution. It was now the time for a new pueblo to come to the fore, which was not associated with the working class, but identified in a more traditional manner.

As detailed in the previous chapter, fascism had emerged as a shadowy force to the left in 1933 and 1934, which had sharpened the sense of threat to the working class. Given the previously constructed association of the church with fascism, it is unsurprising that members of the clergy were arrested in the midst of the insurrection. Nevertheless, there appears to have been a difference in the use of the term ‘fascist’ in the context of the revolutionary insurrection. Incidents detailed in later accounts point to its flexible use in dialogue and the language used on the streets. Militias in Aller were reportedly looking to arrest ‘fascists’, who, according to a parish priest, were members of AP.[[1003]](#footnote-1003) The revolutionaries entered the de la Salle school in Turón and searched for arms that they believed the ‘fascists of the Catholic Youth’ had hidden there.[[1004]](#footnote-1004) When seminarians were arrested and taken to Mieres, their captors ‘shouting “We’ve got fascists, we’ve got priests”, to which those on each side of the road replied “kill’em”’, though they were not in fact killed.[[1005]](#footnote-1005) Father Salgado saluted the arrival of the revolutionaries with a fascist salute, which he mistakenly thought was the revolutionary greeting, and was met with the shout of ‘shoot him, he’s a fascist!’.[[1006]](#footnote-1006) Adolfo Suárez was shot after having been identified as a ‘fascist’.[[1007]](#footnote-1007) Clearly, such incidents are all mediated by the understandings and later recollections of witnesses. Nevertheless, it seems both clear and logical that the idea of fascism influenced who was arrested and legitimated the use of violence.

In contrast, very few *bandos* mention fascism.[[1008]](#footnote-1008) Even the manifesto presented in Paris in January 1935 by the SOMA and the Spanish national mining union did not use the term.[[1009]](#footnote-1009) Fascism had been more important for creating a sense of threat and so was part of the language used by the militias, even if it did not form part of the *bandos*. The revolution itself would inherently remove the fascist threat. Later, when detailing the list of names of those imprisoned in Sotrondio, David Antuña recalled that ‘[t]hat I recall, there were two fascists’. These were only two names from a much longer list.[[1010]](#footnote-1010) Fascism was much more strongly linked to the heat of the moment itself for framing and identifying enemies. A more exact use of the term was made in accounts afterwards in the cold light of the post-revolution.

## The Revolutionary Imagination

The revolutionary insurrection was projected in the *bandos* as a rupture, the point at which a new future could be constructed. In Mieres, Manuel Grossi proclaimed the ‘socialist republic’ from the balcony of the *ayuntamiento* on 5 October while a *bando* from La Felguera the following day declared that social revolution had triumphed.[[1011]](#footnote-1011) Having defeated the security forces and with power in the hands of the revolutionaries, the revolution was understood as triumphant. The *bandos* defined this moment of change. In Grado, a *bando* attributed to libertarian influence by Solano Palacio stated that ‘a new society’ was being created from the death of the old. This was a process governed by ‘natural laws’ and violence was merely a temporary phase; soon the youth would be able to ‘devote themselves to creation rather than destruction’. There was a powerful sense of a dead past, an unstable, ‘complicated’ present, and a future paradise.[[1012]](#footnote-1012) The situation was framed in temporal terms. The projected, inevitable future revolution was suddenly within reach; the same *bando* claimed that ‘[a] few hours—no longer—and there will be more bread on every table and joy in every heart’.[[1013]](#footnote-1013) A radical leap had been made towards the future through the act of revolution, leaving behind the ‘defeated Republic of 14 April’ with the revolution triumphant.[[1014]](#footnote-1014) The revolutionaries were closer to the future than the “defeated” past. *Bandos* demonstrate how individuals, or the authors at least, imagined themselves in terms of time and the stages of revolution, consciously contrasting the past and future. The present was reduced to a stepping-stone or threshold to the future, or at least this was what revolutionaries tried to project. Clearly the *bandos* were not representative of all participants or inhabitants of the areas under revolutionary control. Nevertheless, they played an important role in opening up ‘the realm of the possible’.[[1015]](#footnote-1015) Revolutions are consciously made and articulated; the *bandos* formed an important part of the process of framing the situation as revolutionary and framing individual actors as revolutionaries. As such, the ‘storying’ process was intrinsic to creating of revolutionary action and the forging or imagining of a revolutionary community.

The lyrical enthusiasm and faith in victory of the first few days gave way to more radical rhetoric in *bandos* produced in Oviedo as the revolutionary militias struggled in their attempt to conquer the provincial capital and as government troops drew closer. The second provincial committee issued a *bando* which demanded a final push towards victory, while days later a manifesto produced by the third provincial committee called on all to join the revolution as it continued ‘its onward march’ and criticised aeroplanes for trying to demoralise them with ‘Jesuit-like methods’.[[1016]](#footnote-1016) The traditional chronology is one of a radical, communist-led second committee which gave way to a third committee which looked to protect the communities of the coalfields and find a dignified way out of the situation. However, the radical rhetoric of this *bando* contradicts this supposition. The increase in radical rhetoric was symptomatic of the fact that the revolution was slipping away from them. It attempted to rebuild a bridge to the revolution, which was receding back into the future, whereas the *bandos* from the end of the insurrection are marked by composed and reflective language as radicalism was put to one side. The last manifesto by the Provincial Committee stated the defeat was ‘a stop on the way, a parenthesis, a restorative rest’ and a ‘truce in the struggle’. Defeat was a setback on the way to the revolutionary future. The struggle for triumph would continue, though through other means, as workers were called on to return to work.[[1017]](#footnote-1017) A *bando* issued by the anarchists in La Felguera echoed these sentiments. The revolution was no longer present, but belonged to the future, though the battle was not far away: ‘[w]hen it will be we do not know, but we will participate, because our ideas inspire us, they make our impulses vibrate and accelerate the pace of our revolutionary train’.[[1018]](#footnote-1018) It was understood that the opportunity would inevitably come again.

The enthusiasm for a revolution in progress is clear in the *bandos* produced during the insurrection. Revolutionary faith in victory should not be underestimated, at least at the beginning of the insurrection. Revolutionary fervour was widespread and the insurrection was expected to be a wider phenomenon, as is evident in the expectation that aeroplanes were coming to their aid, which speaks of the desire to imagine the revolution as occurring on a wider scale. In Laviana, a landing strip was prepared and the first planes that flew over Olloniego were met with a shout of ‘they are ours!’ and the account reasoned that ‘it seemed logical not to suppose anything different [...] and it was even said that a pilot saluted with a raised fist’.[[1019]](#footnote-1019) This did not just occur in Olloniego; Grossi recalled that ‘[t]he workers saluted the arrival of the planes as though they were emissaries of the revolution’.[[1020]](#footnote-1020) Benavides suggests that the first planes seen from Sama were interpreted as meaning that Madrid had fallen and also reports that pilots saluted with a raised fist. Revolutionaries thus expected, or at least hoped, to see themselves reflected in the pilots, though the feeling was not universal. According to Benavides, the first planes caused ‘more surprise than worry’ and Carlos Vega later claimed he did not believe the rumours that a pilot had been seen raising a clenched fist in revolutionary greeting.[[1021]](#footnote-1021) Nevertheless, it is clear that revolutionaries envisaged themselves as engaging in a wider struggle—beyond Asturias— and the enthusiasm of the revolutionary moment meant that some, at least, saw themselves reflected in the pilots of the Spanish airforce, before the bombs began to fall.

The ‘news’ produced and emitted during the insurrection preyed on enthusiasm and the lack of knowledge about the wider situation.[[1022]](#footnote-1022) In Turón, the radio station was seized and used to relay revolutionary propaganda, but rather than an attempt to connect with the wider world, this was used for consumption in the coalfields, with speakers in the streets transmitting what was presented as news from all over Spain.[[1023]](#footnote-1023) The news began at nine o’clock in the evening with ‘UHP’ and *The Internationale*. According to the right-wing journalist Luis Bolín, the Asturian aristocrat Pedro Pidal even had ‘imaginary talks’ in French with the French president on the radio.[[1024]](#footnote-1024) Such techniques aimed to raise morale by inscribing Asturias into what was presented as a broader struggle, elevating its importance. Similarly, claims of ‘thousands of class brothers [...] fighting in some towns’ or of the ‘social revolution’ that was ‘[t]riumphant...in an infinite number of pueblos in Asturias and other provinces’ were used to appeal for greater efforts and encourage participants to imagine themselves as part of a wider struggle.[[1025]](#footnote-1025) Imaginative, false news was published in the Llano district of Gijón on 8 October, and, most extensively, in Grado on 13 October.[[1026]](#footnote-1026) In a context of increasing pressure on the revolutionaries, the ‘Central Revolutionary Committee’ issued ‘Official News of the Revolution’ with short statements purportedly from all corners of Spain, such as that Santander had been captured, the civil governor arrested in Bilbao and a column of revolutionaries was marching on the centre of Madrid after taking control of the outskirts. The “events” in each place were summarised in a maximum of two sentences, producing the illusion of a telegram. Three key individuals were named: the socialist deputy Margarita Nelken, socialist leader Indalecio Prieto and former Minister of the Interior Rafael Salazar Alonso. The latter had been supposedly arrested in La Coruña on his way from Portugal, according to the report.[[1027]](#footnote-1027)

This was not simply about “fooling” the revolutionaries. Myth-making was important for sustaining action and an inevitable part of the revolutionary process. Ceferino Álvarez later claimed that ‘we kept people informed about everything that was going on, of how we arrived in Oviedo, of how things were going’ and ‘we were always objective and limited ourselves to what was really happening, to what was true and *to what we were hoping for*’ (emphasis added). As such, he allowed for the creative, imaginary interpretation of ‘reality’.[[1028]](#footnote-1028) But their reality was mixed with the hope and expectation of the revolutionary imaginary. The anarchist Solano Palacio cited the ‘Bolsheviks’ as talking of ‘Russian intervention to the point of saying there were some Russian warships in Spanish waters, [and] they were greatly disappointed when the following day the radio announced that nothing was happening’.[[1029]](#footnote-1029) Rumours and “official” news need to be understood as part of the same phenomenon: the two-way process of creatively imagining the revolution via mythmaking while also interpreting their reality in accordance with the information they had at their disposal.

Uncertainty was key and fertile ground for rumour. This, combined with distrust of the government and its methods, made it difficult for revolutionaries to know exactly what was happening beyond their own experience and what they were told by revolutionary comrades. Vega reported that rumours, such as that of a solidarity strike in France, were accepted ‘without hesitation’.[[1030]](#footnote-1030) According to Díaz Fernández, a captured miner told government forces that revolutionaries thought the radio was lying.[[1031]](#footnote-1031) Indeed, government calls for them to surrender conversely convinced revolutionaries that other provinces had also risen in rebellion, though by 8 October doubt was creeping in.[[1032]](#footnote-1032) This indicated the alienation between the local left and the government and again shows the importance of local ties versus distrust of the state at national level. It was this distrust which bred suspicion of government messages sent by the state—such as the flyers calling on revolutionaries to surrender. After the struggles which had taken place earlier in 1934, it is not difficult to see how belief that the government was lying in the pamphlets dropped from planes could have been widespread. In fact, the disappearance of planes from the sky seemed to confirm rumours that the airfield in León had been taken by revolutionary forces and ‘[o]nly when there were more or less certain news about the advance of troops in Asturias did suspicions begin that the movement in the rest of Spain was fading’.[[1033]](#footnote-1033) Even the provincial revolutionary committee was not sure of the wider situation. A young socialist was sent to León to read the papers; his report was used at the committee meeting on 11 October that decided on withdrawal, though the provincial revolutionary committee believed that government reports were exaggerated.[[1034]](#footnote-1034) Doubts continued amongst the revolutionaries. A *bando* issued in Oviedo by the second committee contrasted government reports that ‘in the rest of Spain nothing is happening’ with government propaganda declaring that the struggle was over in Asturias, which was clearly false, inviting readers not to believe either.[[1035]](#footnote-1035) This sophisticated technique preyed on both the uncertainty and the lack of knowledge about what was happening more widely, and demonstrates that *bandos* actively engaged with the information disseminated by the government in an attempt to convince the local population of their narrative about what was happening outside Asturias. This contrasted with the blunter tactic of the threat of death to those who propagated news favourable to the government forces in a *bando* from Grado on 13 October.[[1036]](#footnote-1036)

According to a later report in *El Noroeste*, the revolutionary committee in Mieres had even published a *bando* informing the local population that Russia and Germany were willing to intervene in Spain as ‘according to the treaty of Versailles, aviation could not bomb population centres’.[[1037]](#footnote-1037) The report is supported by Grossi’s recollections that there was an attempt to send telegrams protesting at bombings to the government, League of Nations and League of Human Rights, but the line had been cut.[[1038]](#footnote-1038) Why would the claim be made that Nazi Germany would intervene to aid the Asturian working class? Left-wing activists in Asturias were certainly aware of what Nazism meant: before the insurrection widely-read *Avance* had carried international news on a daily basis and talks on foreign affairs took place in *ateneos* and Casas del Pueblo. It seems plausible that the *bando* was an attempt to present the Spanish government as more extreme than Germany, with the latter shocked enough to intervene in collaboration with the USSR to uphold international law. Such logic seems outlandish and fantastical now and even in the context of the insurrection it seems unlikely that such tactics would have worked.

These appeals and invocations staked a claim for the revolutionary insurrection to be of international importance. In response to the bombing, the radio in Turón protested to the ‘whole world’.[[1039]](#footnote-1039) Not only were the developments related to a wider national framework, but they were also imagined in international terms. Even spontaneous gestures of creativity read Asturias into the context of the USSR. The Belgian traveller Mathieu Corman wrote that on his way to Gijón he passed a signpost which read ‘Gijón, 60km’ and underneath a hand had scrawled, ‘Moscow, just a step away’.[[1040]](#footnote-1040) These snippets provide glimpses of how the events of October 1934 were framed and interpreted. Whether ironic or earnest, the graffitied signpost associated Asturias with the USSR and framed the insurrection as going beyond the confines of the Republic.

Russia was a common reference point for the working class. Vega reported on 15 October a train with revolutionaries was organised to go to Oviedo, and farewell was said with vivas to the revolution, soviets and the red army.[[1041]](#footnote-1041) Exuberant terms were appropriated and re-imagined in the Asturian context as revolutionaries drew on categories and terms as they sought to perform as revolutionaries “should”. The insurrection was an opportunity to compare their actions to what they had read and heard about the patria of the workers. Imagining the USSR was logical, as Díaz Nosty notes, given that ‘[t]he working class revolution *par excellence*, profusely written about in socialist literature, was none other than the Russian’ and so in the context of the struggle they drew, imaginatively at least, on the USSR.[[1042]](#footnote-1042) It is unsurprising that the revolutionary context was used as an opportunity to implement ideas about Russia as it was the closest revolutionary reference, about which talks had been given at union centres and articles published in the press over previous years.[[1043]](#footnote-1043) Interest was far from limited to the communists and terms such as the ‘red army’ were broadly used in a clear allusion to the Russian Revolution and Civil War. Molins cites a *bando* from Sama decreeing the creation of a red army with ‘iron discipline’ and severe punishments for desertion and disobedience.[[1044]](#footnote-1044) Such measures and language could cause political friction. Solano Palacio, an anarchist, attributed the call to create a red army in Grado which would ‘blindly’ obey its leaders to communists and he was critical of the ‘Marxists’ of Turón, Mieres and Sama for disarming workers in order to create ‘red militias’.[[1045]](#footnote-1045) From a similar standpoint, Villar contrasted the frank tendency towards the dictatorship of the proletariat’ and corresponding ‘rigid, iron discipline’ contrasted with the ‘spontaneity’ of the anarchists.[[1046]](#footnote-1046) There were certainly tensions and ideological differences—the use of power and introduction of “iron” discipline would have touched a nerve in the anarchists.[[1047]](#footnote-1047) But it is likely that the reality was more complex and such differences were more clear-cut in the aftermath. There was fluidity on the left in terms of the language used. The flexibility of the language in accounts written afterwards, which speak in general terms of a ‘red army’, for example, do not aid this differentiation. There is a risk in studying the language used, in terms of differentiating between the retrospective use and what was said at the time. Nevertheless, it is sensible to assume that the situation was more complex and flexible, in line with what was noted in the previous chapter in discussion of the terms ‘Workers’ Alliance’ and ‘United Front’. For example, even a wall poster in the anarchist district of El Llano in Gijón spoke of a ‘red army’.[[1048]](#footnote-1048) The term was not exclusive to the communists, given the general enthusiasm and interest towards the Russian precedent, even if there were differences over strategy and methods.[[1049]](#footnote-1049) For Taibo, the ‘red army’ was never fully defined, but meant the generalised recruiting of militia fighters, rather than relying solely on volunteers. Even so, this, along with conscription, was clearly never attained.[[1050]](#footnote-1050) Rather, rhetorical emulation inscribed Asturias into the broader, epic and historic struggle, more rhetorical than real, but nonetheless a crucial part of the revolutionary process.

While some committees used the communist formulation of ‘workers and peasants’, *bandos* did not use the term ‘soviet’. This is perhaps unsurprising given that, as Cruz has explained, it was a difficult term for communist activists to understand in contrast to the propaganda of the USSR and its achievements.[[1051]](#footnote-1051) Moreover, it is difficult to see how anarchists or socialists would have agreed to the use of such a loaded term. However, Vega did characterise certain committees and areas as ‘soviets’ afterwards.[[1052]](#footnote-1052) This was an attempt to ‘find’ the Russian Revolution in Asturias, given that this would be natural according to the political circumstances of revolution, as understood by communists. Nevertheless, this was very much part of the later dissection of the events in order to extract political lessons. It would be the PCE which would claim the legacy of the Asturian October over the following months while the socialist leadership distanced itself from the events.[[1053]](#footnote-1053) For all the invocation of the Russian Revolution, the revolutionary insurrection of 1934 was brief and geographically confined. Nevertheless, the insurrection, and the repression, would have hugely important effects, not only in Asturias, but throughout Spain.

Conclusions

The revolutionary insurrection was doomed from the start. The Republican state was not undergoing a crisis, the insurgents did not have the support of the armed and security forces and the insurrection lacked the wider support. Nevertheless, the force of the insurrection took many, including on the left, by surprise.

The revolutionary insurrection was a clear attempt at social revolution envisaged as transcending the confines of the Asturian coalfields. Revolutionaries drew on what they felt was the closest precedent, the Russian Revolution of 1917, to guide their actions, but which was little more than a revolutionary performance using borrowed terms. This nevertheless formed part of the attempt to create a revolutionary community, remaking local ties and excluding those who did not fit in the new society under construction. As such, the revolutionary insurrection was an attempt to leap forwards to a revolutionary future, but it was also dependent on pre-existing community ties and feeling, and left-wing culture and sociability in the coalfields. The revolutionary insurrection was therefore a complex phenomenon, demonstrating both distinctive local characteristics, but also caught in the tension between past and future. It was a product of radical action and of a radical imagination, which cannot be understood—and nor can the force of the insurrection—without the developments at local level over the previous two years, and which manifested itself in an outpouring of action and creativity.

# Chapter IV

**The Post-Revolution: From Repression to the Popular Front, 1935-1936**

Introduction

The events of October 1934 were a decisive moment in the history of the Second Republic. The experience of the insurrection and—more importantly—the repression profoundly changed the lived experience of the Republic in the mining valleys between the end of October 1934 and the elections of 1936. In the ‘post-revolution’ political divisions and community fractures widened and crystallised. The left was excluded and silenced by the authorities. Assertions such as that ‘revolutionary organisations [...] were soon back in business in 1935 in full force’ fail to hold up to the evidence and are plainly ridiculous.[[1054]](#footnote-1054) Repression was the only solution offered by the authorities, with the left excluded and criminalised, though at the same time the right needed the spectre of the left to understand itself and justify its own actions and rhetoric. Political groups on the right neglected the opportunity provided by the change in political circumstances due to a lack of interest and ambivalence.

The revolutionary insurrection did not mean the fall of Lerroux’s government, but neither did it mean the introduction of a fascist state. The socialist leadership was arrested—although Prieto managed to escape to France—and its press closed down. The left-wing publications which did emerge in Asturias had to struggle with censorship. 1935 was a year of rebuilding, reorganisation and reorientation for the left. The socialist movement crystallised into opposing factions identified with Largo Caballero and Prieto respectively, and this would continue through 1936.[[1055]](#footnote-1055) 1935 was also a year of unity strategies: the PCE continued to pursue of strategy of building alliances, reaching out to the socialists, while the republicans looked to rebuild the republican-socialist alliance of the first biennium and return to the “spirit of 14 April”.[[1056]](#footnote-1056)

One of the consequences of the insurrection was the increased offensive against the first biennium reforms and a tighter hold on local politics by central government. Even reforms by more liberal figures within the government itself were under pressure. Villalobos, the PRLD Minister of Education, was vilified and forced to resign due to the lack of support for his education reforms. Giménez Fernández, CEDA Minister of Agriculture and a social Catholic, saw his agrarian reform watered down to ineffectiveness by modifications to the original bill.[[1057]](#footnote-1057) Such manoeuvres jettisoned any attempt at a shift the political centre in what was a rapidly polarising country; indeed, polarisation is a central concept for understanding the last two years of the Republic—and hence the Civil War itself—though Cruz prefers to emphasise a more complex picture of polarisation, fragmentation and a final polarisation in July sparked by the murder of the monarchist deputy Calvo Sotelo.[[1058]](#footnote-1058) The CEDA pursued a hard line in 1935; ministers and councillors resigned over pardons issued for those involved in the revolutionary insurrection. Nevertheless, CEDA’s objective was constitutional reform, which could be undertaken after December 1935 with a simple majority, rather than two-thirds of the chamber. 1935 was thus, in some respects, similar for right and left; they both reorganised, struggled with internal differences and waited to recover or reorientate the Republic. CEDA’s strategy of biding its time failed, however, when Alcalá Zamora handed power to Portela Valladares in December rather than the CEDA, and elections were convened.

In Asturias, the cocktail of repression and exclusion was unsustainable in the long term and fuelled the strength of the backlash in 1936. The left which returned in 1936 had a harder edge, a stronger sense of self, relative autonomy and a fixation with arms. Coalfield communities had been traumatised by the experience of the repression and measures introduced at local level by left-wing groups, including boycotts and militias who disarmed rightists, were aimed at disabling the threat that the right posed and enacting the justice of the ‘pueblo’. But this coercive attempt at reducing physical violence served to underline the impossibility of coexistence in the streets in spring 1936, even as leftists attempted to rearticulate a sense of community broken by the repression. The repression—but also the internal dynamics of the left—led to an accelerated radical shift in 1936. Unions and parties were purged and boycotts organised in the pueblos, fomenting radicalism through the implementation of their ideas of justice. This was justice combined with control, and so had a much harder edge than in previous years. Frequent exhibitions of collective working class left-wing power served to underline its strength, not least in late May 1936, when left-wing militias closed down Oviedo for two days in response to the indiscriminate firing on an open-air party by members of the Assault Guard.

Studies of the Popular Front are, somewhat inevitably it seems, mired in questions of responsibility for the Civil War. The Francoist regime later retroactively justified the rebellion through emphasising the chaos of the spring of 1936 and falsified plans for a communist revolution. Nevertheless, it is clear that there was a very high level of conflict and the question of violence looms large in any account of spring 1936, labelled by Payne as ‘the most famous civil disturbance in Spanish history’.[[1059]](#footnote-1059) The number of victims and level of violence is disputed. Estimates from scholars range from around 270 to 450 deaths in political violence between the February elections and the attempted coup in July 1936.[[1060]](#footnote-1060) There is also the question of how discussion is framed. As Cruz highlights, there is a risk of isolating mortal victims from other kinds of collective action; he prefers to contextualise the violence as both an expression of power and control, and part of a wider confrontation in 1936.[[1061]](#footnote-1061) This allows for a more nuanced approach. The existence of violence does not necessarily equate to revolution, as Payne implies, though it certainly poses serious problems for the exercise of state authority.[[1062]](#footnote-1062) Ranzato and Payne paint the Popular Front governments, and particularly Azaña, as fluctuating between impotence, an unwillingness to guarantee order and facilitation of a revolutionary process.[[1063]](#footnote-1063) Rather than understanding the fragmentation within the left, such an approach simplifies the Popular Front into a single homogenous revolutionary bloc.

Similarly, narrow definitions of political violence and difficulties in obtaining the details of incidents can make the computation of victims difficult. Even *Región*, reporting on violent episodes would not always detail motives and not all violence was political—a trial took place over an incident when a man stabbed another for refusing him a cigarette.[[1064]](#footnote-1064) The task of engaging with the level of violence is not aided by censorship and the fact that relatively few newspapers have survived.

González Calleja has recently criticised the recurrent cliché of the Popular Front ‘chaos’ and ‘misgovernment’, highlighting that it neglects to engage with the governments’ attempts to control or curb violence.[[1065]](#footnote-1065) Certainly, the government faced very important challenges in governing Spain in 1936 due to the radicalised politics, and the confrontation between the left and right. There was growth in paramilitary style as part of the culture of confrontation.[[1066]](#footnote-1066) This chapter will provide a more nuanced viewed of the radicalism of the left in 1936, which, while emphasising the hard-edged militancy, will demonstrate the fragility and fractiousness of the situation which belied its projected self-confidence.

## Repression and Community

The military campaign against the Asturian revolutionary insurrection was led by General López Ochoa. The Minister of Defence, Hidalgo, had appointed Franco as an adviser and it was Franco who suggested using colonial troops to suppress the insurrection.[[1067]](#footnote-1067) Four columns, headed by López Ochoa, Solchaga, Yagüe (whose troops departed from Morocco) and Bosch (later replaced by Balmes) converged on Asturias and the insurrection ended on 19 October with the entry into the coalfields of government forces numbering 18,000.[[1068]](#footnote-1068) Revolutionaries had already fled, hiding their arms or leaving them behind in schools or other buildings.[[1069]](#footnote-1069) Protagonists fled into the mountains or exile with the aid of networks set-up by left-wing organisations to facilitate their flight. According to Taibo, over 1,000 managed to flee Asturias and take refuge in the mountains or in other parts of Spain, while 200-300 went into exile. However, such figures seem low given that 121 alone went to the USSR and the main nucleus was actually based in France and Belgium.[[1070]](#footnote-1070)

For those who remained, the army was an occupying force. In fact, terrorisation had already begun before 19 October. Seeing the evidence of killings and rape in Villafría on the outskirts of Oviedo had pushed Belarmino Tomás to negotiate the surrender of the revolutionary forces with López Ochoa on 18 October.[[1071]](#footnote-1071) The agreement sparked confrontation between López Ochoa and Yagüe, but meant that the occupation was completed without fighting.[[1072]](#footnote-1072) The terrorisation tactics built on the experience of colonial war in North Africa, including the use of torture by the Legion.[[1073]](#footnote-1073) Colonial forces ‘were responsible for several kinds of atrocities: the execution of prisoners after summary interrogation, the murder of civilians, the rape of women, and the looting of houses’. Arrests began immediately and within two days nearly 50 provisional prisons were created.[[1074]](#footnote-1074) In total, around 15,000 people are calculated to have passed through the prison system as a result of the revolutionary insurrection and 2,587 were still incarcerated in 1936. Towards the end of February 1935, over 10,000 had been tried and, while death sentences were handed out by the military courts, only two executions were carried out and fewer than 4,000 received sentences of more than a year.[[1075]](#footnote-1075) Rather, it was the beatings and torture of those imprisoned—carried out on a mass scale—rather than judicial execution which were central to their experience of the repression. A document signed by 547 prisoners imprisoned in Oviedo and sent to the public prosecutor (*fiscal*) provided personal testimonies of torture and imprisonment.[[1076]](#footnote-1076) The key figure in this maltreatment was Lisardo Doval, who, appointed on Franco’s recommendation, set up his headquarters at the convent of the Adoratrices in Oviedo, through which 500-600 prisoners passed between 23 October and 10 December 1934.[[1077]](#footnote-1077) Reports of Doval’s actions and his ‘relish for brutality’ led to an investigation, and he was sent back to Spanish Morocco in December, a decision which disappointed the mining bosses.[[1078]](#footnote-1078)

There were a number of extrajudicial killings as part of the process of terrorisation. According to Díaz Nosty, there were between 165 and 210 victims of the repression, including the most infamous case which occurred in Carbayín days after the insurrection ended.[[1079]](#footnote-1079) Twenty-four individuals were taken at night, shot or hacked to death and their bodies thrown on a slagheap and others buried near the Mosquitera mine. Not all were revolutionaries: one was a CEDA-supporting teacher, another had been arrested for a traffic offence and another was simply the son of a well-known socialist.[[1080]](#footnote-1080) López Ochoa claimed to have shot several soldiers in punishment for their actions but, despite this attempt to curb violence, it was little comfort to those who had to live with the terrorising tactics, especially as the Civil Guard refused to hand over the bodies to the families.[[1081]](#footnote-1081) Such cases also need to be placed in the context of violent rhetoric, whereby killing was openly accepted by the authorities as a way of ‘pacifying’ the enemy. A *bando* issued by López Ochoa on 20 October in response to the blowing up of a military lorry, which caused 25 deaths, declared that ‘all those who are found to possess weapons or explosives [over the next 24 hours] will undergo summarytrial and be shot if found guilty’.[[1082]](#footnote-1082) Similarly, speaking in the Cortes, PRLD leader Melquíades Álvarez called indirectly for shootings, citing the example of the Paris Commune: ‘[w]ith those shootings [Thiers] saved the Republic [and] its institutions and maintained order’.[[1083]](#footnote-1083) Such a move would have completely undermined what the Second Republic stood for, even if it managed to reassert the authority of the state. This had been one of the difficulties faced by the regime from the start, as seen in, for example, Casas Viejas.

The scale of the repression was enormous, affecting the lives of virtually everyone in the mining valleys. Arrests and searches for arms formed part of the new rhythm of everyday life. Manuel García recounted that every day a lorry of assault guards would arrive in Olloniego and beat everyone in sight.[[1084]](#footnote-1084) Control was implemented via curfews and safe-conducts. Despite press censorship, the local community was well aware of what was happening. In January 1935, five prisoners were taken from the basement of the Casas del Pueblo in Sama to the provincial hospital because of the state in which they were in. Their exit from the Casa del Pueblo was witnessed by crowds.[[1085]](#footnote-1085) After the killings in Carbayín, mothers held night vigils outside the convent in Sama where their sons were imprisoned to impede further killings.[[1086]](#footnote-1086)

Repression broke the previous rhythms of political and social life. Casas del Pueblo, co-operatives and cultural centres were looted, burnt or turned into prisons, as with the Casa del Pueblo in Sama.[[1087]](#footnote-1087) The SOMA was suspended by the provincial authorities at the request of the civil governor, Velarde, though he wanted the SOMA dissolved rather than just suspended.[[1088]](#footnote-1088) In autumn 1935, the dissolution of UGT unions was decreed by the same authorities and a long list of Asturian socialist unions—from agricultural to matchmakers to shopkeepers—were dissolved.[[1089]](#footnote-1089) With unions suspended and centres ransacked or closed, the institutional heart of local communities for many was removed, profoundly reshaping previous patterns of sociability. Again, this did not just affect the male workforce; schools were occupied by the army and thousands of children lost their classrooms.[[1090]](#footnote-1090)

Mines were closed until mid-December, and even then took weeks to reopen and rebuild their workforces.[[1091]](#footnote-1091) All contracts were cancelled—not just in the mines but also in the arms factories—and workers had to re-apply for their jobs.[[1092]](#footnote-1092) This effectively criminalised all workers by default and their innocence had to be proved. This was economic punishment, aimed at the left: a barrel-organ which played *The* *Internationale* was taken from its owner and destroyed.[[1093]](#footnote-1093) The restructuring of the labour market did not just affect the mine workforce. Female municipal cleaners were given the extra responsibilities of the security forces’ garrisons and women worked for free at the hospital in Mieres.[[1094]](#footnote-1094) Councillors or whole councils were removed in Asturias and around Spain—more than 2,000 in total—and replaced with steering committees and councillors in line with the government, changing the nature of the Republic at local level—councillors were no longer local representatives elected by popular suffrage.[[1095]](#footnote-1095) In Oviedo, socialists and several republicans were removed and the new *ayuntamiento* formed by Radicals, the PRLD and AP, who took advantage of the situation to sack municipal employees.[[1096]](#footnote-1096) The *ayuntamiento* of Oviedo, Provincial Deputation and steering committee in Langreo suspended and investigated employees.[[1097]](#footnote-1097)Purges took place as the new municipal authorities suspended and investigated employees. In Oviedo, several teams of municipal workers, including butchers and those involved in tax collection, were dissolved and workers had to reapply for their jobs.[[1098]](#footnote-1098) The steering committee in Laviana agreed on 31 October to suspend all municipal teachers, while in Langreo ‘suspicious’ teachers were removed.[[1099]](#footnote-1099)

Families were re-structured or uprooted. Ramón García Montes, whose father was in hiding, recounts how the children in his family were shared out among family members’ households while Ángeles Flórez Peón recalled how she went with her mother to live in Carbayín from Sotrondio due to the death of her brother, one of the ‘martyrs of Carbayín’. This meant a complete change in her life and she struggled to integrate into the new community.[[1100]](#footnote-1100) With the mines closed, misery and hunger quickly gripped households. In Mieres women and children begged for leftovers from the soldiers’ mess and the town was ‘submerged in a sea of tears and sorrow’ while La Felguera was a ‘picture of misery’.[[1101]](#footnote-1101) Even those who could work faced problems; those employed by Industrial Asturiana had not been paid since August and in December the company stopped giving workers credit in company shops.[[1102]](#footnote-1102) The solidarity structures which could have functioned to alleviate these problems worked clandestinely or else were unable to function. Initiatives were organised by the republicans and the left to help orphans and families, such as the Comité Pro-Infancia Obrera (Committee in Aid of Working-Class Children), which raised 50,000 pesetas and helped evacuate 500 children.[[1103]](#footnote-1103) Women played a prominent role in solidarity campaigns to help families and those imprisoned, with visits made by deputies and other leaders, such as Ibárruri, de la Torre—who was protected by parliamentary immunity—and Martínez Sierra.[[1104]](#footnote-1104)

Work, the trade union, the Casa del Pueblo: the institutional structures at the centre of many people’s lives had been removed. Bars remained as spaces of sociability where there was a degree of freedom to express political ideas. Unrepentant revolutionaries conversed in low voices in bars and the streets, dissecting what had happened.[[1105]](#footnote-1105) But the security forces also went to bars to glean information as to the exact whereabouts of those who had fled into the mountains.[[1106]](#footnote-1106) In Oviedo, a man criticised the repression in a bar only for an assault guard in plain clothes to arrest him.[[1107]](#footnote-1107) Otherwise clandestine meetings took place in the mountainsand with so many in prison in 1935, prisons became *the* site of left-wing politics. Pages of provincial left-wing publications that emerged in the post-revolution, including *La Tarde* and *Asturias*, were filled with arguments and debates that were often formed by letters that came from prison. With thousands in prison and others in exile, *La Tarde* attempted to connect the prison with wider society, rebuilding the working class movement as a virtual community.[[1108]](#footnote-1108)

The change in the atmosphere materialised in the streets. Even in December only uniforms and elegantly-dressed young women could be seen in Mieres, while most people in Carbayín dressed in mourning.[[1109]](#footnote-1109) Describing Ujo, Camín wrote that there was a ‘tragic silence’ in the miners’ houses where ‘[a]t the windows and balconies, squalid and barefoot children can be seen, along with poverty-stricken women with brick-coloured skin, thin, sickly, and threadbare. Not one clear gesture of joy’.[[1110]](#footnote-1110) The streets summed up the sombreness and paralysis of the post-revolution, in addition to demonstrating the suppression of left-wing politics. It was this exclusion which formed the foundation of the new ‘normality’.

There was little sense of change by mid-1935, despite the opening of cinemas and some cultural centres, and the playing of football matches.[[1111]](#footnote-1111) The Ateneo Obrero in La Felguera was allowed to reopen at the end of November, but with restrictions; there were to be no meetings, only newspapers and books already in the possession of the Ateneo could be read and it had to close at nine o’clock in the evening.[[1112]](#footnote-1112) The rhythms of life prior to the insurrection had not returned. Reports on the fiestas in Oviedo declared that they would ‘not have the same attraction as previous years’, as in ‘each districtthe pain of the recent events is evident’. Where there were no victims of violence, there was unemployment and crime.[[1113]](#footnote-1113) Similarly, the double-page spread dedicated to Mieres on the occasion of its fiestas, which usually celebrated the character of the town, concentrated on unemployment. Mieres was ‘wrapped in a mist of sadness and pain’ while the *fiestas* in Sama took place ‘with the liveliness that is feasible in these moments’.[[1114]](#footnote-1114)

Certainly, a left-wing newspaper (*La Tarde*) emerged at the end of May, though it was banned in the summer and replaced by *Asturias* and *El Pueblo*. Compared to *Avance*, there was a dearth of local news in these publications. The threat of censorship brought with it a self-imposed silence via self-censorship. *La Tarde* did not comment on the trial of those accused of the infamous Turón killings, which had included eight de la Salle brothers, except to report the sentences and days later it acknowledged its silence, declaring a preference to say nothing at all rather than a little.[[1115]](#footnote-1115) Similarly, *Asturias* limited its coverage of the anniversary of the insurrection in October 1935 to a few short, critical comments.[[1116]](#footnote-1116) The left had not disappeared, it was simply excluded: the line pursued by the provincial right-wing daily *Región* consciously reinforced the binary view of society, urging more repression by demanding those dismissed due to the insurrection not even to count as unemployed.[[1117]](#footnote-1117) The dividing line over the revolution was sharp and led to greater polarisation. The Herrero bank was forced to explain why it had *not* been targeted during the insurrection and publicly rejected links with the SOMA, insisting that the bank had suffered during the insurrection, with money taken from branches in several towns.[[1118]](#footnote-1118) Polarisation ensured that local lawyers did not want to defend revolutionaries.[[1119]](#footnote-1119)

The attitude towards the local authorities, and the security forces in particular, was profoundly affected by the repression, breeding distrust and further alienation. Symptomatic of this were rumours that diphtheria vaccines were designed to damage the mental development of children. Mistrust of the authorities was such that children refused to attend school and were reported to have run from the Civil Guard, who were rumoured to have been in Mieres to prevent resistance to vaccination.[[1120]](#footnote-1120) The authorities were forced to reject these ‘calumnious’, ‘criminal’ and ‘absurd’ rumours.[[1121]](#footnote-1121) They formed part of a wider climate of suspicion, which placed local communities under pressure. Informers and police in disguise—as ‘cart drivers’ or ‘villagers’—were used to search for those in the mountains.[[1122]](#footnote-1122) But it was not a straightforward case of the working-class communities versus the authorities. While there are some indications of resistance to the repression, such as *Región*’s claim that Doval’s forces did not receive help in the pueblos, the fact that informers came from within the communities themselves indicates that the pueblos were far from solid blocs.[[1123]](#footnote-1123) Indeed, the context of the post-revolution was one in which revenge could be exacted through the practice of denouncing one’s neighbours, which further fomented a climate of fear. This went beyond the coalfields; a teacher in Tineo was denounced for insulting the army, which she denied, and condemned to eight months of prison.[[1124]](#footnote-1124) An article from Mieres fiercely criticised ‘miserable informers’ for presenting anonymous *denuncias*, understood as betraying previous community bonds.[[1125]](#footnote-1125) The intimacy of the pueblos meant that individuals were continuously under one another’s vigilance; half a million pesetas was found in Sotrondio thanks to the work of informers.[[1126]](#footnote-1126) Yet such vigilance served to widen community divisions still further.

Collaborating with the authorities conferred a degree of power, though not impunity. It did not mean that an individual was above the law. Jesús, a mine worker and informer for the Civil Guard, was drinking in a bar in Turón one evening where he declared he had enemies because he was an informer and had ‘authority’. He asked a man present, Francisco, how he would react to provocation, to which Francisco said he would do nothing, and Jesús attacked him. Jesús, who had clearly drunk a lot, later assaulted the owner of the bar before the Civil Guard arrived to arrest him. Jesús claimed that he was the victim and had only defended himself, accusing the others of insulting him beforehand. He admitted possessing a firearm without a licence, though he had a ‘pass’ for it from the authorities—in fact around 270,000 private licences for firearms were handed out by the Radical-CEDA governments between 1934 and 1935.[[1127]](#footnote-1127) Social relations were transformed in the context of the post-revolution, but the power conferred by association with the authorities was nonetheless fragile. Being an informer conferred power but also stigma and separation from the local community; informers certainly appear to have felt alienated and under threat, even as they enjoyed the protection of the authorities and (often) the use of a firearm. Recounting an experience of October 1934 was used as an appeal for protection, as in the case of Belarmino, accused of firing shots in the vicinity of the Sotón mine in August 1935. Belarmino claimed that he was the real victim as the ‘municipality were harassing him to death’ because of information he had given to the Civil Guard. The authorities did not believe him and he was remanded in prison.[[1128]](#footnote-1128)

It is difficult to ascertain the extent of pressure exerted by leftists in the post-revolution, but a degree of self-policing of the local community did exist and isolated incidents of violence are indicative of the punishment meted out to those who collaborated with the authorities. According to an investigation into an incident in August 1935 during which an individual had fired shots at another, the accused had participated in the insurrection and collaborated with the Civil Guard afterwards, denouncing the cousin of the individual he had shot at, leading to death threats. The accused claimed that he was in fact the victim. He was found guilty, though received a light sentence.[[1129]](#footnote-1129) In the case of the death of Manuel G., there were several rumours about what had happened, ‘but the most widespread, as it appears, is that in which Manuel is accused of having denounced several individuals [to the authorities] who had taken part in the revolutionary events’.[[1130]](#footnote-1130) After the victory of the Popular Front in 1936 and the return of the left to functioning, institutional life, the actions of individuals would be judged by fellow members of political parties and trade unions.

Such incidents reveal the divisions and tensions in local communities after the insurrection. Individuals with opposing political views and experiences took matters into their own hands in order to exact retribution. An individual named Jaime went on trial in Oviedo accused of having attacked a man named José after an argument about October 1934 and the looting of Jaime’s father’s shop.[[1131]](#footnote-1131) Similarly, barely a month after the insurrection one Fermín died in hospital as a result of a gunshot wound to the mouth. According to the newspaper report, ‘the wounded man could not speak, but those who accompanied him said there was resentment between the victim and attacker due to the recent revolutionary events’.[[1132]](#footnote-1132) But it was not just a question of score-settling. The revolution was deployed (or not) to defend one’s actions in violent incidents. After October, witnesses, perpetrators and victims placed themselves on one side or another of the division in society and used the experience of the revolution to their advantage. Those against the revolution, for example, gave statements to the Civil Guard which cast a negative light on the opposing party. Avelino, a guard employed by Duro-Felguera, shot his superior, José, in August 1935. He began his statement to the investigators with the revolution, highlighting that he had denounced José’s sons for arms possession, after which he had received death threats.[[1133]](#footnote-1133) In the context of his arrest, Avelino attempted to use the revolution to his advantage, implying that José was on the side of the revolutionaries, while he supported the security forces. In a similar case, Hortensio M., accused of attacking Hortensio A., cited the revolution in his declarations to the authorities, recounting how he had had been made a prisoner by Hortensio A., treated badly and forced to raise his fist in a revolutionary salute during the insurrection. He also accused the other man of attacking him first. The events of October 1934 were not only a shield, but a justification for violence, as the victim was a revolutionary.[[1134]](#footnote-1134) Similarly, in a separate case, Belarmino foregrounded the events of October in an attempt to slur the victims of an attack in September 1934 in El Camporro (San Martín del Rey Aurelio) of which his brother was accused. In his statement, Belarmino blamed the victim for his injuries, declaring that

everything that has now happened is because two days after the revolution was declared Salvador went to the house under investigation and, armed with a rifle, he forced them to hand over the shotgun they had [...] to the Revolutionary Committee [...] at the same time they forced them (sic) to do guard duty, which they refused to [...]

Belarmino added extra information about Salvador, accusing him of possessing looted money based on comments heard in passing and the amount Salvador spent in *chigres* despite being a worker.[[1135]](#footnote-1135) This was a clear attempt by Belarmino to identify himself as on the side of the “people of order”. Circumstantial evidence was presented to support the claim that the victims were in fact dangerous revolutionaries.

These cases were not straightforward. The insurrection seemingly marked a clear divide temporally, but it often served to refract or intensify pre-existing tensions. As such, it could be difficult to interpret where the political ended and the personal began. When Avelino, a security guard employed by Duro-Felguera, implied that the revolution was central to what had happened, witnesses declared that Avelino and José had their differences over work matters and that there had been threats in September 1934, before the revolution took place.[[1136]](#footnote-1136) It seems that this enmity was personal, with the revolution mixing with work matters. And there was the matter of how local residents would interpret the episodes of violence. Personal motives linked to property, for example, could be downplayed by public rumours which emphasised politics, as in the case of the stabbing of a man called Cesáreo by another named Víctor. *El Noroeste* reported that the former had asked the latter, who was drunk, to stop making jokes about his wife, while there were rumours that it was due to ‘long-term political differences’ between the two.[[1137]](#footnote-1137)

## Politics as Order

Left-wing political expression was limited to quiet comments in bars and isolated gestures, such as shouts, underlining the process of criminalisation and marginalisation affecting the left. The SOMA was suspended in late 1934. In 1935, the government placed further restrictions on political expression, including flags, salutes, uniforms and other actions which ‘meant an attack on the Republic’ or could lead to disorder. Articles and rallies in favour of an amnesty for those imprisoned in the wake of the insurrection were also banned by the government.[[1138]](#footnote-1138) Such measures did not only apply to the left, but a harder hand that was used against the left. In Asturias, the governor handed out fines for ‘subversive shouts’, including to a man for letting his 10-year old daughter call out in the street.[[1139]](#footnote-1139) A hard line was certainly taken: an individual from Turón was sentenced to six months in prison for calling for the death of the security forces on his way out of a bar in May, whereas members of the FE-JONS were only fined for an explosion at their centre in Oviedo, which appears to have occurred due to the mishandling of explosives.[[1140]](#footnote-1140) In April, an individual had been put on trial for throwing a snowball and insulting a municipal guard in Siero.[[1141]](#footnote-1141) The prestige of the security forces was to be maintained at all costs.

The reduction of politics to ‘order’ as dictated by the government was constrictive and suffocating for those who did not identify with the authorities’ line. An article in *La Tarde* asked the governor directly and ‘publicly if it is possible for one to be a Communist, Socialist, ‘leftist Republican’ or simply a liberal’ as ‘it actually appears to be the opposite’. The author hid his name and location as there was ‘a serious threat [...] hanging over me if I disclose the daily harassment [*vejaciones*] of which I am the object because I am a Socialist’. Giving voice to his frustrations, he described himself as ‘honourable worker who loves work and culture’ and ended by asking ‘are we allowed to think?’[[1142]](#footnote-1142)

Order in the post-Revolution was understood by the government and their supporters as an absence of left-wing expression and mobilisation. Strikes were criminalised and news of them censored. A strike by 260 miners at the Piquera mine in February was declared illegal and the strikers ordered to return within twenty-four hours or face dismissal, which they did. A strike in the summer coinciding with the trial of those accused of the crimes committed in Turón during the insurrection was also declared illegal; contracts were cancelled and new workers hired. When the strikers presented themselves for work, a two-week lockout was declared.[[1143]](#footnote-1143) A construction strike proved to be much more difficult to break, however. The governor tied himself in knots, denying it was even a strike, even though it was met with repression: UGT and CNT members were beaten and strikers sacked. Nevertheless, despite the violence and use of blackleg workers, the strike lasted for two months and succeeded: those sacked were readmitted and the working week of forty-four hours was maintained. No assemblies had been allowed and solidarity had been clandestine.[[1144]](#footnote-1144) The strike is indicative both of the strength of the left, even when it had to work underground, and of the inability of the authorities to offer any solutions except force; revolution was read into strikes by the governor.[[1145]](#footnote-1145) Conflicts were interpreted as the disturbance of order rather than the legitimate expression of discontent.

For the right, the security forces were portrayed as the thin line between order and the chaos and destruction of revolution. For *Región*, ‘these little soldiers’ had brought ‘tranquillity on the night of 20 October’.[[1146]](#footnote-1146) Only the army’s presence prevented another revolution; *Región* claimed that it was only the fact that the coalfields valleys had been ‘militarily taken’ in October 1935 that had thwarted a strike that was rumoured would coincide with the anniversary of the insurrection—though the UGT had distributed a flyer condemning it.[[1147]](#footnote-1147) The threat of violence from the army was reinforced throughout 1935—even as the number of troops in Asturias diminished—with the repeated mobilisation of troops via military exercises and marches throughout 1935.[[1148]](#footnote-1148) This brute display of force aimed at intimidation, though they also reassured the ‘people of order’. The exercises were also a political exercise. In July, CEDA leader and Minister of War Gil Robles oversaw manoeuvres in Riosa involving 3,000 troops who used live ammunition, which were followed by a military parade in Oviedo.[[1149]](#footnote-1149) The army was thus highly visible and the threat of violence was repeatedly present, both to reassure the right and to intimidate the left.

Rightist fears were fed by a belief that revolution would return. A month after the insurrection *Región* warned that ‘[t]he working masses retain their arms because they want to repeat the attack’.[[1150]](#footnote-1150) A report from Ciaño highlighted that there were 11,000 inhabitants of the town, but no civil guards; a sense of being surrounded by a dangerous revolutionary other was clear.[[1151]](#footnote-1151) In Oviedo, a motion presented at a council meeting declared:

It is no secret for anyone that one of the main causes of the helpless situation of our city was its insufficient garrison. Oviedo is surrounded by an important industrial and mining zone [...]; there is military industry and explosives production which are of national importance. Related to this is the patriotic need that the garrison be increased.[[1152]](#footnote-1152)

While couched in terms of patriotism and national industry, the implicit threat was that of the revolutionary militias. The spectre of revolution allowed the right to justify these measures and the possibility that left-wing politics could return resulted in strong criticism. *Región* reacted fiercely to posters demanding amnesty that appeared in Oviedo:

There were no measures which could have been taken beforehand which would have prevented the revolutionary events of October and neither is there justice malleable enough to sanction them. Now, while newspapers like ours have to muffle our indignation due to reasons beyond our control, the facades of the buildings in Oviedo, scarred and blighted by revolutionary barbarism, are victims of a rash of un-censored wall posters demanding amnesty for the murderers. They will end up asking for compensation from the families of the victims![[1153]](#footnote-1153)

The tension between the desire to exclude and the necessity of keeping the left under close control was evident. Indeed, it was the projected fear of revolution that underpinned the right in 1935 and was central to the election campaign in 1936. The insurrection was not simply consigned to the past, but formed part of a potential, threatening future and this became central to the election campaign in 1936. However, this dangerous policy fostered fear: rumours spread about strikes, arms caches and revolution in 1934 and 1935 to the extent that the governor fined those who propagated rumours.[[1154]](#footnote-1154)

The prevalence of such rumours indicates the traumatised nature of society during the post-revolution, but rumours were politically useful for those who wished to destabilise and attack the political system. Fines for spreading ‘alarming false news’ were handed to a leading Falangist and his wife.[[1155]](#footnote-1155) Deploying the shadowy fear of revolution was important for rightist political mobilisation in 1935. In some respects it was similar to the left’s fear of fascism in 1933-4 in that revolution was presented as a threat to the interest and even survival of the local community. However, it was different in that the experience—or at least the accounts—of the insurrection sharply brought the fear of a revolutionary left into focus and this fear was more purposefully manipulated via rumours and political propaganda, whereas fascism was much more part of the language of the everyday in the pueblos. Fear of fascism had centred on threats from within the community relating to pre-existing community divisions, while the idea of a revolutionary left was presented as foreign and external—yet also a nightmare which had already been experienced—to the extent that it threatened the patria itself. Depictions of revolutionary violence in the right-wing press also served to create an image of an inhuman revolutionary other. There was a particular fixation with mutilation, such as the false reports of gouged eyes of the children of civil guards and the body of priest for sale as ‘pork’. Presented as bloodthirsty, heartless barbarians, the revolutionaries’ inhuman actions meant they could be treated as such.[[1156]](#footnote-1156)

Paradoxically, even though they spoke like Asturians, Asturian identity was frequently deployed to emphasise the left’s betrayal of the (only?) element of common ground between right and left. *Región* mused on this issue as it criticised the revolutionaries for not handing in their arms:

How is it possible that there are now Asturians who forget such a condition [of being Asturian]? Now that the revolutionary exaltation, which maddens, as the drunkenness caused by bad wine also maddens, has passed, how is it possible that there are still those who put their political passions or syndical interests above their interests as Asturians? Were those workers who with their foolish attitude of sterile resistance risk ruining this region not born in Asturias? For the first time in the history of the region this traditional feeling of *asturianía* is missing.[[1157]](#footnote-1157)

To an extent these comments were rhetorical, but they also served to underline the difference between the working class and the “people of order”, establishing a binary of love and patriotism versus hate and the “anti-patria”. Through removing the category of ‘Asturian’, the inhabitants of the mining valleys were again presented as a foreign ‘other’ and binary distinctions reinforced, with exclusion preferred to engagement. For *Región*, being Asturian meant toeing *Región*’s line. In its campaign against a leftist account of the insurrection published in the summer by José Díaz Fernández, the newspaper declared that ‘there can only be one dividing line [...] either Mr. Díaz Fernández remains in the Asturias of the criminals, or he has stopped being Asturian completely and definitively’.[[1158]](#footnote-1158) Exclusion and repression was thus justified; the bonds of *asturianía* had been broken by the revolutionaries.

The narrative of the revolutionary insurrection and accounts of the repression were controlled from the very beginning by ‘iron censorship’ implemented by the government.[[1159]](#footnote-1159) Control was exercised most brutally—and also extrajudicially—against the journalist Luis Higón Rosell (better known by the pen-name Luis de Sirval). Sirval had been investigating military abuses when he was arrested. Three Legionaries removed him from custody and shot him when he refused to give them the names of his informers.[[1160]](#footnote-1160) Despite the censorship, reports of the repression soon emerged and criticism from the new authorities and the regional right swiftly followed. *Región* strongly criticised the desire by the Ateneo in Madrid to investigate reported crimes, calling it a ‘farce’ that went beyond limits of tolerance. First there was the insurrection, ‘then sanctions imposed on those responsible. And, finally, repression. This is what is logical and just, and because of this it has our support’.[[1161]](#footnote-1161) Criticising the repression was an attack on Asturias (and on Spain). *Región*’sheadline on 30 November declared that calls for an investigation were ‘[a]n insult to the Spanish Army, to Asturias and to Spain’; it was ‘*Región* and Asturias against the anti-patria’.[[1162]](#footnote-1162) At a meeting of the *ayuntamiento* in Oviedo González Villamil protested that the reports in the Madrid pressdid not tell the truth, ‘diminishing the importance of the countless murders, robberies and fires’, and a ban on the sale of these newspapers in Asturias was proposed.[[1163]](#footnote-1163)

The control over the narrative was dependent on an autarkic atmosphere of self-containment that rejected outside interference and served to project an austere form of penance. Asturias, an extrapolation of ‘martyred’ Oviedo, a victim of ‘Marxism’ which had ‘suffered for Spain’, would look after itself, sealed off from the rest of the world.[[1164]](#footnote-1164) Asturias would solve its own problems. As such, “meddling” from foreigners was rejected. A foreign delegation was hurried out of Oviedo after a demonstration at their visit was organised by the authorities as a pretext to remove them from the province.[[1165]](#footnote-1165) *Región* celebrated the departure of the delegation, declaring that the people of Oviedo had given them their ‘deserved “reception”’ and accused the delegation of not being interested in the destruction, only in the treatment of prisoners.[[1166]](#footnote-1166) Business leaders of Oviedo and the JAP sent telegrams in protest.[[1167]](#footnote-1167) Similarly, in June the governor general asked four French journalists to leave the Turón trial, because of their meddling in national politics.[[1168]](#footnote-1168) Despite protests, initiatives were undermined by ambivalence. Though the *ayuntamiento* in Oviedo agreed to appoint a committee (formed by ‘paladins of truth’) to combat the ‘calumnies’ spread in the press, by June 1935 the committee was criticising for not showing ‘signs of life’.[[1169]](#footnote-1169) In essence, it failed to go beyond the initial protest.

It was not just reports of the repression; the commemoration of the anniversary of the insurrection was also tightly controlled. This took place in Oviedo on 12 October, the date of the occupation of the provincial capital rather than the true end of the insurrection—19 October—when government troops entered the mining valleys, even though 19 October coincided with the previous liberation of Oviedo in 1836 during the First Carlist War. Rather, the traditionally important ‘*fiesta de la raza*’—celebrating Europe’s discovery of America—was chosen. Shops and factories closed, a funeral took place at the cathedral, soldiers paraded through the city centre and a special meal was provided for the unemployed.[[1170]](#footnote-1170) Oviedo took centre stage, not the coalfields. Indeed, groups of more than three people had been banned from visiting Mieres cemetery in October and mourners of those shot by government forces in Carbayín had to jump over the cemetery wall in order to grieve for their dead.[[1171]](#footnote-1171)

Despite the campaigns, accounts of the repression did get out. By early 1935 the government was forced to acknowledge international criticism directed at the repression in Asturias.[[1172]](#footnote-1172) Rumours of the horrors led to investigations, such as those by Gordon Ordás and de los Ríos, though they were hushed up.[[1173]](#footnote-1173) Only in 1936 would accounts of the insurrection and repression be openly published, not only in Asturias, but also in the national press.[[1174]](#footnote-1174) The first edition of *La Tarde* when it reappeared in 1936 after having been suspended in July 1935 included photographs of the socialist councillors Bonifacio Martín and Emilio Rey, who had both been killed during the insurrection.[[1175]](#footnote-1175) Accounts of the repression were now openly discussed in the provincial press.[[1176]](#footnote-1176) Now it was the left’s turn to assert its version of the insurrection and repression, wresting control back from the right. This was about more than simply mobilisation for electioneering; rather, it was about reasserting leftist political identity. *Región* was beside itself at the reappearance of the left:

The leftist newspapers, now free of the gag, have thrown themselves into the most shameless campaign in which the central theme is the repression by the security forces of the horrors of the red October in Asturias. Photomontages, fiddled statistics, articles drool calumnies towards the Civil Guard and Army.[[1177]](#footnote-1177)

The reappearance of the left was interpreted as a challenge to the right, which is unsurprising given that since October 1934 rightist political discourse had been largely based on the exclusion of the left.

## The Post-Revolution as an Opportunity

The process of ‘pacification’ was an opportunity for the re-introduction of older forms of disciplining by the industrial companies. The revolutionary insurrection was a convenient opportunity to reset the labour market while also re-imposing and reasserting control over their workforce.[[1178]](#footnote-1178) Mine workers were allowed to return to work in December but the process of re-admittance was under the firm control of the companies, security forces and, in SHE, the SCOM.[[1179]](#footnote-1179) Workers who filled the queues for re-admission to Duro-Felguera had to file past one of the civil guards who survived the revolution. He alone could determine whether they got their jobs back.[[1180]](#footnote-1180) The authorities, security forces and companies also collaborated in introducing identity cards without which a worker was unable to work. The card was provided by the mining company and the individual would then have to take it to the police or Civil Guard post where fingerprints would be obtained and the document sent to the Delegación General de Orden Público, who would then return it to the individual. The companies would take four photos of the individual: one for the card, one for the company and two for the local police forces.[[1181]](#footnote-1181) This heightened the sense of the authorities existing merely as a coercive force and in fundamental opposition to the left. Not only this, but the SCOM and mining companies were also colluding in the economic repression. This interpretation was only compounded by the retention of identity cards over the following months, which prevented workers from working.[[1182]](#footnote-1182) Such a reassertion of control meant that companies could change working conditions at will. Hulleras del Turón evicted workers from company housing, while Duro-Felguera stopped providing free coal to its workforce.[[1183]](#footnote-1183) The authorities had to intervene to force SHE to provide its workforce with paid holidays, which had been legislated by the government of the first biennium.

The process of obtaining a job was complicated further by the security forces’ requirement of a firearm in exchange for work, as individuals risked being charged with illegal possession of a firearm by the authorities. This is what happened to a man named Julio after police searched his home and found a pistol on 1 January 1935. In his defence, Julio claimed the Assault Guard had demanded he find a weapon in order to receive his identity card. At the trial, a priest defended Julio and confirmed, along with the foreman, that a firearm had to be offered in exchange for the identity card and a job. Julio was absolved.[[1184]](#footnote-1184) The process of demanding a weapon characterised workers as revolutionaries by default, which indicates the assumptions of the authorities about the nature of the coalfields, and the presumed ease with which the working class could locate weapons. But such a blanket characterisation can only have alienated individuals who, while not fervent revolutionaries, nevertheless had to go through this process.

The post-revolution offered an opportunity to redirect the Republic and was identified as such by individuals who sought to overturn previous agreements. Parish priests asked for the return of parish cemeteries, indicating an assumption that the arrival of the right meant the cancellation of previous agreements.[[1185]](#footnote-1185) Similarly, the new situation was an opportunity to punish the left. The mayor of Langreo tabled a motion proposing the acquisition of the Casa del Pueblo in Sama for use as a school, which was passed.[[1186]](#footnote-1186) But more often this opportunity was undermined by ambivalence and the unwillingness to offer more than repression. Castejón maintains that after the initial reaction, the mining companies’ planned to learn from experience to prevent a revolution reoccurring, for which ‘education of the masses’ was key. Yet, as he also admits, ‘[t]he main part of the companies’ proposal centred on the strengthening of the repressive ability and state control’.[[1187]](#footnote-1187) Discipline, therefore, was the main solution. Indeed, the socially-minded canon Arboleya was brought in by the companies to advise them on how to move forward, as he had also been consulted by SHE twenty years earlier on the best way to combat the SOMA. His solution had been to set up an independent Catholic union, which was not shared by SHE, who preferred to keep workers’ organisations on a tight leash.[[1188]](#footnote-1188) Arboleya was critical of repression as the only answer to the situation in the post-revolution. He wrote in a letter to the likewise socially-minded Catholic, Severino Aznar, that solutions to the situation were practically limited to ‘cutting off a few heads [and] punishing the rebels’ and Alfredo Mendizábal, law professor at the University of Oviedo, fellow social Catholic and witness of the insurrection, echoed this lament.[[1189]](#footnote-1189) Arboleya was disappointed that Duro-Felguera, despite a professed interest in social action in 1935, could only think of placing money in the hands of priests. When the mining bosses finally gave him their full support in February 1936 it was too late.[[1190]](#footnote-1190) They were only shaken from their ambivalence by the resurgence of the left.

Despite Castejón’s assertion that the companies continued with a policy of dialogue and consensus, in truth the companies were in control of the labour market and did not need to negotiate or deal with unions. His bizarre argument that ‘the political context was not at all conducive to a situation of impunity for the companies in terms of their relationship with their workforce. And the clandestine nature of the organisations was far from meaning the end of union activism’ fails to hold water. Certainly, there was an underground left, but strikes were vehemently repressed: the Nespral strike was broken easily in February and mine workers striking during the Turón trial were sacked and then subjected to a two-week lockout as a punishment.[[1191]](#footnote-1191) The left was hardly in a position of strength and the context was one in which other organisations, such as the SCOM, could attempt to take advantage of the situation by defending the workforce’s demands. But SHE appears to have been unwilling to use the SCOM as a buffer. The union had problems having its voice heard over SHE’s refusal to give workers their paid holidays, which they were legally owed. In the end, the SCOM threatened a strike, the authorities intervened and the holidays were paid. Despite this achievement, there is no evidence that it aided the union.[[1192]](#footnote-1192)

There were appeals for a SCOM section to be created in Sotrondio and for an apolitical union to be created in Figaredo, but such initiatives do not seem to have gone much further than appeals, and the same appears to be true of the Frente Regional del Trabajo (Workers’ Regional Front), which was announced in mid-December and aimed to attract workers away from Marxism, professing an apolitical stance.[[1193]](#footnote-1193) Such failures were probably due to a lack of real interest in extending such unions and resistance by local leftists. Certainly, while the right enjoyed healthy levels of support in areas of the coalfields in 1935, this was not without problems. AP claimed 2,000 members and the AFAP 1,200 in Mieres in 1935, while in Aller the AP claimed two male and two female municipal committees and 11 parish sections. There were JAP groups in Moreda, Caborana, Piñeres, Casomera and Nembra.[[1194]](#footnote-1194) However, the organisations were weak. JAP rallies and meetings in the coalfields relied on JAP orators from Gijón, the AFAP in Sama acknowledged it was struggling to organise in a ‘hostile’ environment and the Catholic Youth blamed social pressures (*qué dirán*) for their small membership.[[1195]](#footnote-1195)

Even the welfare initiatives introduced by the municipal authorities were undermined by a lack of resources and ambivalence. Schemes staffed by young women were developed in Oviedo and the mining valleys to aid the homeless, but were dependent on donations and thus precarious, ad-hoc initiatives, owing much to traditional forms of charity in Spain, where private welfare initiatives were encouraged.[[1196]](#footnote-1196) The meagre resources struggled to deal with the sheer number of those who required aid; in Langreo alone 35,000 pesetas in cash handouts were regularly being distributed to over 500 families.[[1197]](#footnote-1197) The canteen for children in Turón was forced to close due to lack of funds in mid-April after repeated appeals for donations.[[1198]](#footnote-1198) Even the planned mausoleum in Oviedo for the victims of the insurrection was undermined by inaction.[[1199]](#footnote-1199) An attempt by the *ayuntamiento* of Oviedo to remedy unemployment via a plan to employ over 1,000 workers for a ten-month period, in accordance with a law on unemployment from June 1935, was paralysed by political crisis at national level.[[1200]](#footnote-1200) In a similar way, initiatives were developed by the diocese, such as the Comisión Social Diocesana (Diocesan Social Commission). Despite the accompanying fanfare, it is difficult to see how its strategy of ‘sweeping’ away the ‘confusion’ of which the masses were victims, instead of actually engaging with them, would yield any kind of result.[[1201]](#footnote-1201) Similarly, a Catholic school was opened in La Argañosa—a left-wing stronghold in Oviedo—funded by a Parents’ Association, but two months later it only had forty students and appears to have been a lone initiative.[[1202]](#footnote-1202) The space between rhetoric and action underlined the ambivalence which was central to the missed opportunity for the right in 1935 and which pervaded local political action during the post-Revolution.

Meanwhile, the left’s attempt to provide clandestine welfare was vocally rejected by the right as the left was accused of no longer having the moral authority to involve itself in welfare. *Región* accused the humanitarian missions of ‘recruiting’ children to train them for a ‘repeat at any future moment, the horrible tragedy that such mourning and such misery brought to Oviedo’.[[1203]](#footnote-1203) The schema worked in the following fashion: the left had destroyed Asturias and it was up to the ‘people of order’ to pick up the pieces. There was a sense of ownership and control, or even patronage, which reflected hierarchy, social order and traditional ideas of paternalism. It did not matter if the system was inadequate, such as closed schools and canteens, it was up to the authorities to do what was best for the children of Asturias.

## The Return of the Left and the Election Campaign

By autumn, the political situation was changing. The *straperlo* gambling affair broke publicly in October, leading to the resignation of Lerroux as Foreign Minister, deepening the crisis suffered by the Radicals.[[1204]](#footnote-1204) A further scandal followed, resulting in the resignation of Prime Minister Chapaprieta on 9 December. To Gil Roble’s fury, President Alcalá Zamora refused to ask him to form a government, turning instead to Portela Valladares who appointed a government and planned for the elections.[[1205]](#footnote-1205) Gil Robles began speaking to generals, including Franco, about a possible coup d’état that would force the president to appoint a CEDA government.[[1206]](#footnote-1206) Meanwhile, there was renewed confidence amongst the left republicans and socialists after the Izquierda Republicana rally in Madrid, which ‘may have been the largest, single, political rally in Spanish history’ at that moment.[[1207]](#footnote-1207)

At national level there had been stirrings of a return to public life by the socialists in March.[[1208]](#footnote-1208) With many socialist leaders in prison or exile, the PSOE was in the hands of Vidarte, whose circular of May 1935 to the rank and file ‘opened up the debate in the PSOE over the possibility of resurrecting the republican-socialist alliance’.[[1209]](#footnote-1209) Azaña proposed a coalition with the socialists in order to ‘recover that Republic from enemy hands’, for which he had the support of Indalecio Prieto.[[1210]](#footnote-1210) The socialist movement was divided between socialist left and the centrists and reformists, with the former extremely critical of the latter. The leadership of the JS was closely identified with the more radical *caballerista* left-wing of the party and issued a call in a pamphlet entitled *Octubre: Segunda etapa* for the reformists to be purged from the socialist movement and for it to be “Bolchevised”, which was rejected by members of the Asturian JS.[[1211]](#footnote-1211) Largo Caballero himself was in prison and was critical of the pretensions to form a new coalition with the republicans, and through 1935 the differences ‘rapidly crystallise[d] as a battle to control the party apparatus’.[[1212]](#footnote-1212) Largo Caballero refused to be drawn into a pact with the republicans unless the communists were included and it was this—combined with the PCE’s claim of responsibility for the revolutionary insurrection and the Comintern’s shift to officially endorse the policy of Popular Fronts—that brought the PCE out of political isolation.[[1213]](#footnote-1213) The struggle within the socialist movement came to a head in December, when Largo Caballero resigned as president of the PSOE Executive Committee, though the reformists tried to keep the party together. Internal struggles would continue through 1936 and beyond, though they did not prevent the signing of the Popular Front.[[1214]](#footnote-1214) After October, the PCE pursued a policy of an antifascist front, though the PSOE was resistant to the communists’ aim of unity of action. This was re-launched in the wake of the VII Congress of the Comintern as a policy of a single party and single trade union.[[1215]](#footnote-1215) The communist trade unions had never been able to match the size and power of the UGT and CNT and were forced to accept the UGT’s conditions—it would not be unification, rather the communist CGTU would dissolve and join the UGT.[[1216]](#footnote-1216) In Asturias, the SUM joined the SOMA.[[1217]](#footnote-1217)

In Asturias, there was a sense that the proletariat had reappeared by the end of October.[[1218]](#footnote-1218) This was influenced by the growing momentum behind the republicans and, specifically, Azaña’s speech to thousands in Madrid on 20 October. But even if the left was asserting itself, activity was limited to sabotaging the right, as it was unable to organise its own meetings. Moreover, many (male) political activists were still in prison and Matilde de la Torre, in an appeal to women to organise ahead of the elections such as through checking the electoral census, described women as being ‘alone against the enemy’. Women were on the frontline in the electoral struggle on the horizon and they were heavily involved in the electoral campaign.[[1219]](#footnote-1219)

There were thus limits to the return of the left. While the governor was willing to negotiate with workers and companies, as in the case of Hulleras de Veguín, he was unwilling to countenance strikes: the Mariana strike was declared illegal and the governor threatened to fire those who did not return to work.[[1220]](#footnote-1220) A military trial in December 1935 pronounced a sentence dissolving the PSOE and UGT in the whole of Spain, due to their responsibility in organising the insurrection. Though this was evidently not carried out, Velarde, the governor in Asturias, refused to authorise unions to function under the UGT label; they had to declare themselves ‘autonomous’, which the railway union did.[[1221]](#footnote-1221) Repression continued: military trials persisted and in early December an arrest led to a wave of searches in La Felguera and Sama.[[1222]](#footnote-1222) The governor reasserted his authority, clamping down on how newspapers were sold by banning ‘the advertising of newspapers in a coercive or scandalous way’. This was part of wider clampdown on leftist resurgence more widely in Spain with fines and meetings suspended.[[1223]](#footnote-1223)

Nevertheless, towards the end of the year, rumours circulated that councillors in Langreo were resigning and that those elected in 1931 would return to Mieres.[[1224]](#footnote-1224) The socialists were itching to return to political life; *Asturias* asked why ‘civic life’ had not been normalised and why councillors had not been reinstated.[[1225]](#footnote-1225) Socialists asked the new governor, Friera, for permission to enter the building which housed *Avance* (whose printing presses had been destroyed) and to reopen the Casas del Pueblo.[[1226]](#footnote-1226) At the beginning of 1936, *Región* reported that the mayor of San Martín del Rey Aurelio had asked for mine workers sacked after the insurrection to be allowed to return, while *Asturias* printed local news for the first time and *El Noroeste* remarked on the return to the corridors of the civil government building of those who had not been seen since the insurrection.[[1227]](#footnote-1227) While it was evident that elections were looming, it was not until 7 January that parliament was dissolved and Alcalá Zamora signed the decree convening elections for 16 February. Importantly, constitutional guarantees were re-established in the whole of Spain, which meant the lifting of the state of alarm in Asturias. In response to these developments, there was a renewed call for the Ateneo in Barros (Langreo) to be reopened and in Oviedo councillor Miaja tabled a motion for councillors from the previous *ayuntamiento* who had not been found guilty or had been charged with crimes to be reinstated, though it was rejected by the council.[[1228]](#footnote-1228)

Although many had been imprisoned or had gone into exile, leftists had not disappeared in the post-revolution. With the removal of the state of alarm and return of constitutional guarantees on 7 January, the left reasserted itself on the streets.[[1229]](#footnote-1229) Power and control were physically affirmed; *Región* reported that several individuals tried to remove a crucifix from a nun in the centre of Oviedo and that there were shouts of ‘viva’ to socialism and social revolution in the city centre.[[1230]](#footnote-1230) This radical reassertion of leftist identities was met by the banning of the public display of political ideas ‘through shirts, insignias and gestures’ by the governor.[[1231]](#footnote-1231) Such a measure was not targeted explicitly at the left, but the reports of arrests over the following days in *Región* would be of leftists and it is reasonable to assume that if JAP members had been targeted *Región* would have been vocal in its protest. Arrests were made for red clothing and shouting ‘long livesocial revolution!’—in what was both a threat and an affirmation of leftist political identity in its invocation of the insurrection—as AP members walked past.[[1232]](#footnote-1232) *Cacheos* and shouts were the actions of activists rather than organised militias as it seems the latter were the product of the elections themselves. Though the communist militias—the MAOC—were probably created in 1933, they were small in number and practically reduced to Madrid. They only developed and spread after the victory of the Popular Front in 1936.[[1233]](#footnote-1233) Similarly, socialist militias saw a boost in activity after the elections.[[1234]](#footnote-1234) According to Blas, ‘[i]n Asturias the paramilitary organisation was a consequence’ of the insurrection, and was formed by the CNT ‘*grupos de defensa*’, JS militias and communist MAOC, which together formed around 30,000 individuals in Asturias. Given that the organisations were practically disarticulated by the repression, such numbers can only have been organised during the spring of 1936.[[1235]](#footnote-1235)

The armed forces continued to be present, with military manoeuvres conducted in January, while the Legion even marched through the streets of Oviedo, which led to cries of ‘death to the socialists’ by a group of youths.[[1236]](#footnote-1236) Military manoeuvres on mount Naranco overlooking Oviedo took place as the election campaign was in full swing, and days before the elections shooting practice was taking place on a daily basis and troops were stationed in La Felguera.[[1237]](#footnote-1237) The threat of violence and the assertion of military power were clearly present during the election campaign, even when constitutional guarantees were back in force.

Members of the security forces and rightists were firmly under the watchful eye of the left in 1936, both before and after the elections. The use of violence by the security forces during the election campaign was repeatedly criticised.[[1238]](#footnote-1238) Denunciations were published of their actions and how they victimised the left. The director of the prison in Oviedo, Llenín, was a particular target.[[1239]](#footnote-1239) Similarly, *La Tarde* denounced a doctor complicit in torture in Sama and demanded the removal of others, such as the municipal judge of Laviana who was an ‘ex-sergeant of the Civil Guard [...] ex-UP [the political movement of Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship] member, recalcitrant CEDA member’.[[1240]](#footnote-1240) Belonging to these organisations was not illegal. Rather, they were presented as incompatible with the Republic, or at least of holding office as a judge in the context of the Republic. This hints at more radical conception of the Republic in 1936, which was more strongly defined and more militant than at the beginning of the regime in that, rather than misgivings about such individuals, they were now simply rejected as not having a place in the Republic—the Republic of 1936.

The left fought the elections under the banner of the Popular Front, signed between left republicans, socialists, communists and the Partido Obrero de Unifación Marxista and Partido Sindicalista on 15 January. The first points of the Popular Front pact covered a general amnesty for ‘political and social crimes’ and restitution for the victims of repression, and were followed by further points on freedom and justice, respect for the Republic and its Constitution. Other areas of the programme included agrarian reform, education and public works to alleviate unemployment, in what was a return to the spirit that had inspired the first biennium, though the differences between the different signatories were spelled out. Importantly, the pact was an electoral agreement; the future government would be formed by the republicans, with the support of other groups.[[1241]](#footnote-1241) With amnesty as the first point on the programme, it was clear that the repression of the insurrection was central to the election campaign.

The right was organised in ‘anti-revolutionary fronts’, based on different electoral coalitions. There was no common programme comparable to the Popular Front pact.[[1242]](#footnote-1242) Nevertheless, there was a clear discourse: the left was presented as a single bloc representing ‘Revolution’. Indeed, the insurrection was ever-present in the pages of *Región*, which included tales of those killed, figures relating to the violence and destruction. It was order, religion and Spain against the anti-Spanish revolution, which was exemplified in an insert formed by two columns, which the newspaper used to juxtapose the coalitions on every issue.[[1243]](#footnote-1243) AP member Alicia Salcedo reintroduced the representation of the 1934 revolutionaries as dehumanised—they were ‘those barbarians’—and ended her appeal for ‘Asturians, my fellow countrymen’ to vote for the right with no little sense of foreboding, ‘will our executioners return?’[[1244]](#footnote-1244) Accusations that the Popular Front had been instigated by Moscow (according to an article reprinted from *Ya*) and of separatism and freemasonry were added into the mix.[[1245]](#footnote-1245) CEDA, backed with huge funds, presented the elections as an ‘apocalyptic struggle’ and rejected any middle ground.[[1246]](#footnote-1246) Indeed, *El Noroeste* had resigned itself to the lack of centre-ground even before the PRLD signed an electoral agreement with the CEDA.[[1247]](#footnote-1247) Salcedo criticised the idea of a centrist option as ‘absurd’; the question was Spain or the ‘anti-Spain’.[[1248]](#footnote-1248) Nevertheless, there was a degree of pragmatism to CEDA’s electoral strategy in that it was willing to negotiate with any groups to form coalitions (though contacts with the ‘extreme conspiratorial right’ were opposed by more liberal CEDA leaders).[[1249]](#footnote-1249) Indeed, it is through this resolve to win that the addition of an amnesty to its programme can be understood.[[1250]](#footnote-1250) Aware of the powerful attraction of the amnesty promised by the Popular Front, such a strategy was a way of trying to lure support away from the left. It does not seem to have gone further than a testing of the water, however, as *Región*’s editorial on the day of the elections failed to mention it, as did *Acción* in its appeal to voters.[[1251]](#footnote-1251)

The language was violent, particularly the apocalyptic language of the right; for *Región*, voters had to choose between ‘death or life’ and ‘peace or revolution’.[[1252]](#footnote-1252) Such language contributed to an atmosphere of violence and tension, although reports on the weekend’s election campaigning by the governor tended to emphasise the relatively un-violent nature of the campaign in Asturias, even at potential flashpoints, such as a funeral for an individual who suddenly died on the day of the elections, though the atmosphere was clearly tense.[[1253]](#footnote-1253) Cruz reports that twenty-five were killed during the election campaign in Spain, though it seems that in Asturias it was more of a case of violent, polarising rhetoric than of actual bodily harm.[[1254]](#footnote-1254) Nevertheless, with such rhetoric justifying recourse to physical retaliation, the coexistence between different groups in public space during campaigning was difficult and encounters between opposing groups led to incidents. In early February, shots were exchanged between those pasting up CEDA posters and others in Ujo.[[1255]](#footnote-1255) In Laviana, an individual, declared ‘[w]atch out, there are fascists’ upon entering a bar and challenged a man present, José, to shout ‘death to fascism!’ José refused and was stabbed by his challenger, who was later arrested.[[1256]](#footnote-1256) The Catholic Youth in Sama claimed its leaders had received death threats and one of its members had been attacked.[[1257]](#footnote-1257) The elections themselves were relatively calm—with the exception being a Falangist who was shot by a municipal guard in Langreo when he attempted break a ballot box and pulled out a pistol.[[1258]](#footnote-1258) The elections were a clear—but not huge—victory for the Popular Front which received approximately 170,000 votes, with 150,000 for the CEDA-PRLD candidacy.[[1259]](#footnote-1259) Nationally, the Popular Front also won, albeit narrowly, and neither left nor right polled more than fifty per cent of the votes. Nevertheless, the system meant that the Popular Front gained 265 seats, which grew to 285 after elections in certain areas were repeated in May, compared to the right’s initial 185. In Asturias, the Popular Front won in Oviedo and the coalfields, except in Aller. Even so, the rightist vote was a significant minority.

Table 4. The national election results in Asturias (1936)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Popular Front | CEDA-PRLD |
| Langreo | 14,356 | 3,400 |
| Mieres | 16,325 | 4,231 |
| San Martín del Rey Aurelio | 5,157 | 1,653 |
| Aller | 4,563 | 5,547 |
| Laviana | 3,685 | 1,127 |

Sources: *La Tarde*, 18 February 1936; *Región*, 18 February 1936

There was a higher percentage of votes for the right-wing list in the less industrialised, more mountainous areas of Aller, Caso and Sobrescobio, with Aller showing a high index of polarisation, with a more even distribution of votes between right and left, though with a clear victory for the former.

## The Victory of the Popular Front

The “revolution” of which the right had warned did not materialise in the wake of the elections. CEDA-supporting *Región* was initially cautious, reflecting the ‘moderation’ espoused by Gil Robles, though in the early hours of 17 February Franco and Gil Robles had both tried to have a state of war declared. Prime Minister Portela resisted the pressure. *Región* called for calm and underlined that it was now the responsibility of the left to maintain law and order.[[1260]](#footnote-1260) The election results were a catastrophe for the CEDA, whose accidentalist strategy aimed at gaining power in order to reform the Constitution (at the very least) was left in ruins. Defeat had left the CEDA rudder- and strategy-less, a loss of support, and no clear position for moving forward (resulting in ‘soul-searching’). The party fragmented as ‘only the promise of victory under Gil Robles’ leadership’ combined with fear of the left ‘had kept the rather amorphous, heterodox CEDA united coming into 1936’. Defeat ‘reaffirmed’ ‘disgust’ with democracy for many, while the more radical JAP had ‘talked itself into a corner’ with regards to its political position—many youth members moved to the Falange in spring 1936.[[1261]](#footnote-1261) In Gijón, where the JAP was strongest in Asturias, half the membership switched to Falange.[[1262]](#footnote-1262)

The election of the Popular Front was interpreted by its supporters as the victory of ‘the people’, reclaiming the Republic from those who had taken it away over the previous two years.[[1263]](#footnote-1263) The post-revolution was over and justice, which included the amnesty promised by the Popular Front, would be done. For Maricuela, the elections meant that ‘[t]he prisoners would be released and we would have more FREEDOM (sic)’.[[1264]](#footnote-1264) However, a vote for the Popular Front was not just about amnesty, but the rebalancing power relations and punishing the right. Leftists were frustrated that the ‘executioners’ of October 1934 still roamed the streets, while the ‘heroes of the revolution’ were still pursued by the security forces and the church. A vote for the Popular Front had been a vote to lock up Gil Robles.[[1265]](#footnote-1265) Thus the Republic of the Popular Front meant justice, but this was not the same sense of historic, social justice of 1931. For families, with the return of those imprisoned or in exile, there was clearly a sense of returning to “normality”.[[1266]](#footnote-1266) But even as there was a sense of a return, there could be no return to the status quo *ante*. There was a greater sense of immediacy in 1936 and wider social emancipation was combined with a desire for justice and retribution for the events of the previous biennium.

The cathartic release felt by the victory of the Popular Front was evident. The results were widely celebrated in the streets, which mixed with mutinies in prisons (including in Oviedo), fires and confrontations with the police.[[1267]](#footnote-1267) The freeing of prisoners on 20 February meant jubilant returns to their family and friends in the mining valleys and the following day mines closed in Ablaña (Mieres) and many workshops closed at midday.[[1268]](#footnote-1268) The celebrations and jubilation in the coalfields extended to the return of leftist municipal politicians and those released from prison. Many turned out in Langreo and San Martín del Rey Aurelio for the first meeting of the reinstated *ayuntamientos*.[[1269]](#footnote-1269) Institutional spaces, such as the Casas del Pueblo, were reoccupied. The return of González Peña, SOMA leader, parliamentary deputy and “generalísimo” of the revolution, two weeks later was accompanied by a massive wave of mobilisation in a collective demonstration of the public return of the left. Symbolically, this was the occupation of Oviedo that had been unsuccessful in October 1934. On his journey to Oviedo he was acclaimed by shouts of ‘viva UHP’ and 30,000 reportedly received him in Mieres, where he visited the tombs of those killed in the insurrection. Accompanied by militias, he proceeded to Oviedo and was forced to enter the provincial capital on foot due to the sheer number of people on the streets. *La Tarde* described how ‘red Asturias’ welcomed him back and remarked sarcastically that ‘[a]ll “the martyrs” of Oviedo, the “victimised city”, attended *en masse* to receive “their executioner”, the *generalísimo* of the Revolution’.[[1270]](#footnote-1270) The shadow of October was ever-present and championed by the left; the fact that Largo Caballero distanced himself from the insurrection while the PCE stepped into claim responsibility should not occlude this.[[1271]](#footnote-1271) The memory of the insurrection helped to reinforce a more radical facet of political identities, even if this—and the rhetoric used—was not necessarily supported with revolutionary action. Consequently, even when the socialist leadership repudiated the revolutionary insurrection, it is important to note the important constitutive role that it played in socialist (and wider left-wing) identities.

The actions of the *ayuntamientos* and local political groups centred on three areas: retribution, restitution and reinstatement. As occurred more widely, the *ayuntamientos* carried out investigations and purges, annulling appointments and decisions made by the *comisiones gestoras* (steering committees) during the post-revolution and sacking some workers—though they were allowed to appeal—while reinstating others.[[1272]](#footnote-1272) In Oviedo, 13 employees were removed by the steering committeeand 23 reinstated.[[1273]](#footnote-1273) The *ayuntamientos* took an active role in information-gathering and supported groups who were looking for justice.[[1274]](#footnote-1274) Payments were paid to prisoners who had been or continued to be incarcerated and their families.[[1275]](#footnote-1275) Monetary compensation, including the agreement to pay wages to those workers suspended after the insurrection in Oviedo, symbolically reversed the actions taken by the local authorities during the post-revolution, such as the reluctance by the municipal authorities in Langreo to pay the food bill of those imprisoned.[[1276]](#footnote-1276) The new municipal authorities thus took an active role in fomenting and enacting Popular Front justice using the institutional means at their disposal.

Following orders from the Ministry of Work, the governor issued a circular ordering mayors to organise lists of those dismissed due to the revolutionary insurrection.[[1277]](#footnote-1277) In fact, readmission had already begun, with announcements that arms workers in Trubia and Oviedo would be reinstated and that miners and metalworkers in Langreo were negotiating their return.[[1278]](#footnote-1278) The companies accepted that resistance was a battle they were incapable of winning and the inevitability of the return of sacked workers meant that it was better for them to negotiate directly with the workforce. This points to a realistic understanding of the situation and the changing balance of power. Investigations into cases of dismissal began and by the beginning of July the number had reached over 7,000, which was itself testament to the scale of the repression.[[1279]](#footnote-1279)

Evidently not everyone in the coalfields had voted for the Popular Front and, as in 1933, the local results of the elections were disconcerting for leftists, despite the Popular Front victory. Again, the ballot box had made the rightist presence known. Leftists tried to identify those who had voted for the “enemy” candidacy, explaining, for example, that the 35 votes for the right in Veneros (Langreo) were men who ‘let themselves be beaten by weaknesses’, such as by selling themselves for a job.[[1280]](#footnote-1280) Voting for the right had not been a question of democratic choice or ideology, but of hire. As in 1933, for the left, votes for the right were neither genuine nor representative of the local community. In Ciaño-Santa Ana, there was a different and more militant reaction: it was now the responsibility of the ‘pueblo’ to ‘unmask’ these ‘cowards’ and ‘traitors’, to judge them and to show them the way. These ‘cowards’ were not simply the local bourgeoisie and the author of the article struggled to understand what had happened: there had been 113 votes for the right while there were only eight local business owners, of which two were leftists.[[1281]](#footnote-1281) There was a similar belief that the pueblo—the working class—was leftist, even if this class-based analysis failed to explain local voting patterns. The consequence was a much more aggressive policing of the behaviour of the working class in order to assert the identification of the left with the local working class community.[[1282]](#footnote-1282) As in 1933, the fact that the election results did not correspond to class-based understandings of the local community spurred greater action and a stronger assertion of leftist political identities.

Purges took place in political parties and trade unions, as the conduct of members during the revolutionary insurrection and afterwards was judged. Socialist sections reported they were investigating members, as occurred in Hueria de San Andrés (San Martín del Rey Aurelio) and Sotrondio.[[1283]](#footnote-1283) In Oviedo, the Agrupación Socialista scrutinised the conduct of individuals following an appeal via *La Tarde*, including eminent figures such as the “father” of Asturian socialism Manuel Vigil Montoto, Teodomiro Menéndez and the mayor of Oviedo López Mulero.[[1284]](#footnote-1284) These practices were frequently assembly-based. The provincial JS held a congress in April to discuss unification with the JC to form the JSU (Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas: Unified Socialist Youth), which was occurring at national level. At the congress, bitter differences came to the fore over the conduct of the revolutionary committee before and during the revolutionary insurrection as reformists were heavily criticised and there were even calls for the Madrid JS’s conduct to be judged and for the JS to join the Third International.[[1285]](#footnote-1285) The memory of October was used to legitimise and fuel radicalism. Thus, internal competition within the left fomented radicalism still further: the atmosphere was such that there was a desire to come across as the *most* radical.

Policing behaviour was thus a mechanism for greater radicalism, and even took place at the workplace, as in an assembly at the Mariana mine to judge the behaviour of fellow workers during the elections.[[1286]](#footnote-1286) In Sama, the local PCE cell judged the conduct of a member for signing a statement presented to him while imprisoned during the post-revolution. He recognised that this was ‘a weakness that Bolsheviks must not have’ and emphasised the ‘uncertainty’ and ‘terror’ of the situation, insisting he had not informed on anyone. The cell, after hearing that he was a good comrade who had fought well in the insurrection, decided to express its disappointment but not to expel him.[[1287]](#footnote-1287) Such practices served to cement a more radical model of what a good comrade should be; judging conduct served to police behaviour within the left.

Purging and punishment enforced clear lines which did not always correspond to the murkier realities of the past two years, whether due to personal weakness, indiscipline, fear or else more complex personal relationships and loyalties. The potential consequences of mixing with the right are clear in the case of a young mine worker ‘duped’ into attending an AP rally in November 1935. He had been accused by his fellow workers of signing a call for the fulfilment of the death sentences given to those accused of the Turón murders in October 1934, which had led to threats that had left him contemplating suicide.[[1288]](#footnote-1288) The article was an appeal for acceptance and reintegration in the face of probable ostracism.

Not only did this level of individual scrutiny stimulate a shift to the left, but this was also heightened by the *public* castigation of those who had not fulfilled what was expected and the consequences that this could have. Rumours about individuals’ conduct were flying around the coalfields. In La Moral (Langreo) accusations were made publicly by an ex-member of the JS that the treasurer had been involved in supplying arms to the security forces during the repression. After investigating, the JS declared the accusations were ‘completely false’.[[1289]](#footnote-1289) To combat such rumours, individuals defended themselves by explaining their actions during the insurrection and aftermath. Stories of personal trajectories were already an important part in which individual leftist identities were expressed. But in 1936, rather than reeling off a list of strikes in which they had been involved, individuals had to explain themselves in relation to the revolutionary insurrection and, given that cooperation with the authorities could mean ostracism from fellow leftists, such explanations were more important than ever. Emilio Vigil, secretary of the Agrupación Socialista in Siero, wrote a letter in defence of his conduct to combat the ‘defamatory campaign’ against him describing his participation in the insurrection, his arrest in 1935 and the accusations made against him. He had been accused of stealing money from the bank and neighbours continued to direct snide comments at his wife and children. Frustrated at the defamation, he called on the ‘pueblo of Siero’ to judge him.[[1290]](#footnote-1290) Rather than appealing solely to the left, he invoked the wider community as an arbiter of his conduct, entrusting his reputation to the self-policing mechanisms of the pueblo. Despite the political fracturing in the pueblos, individuals of opposing political creeds continued to inhabit the same spaces. The fact that such appeals were made—even in July 1936—is indicative of the intense, accusatory atmosphere and the sense of fragility within the left. But as an ultimate defence, the community—as locally “sovereign” in terms of one’s reputation—could be appealed to as witness and judge of an individual’s behaviour. A ‘comrade’ who was a civil guard wrote to *La Tarde* in defence of his brother and to end the rumours he called on ‘all citizens and comrades’ to present evidence to prove the *denuncias* so that ‘public opinion’ could judge his brother’s conduct as a municipal guard.[[1291]](#footnote-1291)

## Vigilance, Boycotts and the Strength of the Left

Rumours and denunciation were not merely an internal matter within the left. A watchful eye was kept on the security forces and the right in an indication of the mistrust bred by the post-revolution; articles in *La Tarde* reported on members of the security forces, including their petitions for a transfer or retirement, or the actions of the Civil Guard in the pueblos.[[1292]](#footnote-1292) Given that the memory of the repression weighed so heavily, it is unsurprising that the left’s gaze frequently focused on the security forces. Orators at the Popular Front rally in March verbally attacked both rightist leaders and the security forces.[[1293]](#footnote-1293) Public denunciation of perceived enemies was not a new phenomenon but the victory of the Popular Front meant the cathartic release of personal and collective anger against security forces seen as incompatible with the Republic of the Popular Front. This needs to be understood in the context of the continued use of violence. Assault guards beat demonstrators who welcomed those returning from exile in the USSR and an editorial complained that the Assault Guard had ‘brutally beaten’ a pro-Popular Front demonstration while having previously disappeared when individuals raised their arms in a fascist salute and shouted death to the Republic in the city centre. Not only was the Assault Guard refusing to defend the Republic, but it attacked its supporters.[[1294]](#footnote-1294) This fissure between the working class and the state security forces was also actively policed by individuals, as is illustrated by an incident in a bar in Sama in March. Three individuals entered a bar and started an argument with another named Manuel José about politics, accusing him of being a plain-clothes civil guard and a fascist. When he provided evidence of his worker status—and by extension of his proletarian identity—they declared his papers to be false. It was this accusation of falsification and of concealing a particular identity that provoked a fight with chairs, which ended with Manuel stabbing the three individuals.[[1295]](#footnote-1295) The three individuals evidently felt empowered enough to make the accusations against Manuel in what they saw to be a defence of their interests and their social space; what right did a plain-clothes civil guard have to be in a working-class bar in Sama in March 1936?

For the left, the security forces were not part of the “real” pueblo. Parliamentary representatives were called on to organise the destruction of the records and identity cards that the security forces had used in the repression and which remained in their hands. Workers do not need to be registered, the article claimed, ‘in a regime that they have brought and defend’.[[1296]](#footnote-1296) Suspicion was fomented by the links the state security forces maintained with local rightists, which appears to have been particularly prevalent in Aller, where the CEDA, and particularly the JAP, had a stronger network and the political situation was more evenly balanced. This fuelled a tenser and more conflictive situation. Before the elections there were reports that the JAP was armed in Aller and the Civil Guard were said to be ‘cohabiting’ with the SCOM.[[1297]](#footnote-1297) *La Tarde* built on these fears by reporting that Fernández Ladreda, the CEDA leader, had tried to ‘infiltrate’ the Assault Guard with members of the JAP.[[1298]](#footnote-1298)After the elections, the *ayuntamiento* of Aller discussed in a secret session a *denuncia* presented by six local inhabitants that an employee of the *ayuntamiento* had been training ‘the so-called fascist militias’ during working hours, in addition to collaborating in the printing and dissemination of propaganda ‘against the republican regime’. The *ayuntamiento* agreed to investigate.[[1299]](#footnote-1299) There were intense concerns about the extent to which the right was armed while the Civil Guard were criticised for carrying out body searches of ‘peaceful workers’ in Lena, even going through their food baskets, rather than targeting fascists.[[1300]](#footnote-1300) Again, the security forces were accused of not defending the Republic, which itself indicated a clear sense of who was inside and outside the Republic in 1936.

Distrust of the security forces was shared by the new municipal authorities, who moved to eliminate the privileges that the security forces had enjoyed in the post-revolution. Previously, bills had been paid by the *ayuntamientos* including the cleaning of buildings occupied by the security forces in both Langreo and Aller, and the acquisition of a heater for the Civil Guard garrison in Moreda.[[1301]](#footnote-1301) The authorities in Alleragreed to stop paying the rent of buildings for the officials of the security forces and the water and electricity bills of the garrisons, though the *ayuntamiento* was forced to suspend the removal of telephones when the Civil Guardrefused to pay the bills until higher ranks resolved the issue.[[1302]](#footnote-1302)

Vigilance was far more than just passive observation and reporting what was happening through the provincial press; it was an active exercise. Suspicious of the security forces, fearful of armed rightists and emboldened by the return to public, political life, left-wing militia forces took on the responsibility of stopping and searching individuals and by May the antifascist militias of the MAOC were carrying out drills on the Naranco, overlooking Oviedo. [[1303]](#footnote-1303) This policing of public space through body searches was common and had begun before the elections. It became more prevalent around Spain in late March after rumours of an order from the Ministry of the Interior authorising governors to appoint them to the role.[[1304]](#footnote-1304) These ‘*guardias de vista*’ worked alongside municipal police to search rightists in El Entrego in April, though there were also reports that such guards had been arrested by civil guards for the unauthorised carrying of firearms.[[1305]](#footnote-1305) While such initiatives may have aimed at reducing violence, at least from the right, they undermined the authority of the state. Even as leftists claimed to uphold the Republic, they usurped its authority in the streets, profoundly shaping how the Republic was experienced in spring 1936. Whereas in 1932 groups of JS members had invoked the Republican project to push for the implementation of legislation in the pueblos, such as through removing crucifixes, in 1936 the left was more self-confident and made claims to parity, as groups which could be entrusted with the security of the Republic. There was a projected closeness with the Republican state, but the local leftists’ vision of the Republic was not the same as that of the authorities. In early April, the PCE cell in Sama requested that the local Popular Front ask the governor to appoint them as the ‘guarantors of order’ in order to prevent ‘false rumours’ or ‘any surprise’ from the armed forces. They also asked for the mayor to ban rightists from leaving the municipality at ‘certain times’ to prevent alarm.[[1306]](#footnote-1306) Such initiatives thus moved between acting autonomously and requesting authorisation to function as a para-state body. But the authorities were concerned and at the beginning of April there were attempts to curb the activities of the non-official police, including a circular issued by the Ministry of the Interior ordering an end to such initiatives.[[1307]](#footnote-1307)

Clearly, such initiatives were problematic for the rule of law and constitutional government as local leftists took it into their own hands to uphold the principles of the Republic and guard against threats, questioning state structures. The republican minority governments’ attempts to rebuild state authority suffered when prime minister Azaña, an extremely able politician, was elevated to president of the Republic when Alcalá Zamora was impeached and forced to resign. Azaña had hoped that Prieto, leader of the socialist centrists, would be able to replace him and form a government, but Prieto was hamstrung by the lack of support from the socialist left. This meant that the final government of the Second Republic before the war was again formed by republicans and headed this time by Casares Quiroga. Republican governments had been weak from the beginning and were fearful of the ‘growing popular mobilisaton’. But the socialist left was less interested in the ‘erosion’ that the government was suffering, as they expected to obtain power in the future, rather than, as Prieto saw it, the failure affecting the whole of the Popular Front.[[1308]](#footnote-1308)

The ‘order’ of the post-revolution had changed. While in 1935 ‘order’ for the right had meant exclusion of the left, now that the left had returned, their policing of order in local communities was based on its mistrust of both the security forces and the right. It was a very clear reversal to the power dynamics of the preceding months. By the end of April, *Región* commented on the *cacheos* which ‘are repeated day after day’ and meant that ‘the security and safety [*tranquilidad*] of each individual depends on the sympathy or antipathy held towards us by those of the “Popular Front”’.[[1309]](#footnote-1309) This was true, but the situation was not one of revolutionary violence or of widespread extra-judicial murder. While the effects of these frequent, intimate encounters between left and right are impossible to measure, it is easy to see how the removal of weapons by local political opponents can only have increased feelings of anger and resentment amongst rightists.

The policing of local communities was broader than vigilance and left-wing militias removing firearms from opponents. There was a widespread use of boycotts in 1936, which went further than those organised in previous years—both in scale and organisation—and functioned as a form of community retribution.[[1310]](#footnote-1310) They indicate a hardening of politics at local level and fit into a wider wave of direct, proactive and militant strategies taken by the working class left, such as land seizures in the south.[[1311]](#footnote-1311) Boycotts asserted control and implemented collective punishment in a manner which was highly visible in local communities in that they influenced patterns of consumption and sociability and ostracised certain individuals. In fact, mine workers who had obtained jobs in the post-revolution were shunned by SOMA members in Mieres. If socialists encountered such workers in a bar or café and the owner refused to expel them, then the SOMA members should leave.[[1312]](#footnote-1312) This was indicative of the frictions and polarisation in the pueblos, the distrust, suspicion and profound crisis of communities, which were being forced to function almost as separate societies at local level, with the political cleavage the determining factor.

Boycotts were organised in punishment for the results of the elections or in response to the repression or actions of individuals during the post-revolution.[[1313]](#footnote-1313) They asserted popular justice through a display of collective power. The JS in Bimenes called for the boycott of two businesses presented as ‘oppressors’ of the working class, one of which was accused of actively participating in the repression of the insurrection: ‘he did what he could to condemn us so that we rotted in prison’.[[1314]](#footnote-1314) But boycotts were not solely employed by the left. A woman from Pola del Pino (Aller), one of the remotest areas of Aller, wrote to *La Tarde* complaining that rightists had boycotted her business since she had allowed Popular Front meetings to take place there.[[1315]](#footnote-1315) A bakery was boycotted in Oviedo as Josefa, the owner, was a leftist and had given a speech in a central square. The Agrupación Femenina Asturiana retaliated by calling on those who delivered bread to stop doing so to certain individuals.[[1316]](#footnote-1316) Castigation was swift and indicated the hardening of political divides. Such practices can also be understood as the extension of strike techniques to the wider community themselves—in that boycotts consisted of a deliberate and collective cessation of normal patterns of consumption.

The highly-organised nature of boycotts in 1936 is further testament to the high degree of mobilisation and militancy at local level. Meetings were held, commissions created and instructions printed in the provincial press—*La Tarde* even included a small section dedicated to boycotts.[[1317]](#footnote-1317) As in previous years, local groups worked together in the pueblos. The JS and JC in Langreo issued ‘certificates’ for market-sellers from rural areas so that ‘every good citizen, leftist man or woman’ could demand to see the certificate in order to ‘contribute to these just boycotts’.[[1318]](#footnote-1318) Such certificates would strengthen ties within the left even as those outside were excluded, contributing to the hardening of identities. In Langreo, the socialist trade unions envisaged a boycott which would transcend the municipality. They appealed to all working class political and syndical organisations in Asturias via *La Tarde* to send them information on businesses which should be boycotted, ‘[g]iven that the project of this Federation is to boycott and sink all businessmen and professionals who during the period of persecution and ignominy suffered by the Spanish people served as snitches [*soplones*] and stalwarts of the reaction’.[[1319]](#footnote-1319) As is clear, the language of boycotts was militant and, at times, violent. A boycott organised by the Antifascist Popular Front in Trubia instructed that the working class must not ‘contribute with your money to enrich the murderers of the working class. All-out war on those who betray our class aspirations’.[[1320]](#footnote-1320) But while the language was militant, the strategy itself was not physically violent, even as it deepened divisions at local level. Efforts were also made to justify boycotts with explanations printed in the pages of *La Tarde* and *Avance*.[[1321]](#footnote-1321)

The organisational apparatus, which built on pre-existing organisations and political practice, evolved to an extent that a quasi-judicial system even developed in some areas. In Sotrondio, an assembly was organised by the boycott commission to judge the conduct of Manuel Ordiz and Manuel Álvarez at which 30 organisations were represented. It was decided that the boycott should remain; Ordiz was accused of denouncing individuals to the authorities who were later beaten and of blackmailing others under the threat of denunciation. The language and form was that of a trial: justice was invoked, a *careo* (face-to-face confrontation) had taken place, evident was presented and heard, Ordiz allowed to defend himself and the sentence dictated. The boycott was understood as temporary: the sentence would be revised.[[1322]](#footnote-1322) In Figaredo a boycott organised by the local Popular Front was lifted as, ‘having passed the boycott period [*transcurrido* *el plazo de boicot*]’, it was time for it to end.[[1323]](#footnote-1323) The practice was circumscribed; it had limits and logic. A parallel system of popular justice had emerged at local level that was shaped by existing ways of policing the local community; boycotts developed as did institutionalised practices such as shunning. This system also built on the militancy and empowerment of the working class and cannot be understood without the experience of repression. But the effect was to accentuate still further the relative autonomy of the working class which felt isolated from the state even as it aligned itself with the principles it associated with the Popular Front: popular justice and empowerment.

These twin ideas fed into grassroots agitation. The Popular Front was an electoral coalition, not an arrangement for the resurrection of republican-socialist governmental collaboration. While the Popular Front ‘never extended beyond the election committee’ on a national level, in Asturias ‘the Popular Front continued to function after 16 February’, organising a rally in Oviedo in late March and at local level serving as a ‘vehicle for working-class demands and action’.[[1324]](#footnote-1324) This high level of local organisation and agitation built on past experiences prior to and during the revolutionary insurrection. As *Avance* declared, the Popular Committees were not just about the elections, ‘[t]hey were organisms of combat then and should continue to be now’.[[1325]](#footnote-1325) Not that there were not problems. The activities by Popular Front committees were ‘both localized and sporadic’.[[1326]](#footnote-1326) Despite the enthusiasm for unity, the CNT did not join the 1 May demonstration.[[1327]](#footnote-1327) Nevertheless, as in 1934, unity was understood as a framework and an instrument for working towards progress. The enthusiasm for unity was such that it was identified as a commercial opportunity: the pages of *Avance* even advertised cognac branded ‘UHP’.[[1328]](#footnote-1328) Some Workers’ Alliances were recreated, as in Sotrondio, where they were described as ‘the necessary vehicle to reach the eagerly awaited objective’.[[1329]](#footnote-1329) By mid-July the Popular Front and Workers’ Alliance seem to have melted into one another, with the latter facilitated by the former; what was important was the solidarity of the workers to forestall an attack from the opposition.[[1330]](#footnote-1330) Unity was therefore about agitation and action, but not about organising a revolution. Rather, it was about the militant defence of their ideals and of their Republic.

## Violence and Autonomy

In Asturias there were waves of tension in March, April and May—as in the rest of Spain—but it was hardly a case of pre-revolutionary chaos. Skirmishes took place between youths, such as between the left and JAP on 9 March.[[1331]](#footnote-1331) Incidents during demonstrations were more common, indicating the impossibility of coexistence of opposing groups in public space. On 14 April, the anniversary of the Republic, troops and security forces paraded through the centre of Oviedo. *Región* reported that there were contrasting shouts and vivas—to Spain, the army or else to Russia and the revolution. The newspaper reported that, after the parade, young leftists went to a building from where someone had shouted ‘viva Spain!’ The Assault Guard intervened and made as if to charge. The civil governor ordered the guards back to their barracks, fights erupted among the crowd and several were injured.[[1332]](#footnote-1332) The solution was to withdraw the forces of the state. It was not so much the day of the Republic itself which was disputed, but the presence of the army and how it was acclaimed by certain individuals.

These waves of violence, searches and arrests were accompanied by incidents of targeting of church property, as occurred in Spain more widely.[[1333]](#footnote-1333) In Asturias, Álvarez Tardío and Villa García have counted 35 anticlerical violent acts, which were mostly focused on the buildings themselves—they only count two attacks on religious personnel.[[1334]](#footnote-1334) Churches in Valdecuna and Gallegos (Mieres) were targeted in March, and churches in Laviana, Ribera de Arriba, Proaza, Brañes (Oviedo) and a shrine in Valdecuna were attacked during the two first two weeks of April. The church in Valdecuna was targeted again in May—the same day that a church in Villoria (Laviana) was set alight—and there was a wave of attacks on rectories in Caso in June.[[1335]](#footnote-1335) It is clear that the violence was relatively localised, as in Caso in June, and grouped in waves, as in March, and then again in April around Holy Week.[[1336]](#footnote-1336) The parish priest of Laviana was expelled by the *ayuntamiento* in May.[[1337]](#footnote-1337) Such incidents seem to broadly correlate with the arrests and episodes of violence previously discussed.

In March, there was a clampdown on the Falange nationally. In Asturias, a Falangist was injured in a confrontation and the fact that he was armed led to a leftist demonstration and the subsequent order by the governor to close the Falange centre.[[1338]](#footnote-1338) Thirty-seven were arrested, though later freed.[[1339]](#footnote-1339) Days later the FE-JONS leaders in Aller were imprisoned and, according to *Región*, there was a protest after rumours that they were being badly treated—the leaders were taken to Pola de Lena to diffuse the situation.[[1340]](#footnote-1340) In April, homes of rightists were searched in Turón and munitions found.[[1341]](#footnote-1341) A further wave of arrests, which included members of the clergy, AP, Falange, CEDA followed in April in Turón, Oviedo, Cangas de Onís and Mieres.[[1342]](#footnote-1342) The following month, the brothers of Enrique and Fernando Canga, FE-JONS leaders, were fined together with Enrique’s wife for the arms found in their home.[[1343]](#footnote-1343) Towards mid-May AP members were released, though days later individuals who had only recently left prison attacked municipal guards in Noreña.[[1344]](#footnote-1344)

The CEDA did not collapse nor did the whole movement shift further to the right. Giménez Fernández, CEDA leader, social Catholic and erstwhile Minister of Agriculture in 1935—though his attempt at agrarian reform had led to him being booted out by his own supporters—advocated respect for the Republican regime and a move towards the middle ground. He entered negotiations with socialists in April 1936 in the name of the CEDA to form a ‘national government’ in order to stabilise social conflict.[[1345]](#footnote-1345) Such a proposal faced ‘immense’ difficulties due to the divided nature of the socialist movement and opposition from within the CEDA. Gil Robles tolerated the negotiations, but was far from enthusiastic.[[1346]](#footnote-1346) The majority of the CEDA would not unite behind him nor did it show interest in shifting towards a more moderate stance. In May the CEDA began to shift towards further towards confrontation with the Republican regime and negotiations stopped on 2 June after Gil Robles informed Giménez Fernández and the moderates that it was impossible for the CEDA to continue working towards a centrist position.[[1347]](#footnote-1347) Gil Robles was aware of the conspiracy against the Republican regime, issuing party leaders with instructions to join the military when the rebellion came and transferring party funds to the conspiracy, even if he refused to be ‘publicly compromised’. Indeed, the situation was moving quickly in June: the Derecha Regional Valenciana, part of the CEDA, joined the conspiracy in June, and the Falange was in contact with the plot.[[1348]](#footnote-1348)

This is the context in which Gil Robles’ catastrophist rhetoric, most (in)famously in the Cortes in mid-June, must be placed. These declarations, along with those by Renovación Española deputy Calvo Sotelo, were fanned by the right-wing press and contributed to heightening the climate of violence. Clearly, there was increased conflict and violence in 1936, but this did not mean that the Republic was chaos-ridden or ungovernable. A degree, though not all, of the violence was a strategy aimed at destabilising the regime and increasing tensions, polarising society still further and envisaged as vindicating a coup. The middle classes were certainly frightened: they were afraid to stay in the Asturian coalfields and the rural right fled to provincial capitals more widely.[[1349]](#footnote-1349)

Recent scholarship has linked violence to other instances of often peaceful mobilisation, as was also the case in Asturias.[[1350]](#footnote-1350) After a peaceful demonstration by unemployed members of Popular Front in Pola de Lena, ‘several groups of kids’ forced the door of the AP centre, took papers and a portrait of Gil Robles out into the street and burned them.[[1351]](#footnote-1351) Violent strategies were part of a wider repertoire of collective action and the opportunity provided by demonstrations—or the emotional stimulant that they provided as collective expressions of strength—were taken advantage of to enact violence. The street was not wide enough for everyone. In early April, those exiled in Russia returned to Asturias and an impromptu march took place in Oviedo. A fascist shouted ‘*arriba España*!’ and the marchers went after him. The Assault Guard intervened, beat several of the leftists and the fascist was arrested.[[1352]](#footnote-1352) The arrests of Falangists in Aller in March took place in the context of protests over the substitution of religious education which served to heighten tensions and energise protest still further.[[1353]](#footnote-1353)

At the beginning of May, rightists, including Falangists, took advantage of the protest of the funeral in Gijón of a murdered civil guard to protest against the regime and a ‘tumult’ occurred, leading to arrests.[[1354]](#footnote-1354) The response by the authorities provoked further protest, and the governor asserted his authority by making further arrests. Mariano Merediz, a PRLD member and ex-deputy, was arrested for the terms used in his telegram of condolence to the head of the Civil Guard.[[1355]](#footnote-1355) Attempts to clampdown on the protest served to fan the enthusiasm of those in opposition to the authorities and stimulate further opposition. In Aller, according to *Región*, a ‘multitude’ gathered to bid farewell to those ‘arbitrarily’ arrested, shouting ‘vivaCatholic Spain!’ in a cry that construed Catholic Spain as fundamentally different to the Republic. The article was defiant:

Not in Bello, nor in Casomera, nor in Collanzo, nor in Felechosa, nor in other areas does the oppressive [*bochornosa*] politics practised by the *Ayuntamiento* of Cabañaquinta receive adulation or sympathy. The fascist militias are enjoying greater influence and growth in all of Aller ever since their persecution and despite having been dissolved.[[1356]](#footnote-1356)

This repeated scenes from two weeks earlier, when Falangists were arrested. They were accompanied to the train station, where the fascist salute was made by their supporters. The following day the same happened. An article from Moreda expressed frustration that someone who had criticised the events had been threatened with arrest.[[1357]](#footnote-1357) The dynamic was thus complex. The authorities’ attempts to reassert their control and state-led order was interpreted as repression and persecution by the radical right, who used the opportunities caused by arrests and funerals to express greater opposition. The reassertion of authority by the governor and other bodies served to legitimise their anti-Republican position. While at the same time, the perception by the left of the authorities’ inability to control this situation and impose Republican order (as they saw it) led to increasing frustration and a warning that they would take the situation into their own hands.[[1358]](#footnote-1358) Such a dynamic did not cause the coup, but it did mean that there was progressive radicalisation while the authorities struggled to maintain control as well as rising tension in the streets.

There was also a rise in targeted violence. The Falange had switched to a strategy of targeted assassination, which began with the attempt on the life of the socialist Jiménez de Asúa in March. In Asturias, Alfredo Martínez, ex-minister and PRLD leader, was shot at his home in March and later died. Both communists and Falangists were arrested, though it is unclear who was responsible.[[1359]](#footnote-1359) In early May there was an attempt on the life of the civil governor, Bosque, a member of Izquierda Republicana.[[1360]](#footnote-1360) There were also isolated incidents in the coalfields, with individuals or cars stopped or fired at. In Sotrondio an individual reported that he had been stopped by six men who were ‘going to kill him for being a dinosaur [*carca*]’; the six fled after he fired shots into the air and the Civil Guard arrived.[[1361]](#footnote-1361) The car of the parish priest of Moreda was reportedly stopped at the end of April and shots fired, and a car shot was at in Laviana in May.[[1362]](#footnote-1362) In July, a socialist was reported to have been attacked by a ‘fascist’ in Ciaño.[[1363]](#footnote-1363) Revenge was taken by two brothers in Aller, who killed a teacher who had reported them to the authorities after the insurrection.[[1364]](#footnote-1364) These were locally-organised incidents of violence aimed at vengeance or else asserting control over local communities. They were an extension of the control and policing of the local community in that prior leftist hegemony was rearticulated through score-settling.

Competing projects of ‘authority’ and order in 1936 related directly to the idea of the Republic itself. The authorities showed a clear desire to reduce violence and disorder by restricting the radical right’s capacity for mobilisation, such as through banning the Falange and arresting its members. Socialists (and communists) had a more militant stance towards order. After the experience of the post-revolution—and the resultant distrust of the security forces—and with a conception of the Republic more in-line with their ideological beliefs, they were prepared to police the Republic at local level, particularly if the state seemed less capable of defending itself. This perception of authority—which was that of the working class, the people and the Popular Front more generally—was very different from that pursued by the right, though it was closely aligned with the civil governor, Bosque. There was a strong attachment to Bosque as he fitted in with the more militant, ‘antifascist’ understanding of the Republic in 1936 for the left. For *Región*, incidents of violence were symptomatic of the lack of authority, understood as the lack of a more aggressive policing policy. This was hardly a defence of constitutional authority, as the newspaper justified violence due to the lack of authority, which only served to undermine it still further. In the wake of the shooting of Alfredo Martínez, the editorial explained that citizens had to take the ‘terrible’ measure of taking ‘justice into their own hands’.[[1365]](#footnote-1365) Its call two weeks later for the street to be a ‘neutral space for ALL (sic)’ was little more than empty rhetoric.[[1366]](#footnote-1366) It should rather be interpreted as a call for a return to the post-revolutionary streets from which left-wing political expression had been excluded.

Demonstrations and marches exemplified the power of the working class. While *La Tarde* emphasised the ‘serenity’ of the 1 May celebrations in Oviedo, the massed ranks of the ‘red militias’ and the fact that ‘dynamite exploded in the hills announcing the beginning of the parade by the proletarian Army (sic)’ can only have been interpreted by rightists as a revolutionary threat, or the vivid memory of October 1934.[[1367]](#footnote-1367) These were no longer just workers, but an army, disciplined and in control. The socialist mayor, López Mulero, reportedly highlighted this, eulogising their ‘discipline’ and ‘exhibiting them to the governor as the firmest bulwark of the security of the Republic’. The governor spoke, recalling the fallen in October, ‘whose martyrdom and death made possible the re-conquest of the Republic’.[[1368]](#footnote-1368) The demonstration was an exhibition of power and support for the Republic.[[1369]](#footnote-1369) In 1936, the Republic depended on the strength of the left-wing militias and on the loyalty of the working class. It was a physical demonstration of order, through the lack of violent incidents. In Mieres there was ‘order’ and ‘discipline’ on 1 May and the events in Sotrondio were described as ending ‘without a single incident [...], which demonstrates that we did not need foreign bodies [*cuerpos extraños*] to maintain order’.[[1370]](#footnote-1370) Indeed, during the Popular Front rally on 29 March the police were not present at the request of the mayor and by agreement with the civil governor. This contrasted with the power exemplified through the uniformed militias which marched through Oviedo in mid-June on the occasion of the visit of the socialist leader Largo Caballero, when there were reportedly shouts of ‘UHP’ and vivas given to Russia and the red army.[[1371]](#footnote-1371) Repeatedly, therefore, the left took control of the streets in early summer 1936. It is not hard to see how this would have been interpreted by those on the right. The same revolutionaries who had battled to take control of the city in October 1934 were now marching boldly through the centre and defended or even acclaimed by the authorities.

The march of the militias took place in the wake of the most serious crisis of the Popular Front period in Asturias, caused by the Assault Guard in Oviedo. The origin lay in an open-air party on the evening of Saturday 23 May. In the midst of the crowd an individual fired shots and was disarmed by the JS and JC—*Región* labelled it an incident between Falangists and the left. Assault guards in plain clothes intervened, but were disarmed by leftist youths, who handed the weapons to the authorities while the guards were beaten and insulted. What happened the following evening resonates with Blaney’s argument that the Civil Guard had a ‘pathological fear of being overwhelmed by the masses’ which shaped their response, and appears to point to a similar mentality amongst the Assault Guard.[[1372]](#footnote-1372) The guards, who understood themselves as upholding order, had been disarmed and humiliated by members of the crowd, and decided to reassert their authority. The following evening was the second night of the celebrations. According to the governor’s report, a ‘blond, tall, young individual’ fired into the air before fleeing and ‘as though these shots were a signal’, assault guards, whose presence in plain clothes the governor had expressly forbidden after the events of the previous evening, fired into the crowd. The lights went out and panic ensued. As soon as the governor was made aware of what was happening, he demanded the return of the guards to their barracks, but, disobeying the order, two lorries of assault guards went to the scene and opened fire. Twenty-one were injured, of which one was serious. The mayor and a public prosecutor, along with other local leaders, managed to diffuse the incident and the assault guards returned to their barracks. *La Tarde* reported that more than 100 shots were fired, accused the guards of shooting a young woman already on the ground, and claimed the attack had been organised and planned, rather than a reaction to the circumstances.[[1373]](#footnote-1373) The extent to which it was planned is difficult to ascertain, though it seems clear that it was closely linked to what happened the day before.

Through Monday and most of Tuesday Oviedo was completely shut down by a general strike. The left not only shut down the city, it also patrolled the streets, keeping order. According to *Región*, the ‘red guard’ kept order during the strike, signing safe-conducts and restricting movement by vehicles into the city. Even the national cycle race, the *Vuelta a España*, was prevented from entering Oviedo and there were no trains in the municipal district of Oviedo. Investigations began immediately and several assault guards were arrested or transferred.[[1374]](#footnote-1374) *Región*, for all its habitual amplification of disorder and violence, was relatively subdued, reserving its criticism for the strike, minimising the importance of those wounded and neglecting to report on what had happened at the fiesta. The newspaper claimed that it could only speak in general terms and was unable to find anyone about whom it could protest explicitly, though it vehemently criticised the strike for holding the city to ransom.[[1375]](#footnote-1375) Eluding blaming the Assault Guard would seem to point to a wider strategy of avoiding alienating the security forces.

The institutional response had been forceful and rapid in investigating the incident, while the streets had been in the hands of the left. But both depended on one another. Left-wing militants were closely aligned with the authorities, even if power in the streets often lay in their hands. This alignment is exemplified in the mobilisation around the removal of the civil governor in the wake of what happened. In the Cortes, Renovación Española leader Calvo Sotelo, who frequently espoused catastrophist rhetoric, compared the situation in Asturias to the USSR. The governor of Asturias replied with a telegram accusing those who sympathised with Calvo Sotelo as responsible for disturbing public order and inviting the deputy to visit Asturias.[[1376]](#footnote-1376) Calvo Sotelo claimed the telegram broke parliamentary privilege and in the end Bosque resigned.[[1377]](#footnote-1377) The strength of the left’s identification with the civil governor was quickly apparent: political parties, trade unions and *ayuntamientos* sent telegrams, a strike was called and shops closed in Mieres.[[1378]](#footnote-1378) Again, it seemed that there was a defined idea of a more militant, leftist Republic of which Bosque was a defender. Different Republican projects continued to compete in 1936, as they had done since the beginning of the Republic. But in 1936, the leftist Republic demanded on the streets in Asturias was an uncompromisingly militant and radical Republic. In some ways the militancy was similar to the socialist rhetoric prior to the 1933 elections, but rather than focusing on the socialists gaining power, in 1936 such rhetoric was a broader principle of a leftist, worker-led Republic which would impose itself on those who would not accept reform.

In June, violent tactics escalated as bombs started to be used against left-wing targets, the publications *La Tarde* and *Combate*, and also the *ayuntamiento* and Banco Español de Crédito in Sama. *Avance* linked the bombing to those at *La Tarde* and *Combate* and attributed them to a ‘group which, since the Popular Front triumph, has been acting in our province’.[[1379]](#footnote-1379) The strength and self-confidence of the left combined with fears of a rumoured armed rising meant that left-wing militants patrolled the streets of the pueblos. In Aller, ‘subversive elements’ slept at the Civil Guard barracks, a building that belonged to the SCOM.[[1380]](#footnote-1380) It was clear where the divisions were. But this was more than just about split communities. What was important was the willingness, organisation and strength to police themselves. In reaction to fears, militias reclaimed and secured the spaces of local communities. Clearly such a reaction depended on a strong sense of collective self-confidence, but it also demonstrated a lack of confidence in the state to protect itself. This was not just fear of armed risings. Strikers in Mieres, fearful of possible attacks, organised guards to defend the Abella mine when the owner withdrew his own guards.[[1381]](#footnote-1381) This was the reversal of traditional armed defence of industry, undertaken by companies in fear of the retribution which could be meted out by strikers. Guarding mines was not protecting property per se, but guarding the means of production on which their livelihoods depended. There was clearly a profound sense of crisis and of suspicion that the mining companies could sabotage their own property. This feeling served to bolster independence as armed groups organised in defence of their jobs, as they saw it.

The socialists considered themselves to be the bulwark of law and order—that is, Republican order—at grassroots. Yet in their eyes the Republic was not protecting them. In July, a trial took place of three ‘antifascist militiamen’ accused of disarming two ‘reactionaries’ in Casomera (Aller). The public prosecutor requested a sentence of two months and a day for the socialists for coercion and illegal possession of arms, and the same for the reactionaries for illegal possession of arms. *Avance* was critical that individuals ‘at the service’ of the Republic were now on trial for having handed weapons to the authorities.[[1382]](#footnote-1382) Days later *Avance* reported that the socialists had been given sentences of between six and elven months, while the ‘fascists’ had only received a month and a day.[[1383]](#footnote-1383) The socialist militias were protecting the Republic, but the reverse was not true. Meanwhile, targeted violence had continued. Early July saw the attempted shootings of a municipal guard and a socialist, the targeting of the newspaper kiosk owned by a communist with dynamite, and dynamite found near the PCE headquarters in Oviedo.[[1384]](#footnote-1384) ‘Fascists’ were arrested and later freed.[[1385]](#footnote-1385) If the authorities refused to deal with the ‘fascist *pistolerismo*’, the ‘working class’ would, *Avance* declared.[[1386]](#footnote-1386) They supported Republican order, but it was failing to look after itself. A similar sentiment was expressed days later. ‘Excessive tolerance encourages fascism’ proclaimed the headline of *Avance* on 16 July when reporting Suárez de Tangil’s call in the Cortes for Spain to be saved—constituting ‘an authentic declaration of war’—and after which the monarchist deputies left the Cortes.[[1387]](#footnote-1387) Aware of the imminent rising, Suárez de Tangil left Madrid before the coup. His declarations in the Cortes had been made in response to the murder of fellow Renovación Española deputy Calvo Sotelo by assault guards in Madrid, itself in response to the killing of an Assault Guard lieutenant by rightists. It was the murder of Calvo Sotelo that accelerated the conspiracy and brought forward the date for the coup.

In contrast to the planned coup, the growing self-confidence and autonomy of the left should not be read as a deliberate attempt to induce a chaotic, pre-revolutionary or indeed revolutionary situation.[[1388]](#footnote-1388) The militant attitude was aligned with the Republican project as it was still identified as supporting their interests.[[1389]](#footnote-1389) The language of *Avance* was becoming muscular and bellicose, recovering a more radical stance. The Republic needed to be tactically defended, even if it was the ‘means’ to organise a class revolution, an editorial of *Avance* claimed.[[1390]](#footnote-1390) The masses were no longer ‘toys’; rather, they were ‘capable of guiding the tiller of the country on their own’.[[1391]](#footnote-1391) Not only did the Republic need to be rechannelled to work for the working class, but it was the working class who would direct the country. This was a much more bullish conceptualisation of the Republic as a ‘workers’ Republic’ than that of the Republic of the people. This was not anti-Republican; rather, there was a defined idea of a radical Republic which these militias were willing to defend. The question remained as to the extent to which this was compatible with more moderate Republican projects. The support of the radical grassroots depended on the ability of the regime to deliver change, but, in contrast to previous years, this was more belligerently asserted in the streets. Pride in united working class force was also transmitted in the report that militias in Sama were disappointed when the rumours of a movement against the Republic did not materialise.[[1392]](#footnote-1392) This was posturing, but the underlying bellicose and militant attitude was clear.

Such a militant attitude had been present since the spring. In April, the Agrupación Socialista of Lada made a stark warning to the wider community via a note published in *La Tarde* declaring that they were prepared to defend their affiliates from insults and coercion (in the case of a student punished for saluting with a raised fist and ‘UHP’).[[1393]](#footnote-1393) The political cleavage was even more sharply defined in 1936. In Mieres, bars and cafes refused to employ unionised workers.[[1394]](#footnote-1394) This ‘hardening’ had strengthened the working class left and was evidence of a more radical stance. This hardening can be seen in the control of spaces, discernible in the killing of Manuel in a bar in Sama and the closing down of Oviedo by unions in the wake of violence employed by the security forces. This radicalism was reactive and contingent on both circumstances in Asturias in 1936 and the experience of repression. The vociferous antifascist stance was not, however, channelled towards revolution, but into a Republic structured towards the needs of the ‘pueblo’, that is, the working class.

While the situation on the streets was tense, the mines were calmer, demonstrating once more that radicalisation was more about politics than labour conflict. This was despite the continuing problems of the mining industry which struggled with low demand for coal. Though there was an increase in conflicts, ‘tensions were channelled through institutional mechanisms’.[[1395]](#footnote-1395) The climate of rising social tension and strikes in May due to frustration, reports of mine closures and slowdowns built into a wave of strikes which erupted into a larger strike. This was sparked by a conflict in the Cadavío mine which emerged when workers demanded an increase in the working week, and organised a sit-down strike in the mine. The strike spread through the Nalón valley and even to Mieres and Turón, though it was peaceful and a negotiated solution was reached.[[1396]](#footnote-1396) Militant and radical stances with regards to the Republic did not mean that co-operation between different groups was impossible. The problem was the political clashes in the streets rather than negotiation between representatives of different groups.

The problems of short-time working and owed wages continued, however, and the May strikes were followed on 3 June by a general mining strike called by the SOMA.[[1397]](#footnote-1397) The socialists asked for the payment of unpaid wages and pensions, the payment of compensation for October 1934, the readmission of four workers and the creation of an independent *caja* for pensions. The final two demands were the most radical: they asked for the seizure by the state of mines abandoned by companies or closed for unjustified reasons—to be judged by the authorities—and their transfer to the mine workers, and the appointment of a commission to study the best way to nationalise the industry.[[1398]](#footnote-1398) Property rights were being questioned when property was not being productively used for the good of local society—in the eyes of the workers. The strategy was one of using institutional channels, rather than direct action. This contrasted to the land occupations in the south of the country. In March, peasants invaded states, particularly in Extremadura where it took place on a mass scale, and the occupation was legalised by the government, which was unable to do anything else in the face of such large scale action. There were no more land seizures, but tensions and conflict in the south did not disappear and a huge strike wave broke out at the beginning of May.[[1399]](#footnote-1399) In Asturias, the general mining strike, which lasted for eighteen days and was hailed as a victory by the SOMA, was remarkably calm given the tense political situation, which again underlines the *political* nature of the conflicts and radicalisation in Asturias.[[1400]](#footnote-1400) The solution was a reduction in the working day, retirement of older workers, a loan to pay outstanding wages and pensions, and a centralised body for selling coal, with worker participation.[[1401]](#footnote-1401) Institutional channels were still open for the settling of labour matters through negotiation, though this contrasted with the disciplined, uniformed ranks who filed past Largo Caballero in the centre of Oviedo, or who took it upon themselves to patrol the streets. The contrast with 1934 was that there was hope in the Republican regime, though this would mean a more radical Republic than had previously been the case. There were clearly tensions between the revolutionary self-image and more pragmatic negotiations. In a speech at the end of the strike, Graciano Antuña, the SOMA leader, declared the union to have always been a revolutionary organisation, though with an ability to ‘temper’ its attitude to the context, and drew a line connecting the negotiations of 1936 with the revolutionary insurrection, appealing to those present to judge whether the SOMA leaders were the same men who had fought to defend the working class in 1934. He declared that the mine workers had not obtained all of their objectives, but this was impossible in a bourgeois regime.[[1402]](#footnote-1402) While there was no call for revolution, this was a bullish vision of a Republic working on behalf of the working class. Importantly, the Republic did not close off the road towards socialism—the left could still work within it towards its own objectives.

At the beginning of the SOMA strike, the conservative daily *El Carbayón* had spoken of ‘subversion’ and darkly augured a ‘[b]ad summer’ for Asturias.[[1403]](#footnote-1403) But labour matters were soon to be secondary as an entirely different ‘bad summer’ to that presaged by *El Carbayón* was about to explode.

# Conclusion

Late on 17 July 1936 a military rebellion against the Republican state began in Spanish North Africa. The following day other garrisons on the mainland revolted. This was far from spontaneous: it was a planned coup that was the result of a conspiracy that had begun during spring-summer 1936. As a coup, the rebellion failed. But it paralysed the Republican state as by ‘shattering both army and police command structures the rebellion deprived the liberal republican government of the coercive measures’ required to resist the coup.[[1404]](#footnote-1404) Paradoxically, the failure of the coup was indicative of the strength of the Republic—or, rather, of the idea of the Republic—and also of leftist organisations who supported it and who mobilised to fight ‘fascism’ and the forces of reaction. The situation rapidly coalesced into two zones, with the broad swathe from Galicia through the central plain to Navarra and Aragón, and areas of south and western Andalucía in the hands of the rebels, while the northern coast between Asturias and the French border, and the central and eastern areas—from Málaga to Madrid to Barcelona—were in the hands of Republican forces or the revolutionary left. While these divisions broadly corresponded with the election results of February 1936, the reality in the pueblos was much more complex, with communities fractured along different fault-lines, including politics, class and religion. These divisions, combined with the strength of mobilisation and agitation in 1936, meant that the destabilising coup sparked off a civil war, though evidently this does not mean that these divisions *caused* the coup itself.

The censored headline of *Avance* on 18 July should have read ‘[*c*]*ojones* and dynamite’.[[1405]](#footnote-1405) Bellicose and assertive, it betrays the self-confidence and radical self-image of the socialists in spring 1936 while also invoking the memory of October 1934. In response to news of the rebellion, militias occupied Oviedo and packed into lorries to fight the rebellion in Castile. It was only when they left that colonel Aranda, the commanding officer in Oviedo, rebelled. Oviedo would remain in rebel hands and Francoist troops managed to establish a corridor to the city in October 1936. As in 1934, militia forces concentrated their efforts on the symbolic struggle to capture the provincial capital. The province remained Republican until October 1937, when it was the last area of the north to fall to Francoist troops.[[1406]](#footnote-1406)

An understanding of the dynamics of radicalism and radicalisation is essential to understanding the Second Republic, not only in Asturias but also more widely. This thesis has shown that radicalism is a historically contingent force and a dynamic and reactive process, resulting from a combination of factors and strategies conscious and unconscious. Stilted explanations rooted in economic determinism are insufficient for understanding this phenomenon. Radicalism, the understandings of politics and how politics was practised, developed in the context of the communities of the Asturian coalfields. While the main focus has been on radicalism and the community, other themes, such as youth, gender, the importance of rumour and boycotts, and the ‘social contract’ between companies and the local community have also been woven into this study.

Radicalism and the revolutionary insurrection of October 1934 cannot be understood without the particular political practice of the coalfields, which depended on the configuration of the social environment, including a sense of struggle moulded by experiences of work, strong tradition of left-wing identities, and the important network of local institutions, trade unions and political parties. However, concentrating solely on institutions—even the SOMA—is not enough to understand the dynamics of mobilisation and protest when studying the coal valleys of Asturias. A broader understanding of politics is needed, not just to take it beyond the union, but in terms of how politics was defined, and was embedded in the wider environment and local communities. Tenant activism cannot be understood without the unions, yet at the same time it was beyond the confines of union politics. Definitions of politics need to take into account the dynamics of power, rather than reducing politics to institutions and the minutes of executive committees. This means integrating anticlerical violence into discussions of politics, rather than separating it. The analysis of episodes of interpersonal violence enables the exploration of the dynamics of power at micro level beyond emphasis on over-simplifying political epithets.

The coalfield pueblos were far from monolithic communities and the divisions and differences within them contributed to the dynamic process of radicalisation. Thus, while the left—in its different facets—was hegemonic, it did not monopolise culture and politics. The conflict over religion was crucial, particularly in the context of the secularising Republican project. The division over religion and politics was often understood in gendered (and age-marked) terms, with the ‘*beatas*’ singled out as the opposition and this helped to drive—in reaction—the radicalisation of the (usually masculine) left. Indeed, the number of votes that the right received fed into the anxieties within the left about the wider community. Fascism was read into these divisions and the very nature of the fascist threat, as it was perceived, heightened local fears. It is not enough to merely to dismiss the role of fascism by pointing out that there were not many fascists; the radicalism of the left was driven by fear of the perceived fascist threat and the dark future it augured.

Such themes emphasise the political nature of radicalisation. This thesis has questioned the habitual use of strikes as a straightforward index of radicalism. Traditional theories that unemployment or the blocking of social legislation caused radicalisation need to be revised. Rather, it is clear that strikes were a more complex phenomenon and that the grassroots had a much more conflictive relationship with the SOMA than has usually been emphasised. Indeed, the socialist-organised mining strike of late 1932 actually legitimised more radical stances, which was far from being the SOMA leadership’s objective. Meanwhile, the coal industry continued to face a mounting crisis and the SOMA continued to struggle to defend its members. The declining economic situation was important, but unemployment on its own did not automatically lead to rebellion. The SOMA membership had been broadly in favour of the retirement plans negotiated in February 1933, but when the reality emerged of how it would affect them personal, strikes erupted in protest. As a result, young workers became alienated from the union. This combined with short-time working and the non- or late payment of wages and subsidies over the following months, led to growing disaffection.

Yet at the same time there was no real motive for leaving the SOMA. At grassroots, some members began to search for alternative ways of defending themselves through unity initiatives and collaborating with other groups. Overcoming syndical divisions was envisaged as a key way in which they could move forward, given that the SOMA did not seem to be offering hope or an option of a better future. Moreover, for the left, unity was emotionally-charged and served to provide a framework for protest. The classic way of writing the history of the Workers’ Alliance needs to be revised. The process was much more complex—and less linear—than accounts that begin with Joaquín Maurín have suggested. A focus on the grassroots reveals the substantial amount of collaboration with communists and the dynamism of local initiatives. The Workers’ Alliance in Asturias was an agreement between leaderships which did not exactly reflect what was happening in the pueblos. What was important about the Alliance, and unity more generally, was that it opened up a new framework for action.

Such factors shaped radicalism, but it was protest in defence of community in 1934 that served to hasten and intensify it. There was already a strong sense of self-policing of the local community, but in spring 1934 the adoption of aggressive policing strategies led to an increase in protest rather than reducing it. This was hugely important; it built on and *accelerated* the adoption of radical stances, tying together left-wing politics and community defence more intensely. The state was now experienced as threatening and antagonistic, and there was a worrying sense of alienation from *their* Republic, that coincided with a sense of crisis in the coalfields, evident in the episodes of violence and coercion. Militant, war-inflected language increased, as was reflected in the rhetoric of *Avance*, which shaped discontent, but did not cause it.

Without this combination of factors, the revolutionary insurrection cannot be understood. Evidently, in causational terms, the training of militias, the transportation of arms and the entry of the CEDA into government were essential. The revolutionary insurrection was sparked by a political event, but our understanding of October 1934 in Asturias cannot be reduced to the CEDA’s accession to government or Largo Caballero’s plans, and the insurrection itself went beyond what was expected in Madrid.

As a revolution, the Asturian October was a failure, doomed to disaster without wider support. The events of July 1936 would show that support from the security and armed forces were needed to disarticulate the functioning of state structures. Nevertheless, the revolutionary insurrection in Asturias was a clear attempt at remaking society. There was a sense of reaching out and constructing the future, even if it quickly receded away. Building unity and the fascist threat were also about the relationship of the future to the present; now the radical step was taken of trying to move into that particular future. Consequently, economics are not enough for understanding radicalism and radicalisation. What is needed is an approach which takes emotional reactions into consideration and emphasises the narrative of hope and expectation that allowed the revolutionaries to reimagine the future. Through narrating the struggle they imagined themselves as part of something wider. The invocation of the Russian Revolution was testament to the perceived epic nature of the events in which they were caught up—and which were of their own making—and the possibilities that the new context offered.

Remaking society built on previous ideas and feelings of community. The insurrection did not mean the killing or incarceration of all rightists and nor did it degenerate into riotous and chaotic violence—violence was targeted, though also contested. Thus the insurrection was about recovering a sense of agency and control at local level, though in a much more radical manner than in previous years. The revolutionary insurrection was therefore a complex event, which took the shape of, or at least invoked, social revolution, but was also about power and control over local communities.

The ensuing repression would profoundly affect the structures of local communities: cultural and trade union centres were closed, all contracts were cancelled and thousands imprisoned and suffered beatings and torture. The left was excluded and left-wing political expression was criminalised. It was an opportunity for other groups from the political right, but was squandered by a lack of interest and ambivalence. Certainly, the right needed the threat of revolution and the left, but the only new ‘order’ it could offer was one of exclusion and the presence of the military; there was no real vision of an alternate Republic.

Moreover, communities were divided by suspicions and *denuncias*. The power dynamics had changed and informers came from within local communities themselves, though they were vulnerable to violent retribution from others. Moreover, the pressures of the situation meant that not all individuals lived up to the expectations placed on them by their union or political party retrospectively. Such pressures served to propel radicalisation further in 1936 with the return and reorganisation of the left. The Republic of 1936 was very different to that of 1931. There was a harder edge to politics in 1936, but also a sense of crisis in local communities: boycotts and purges illustrated and contributed to the process of radicalisation, revealing divisions in local communities. Nevertheless, the left was more muscular in 1936, challenging the state in its enforcement of order—their own order—and an idea of a Republic—their own, radical Republic. But they aligned themselves with the regime and were not consciously challenging it in the way they had in October 1934.

Consequently, static notions of politics, democracy and, above all, the Republic are unhelpful for understanding the period between 1931 and 1936, and the dynamic processes at play during the Republic. The Republic of 1936 was not that of 1931, and inevitably so. The left in the coalfields in 1936 was more militant and more radical, having gone through different phases of radicalisation. A latent combativeness at the beginning of Republic, translated into more radical stance from late 1932, accelerating through 1933 and 1934. But even then, it was activated by different circumstances. While it was *there*, it was also very much a reactive force, and a further wave in 1936 was propelled by the post-revolution and purges within the left.

Without understanding radicalism and the political dynamics of the coalfields the revolutionary insurrection of October 1934 cannot be understood. It is not enough to understand national cleavages; these need to be understood in relation to local divisions. Radicalism was a reactive and dynamic process dependant on the factors and context outlined above, and it is through this that we can understand the developments between the springtime of the people in April 1931 to the *cojones y dinamita* of July 1936.

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19. Adrian Shubert, ‘Entre Arboleya y Comillas. El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias’, in Gabriel Jackson *et al.*, *Octubre 1934. Cincuenta años para la reflexión*, (Madrid, 1985), pp. 243-52; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 113-115. See also Domingo Benavides, *El fracaso social del catolicismo español. Arboleya Martínez 1870-1951*, (Barcelona, 1973). There are some comments by Ruiz, *El movimiento obrero en Asturias*, pp. 106-110, pp. 134-6. See also Juan José Castillo, *El sindicalismo amarillo en España: aportación al estudio del catolicismo social español (1912-1923)*, (Madrid, 1977). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 113-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Benavides, *El fracaso social del catolicismo español* and ‘Arboleya y su interpretación de la Revolución de Octubre’, in Jackson *et al.*, *Octubre 1934*, pp. 253-267; Shubert, ‘Entre Arboleya y Comillas’, pp. 243-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Sisinio Nevares, *El patrono ejemplar. Una obra maestra de Acción Social*, (Madrid, 1936), pp. 42-4; Jorge Muñiz Sánchez, *Del pozo a casa: genealogías del paternalismo minero contemporáneo en Asturias*, (Gijón, 2007), pp. 209-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Francisco Erice, *La burguesía industrial asturiana (1885-1920)*, (Madrid, 1980) and *Propietarios, comerciantes e industriales: burguesía y desarrollo capitalista en la Asturias del siglo XIX (1830-1885)*, (Oviedo, 1995). Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 9-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Manuel Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, (Gijón, 1981); José María García de Tuñón Aza, *Apuntes para una historia de la Falange asturiana*, (Oviedo, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. A Spanish edition was published in 1984. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 36-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. E.g. Moradiellos, *El sindicato de los obreros mineros de Asturias*, p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. José Sierra Álvarez, *El obrero soñado: ensayo sobre el paternalismo industrial: Asturias, 1860-1917*, (Madrid, 1990), p. 191; José Luis García García, ‘Trabajo y espacio social en una comunidad minera asturiana’, *Política y sociedad*, 25 (1997), pp. 87-100. See also Jorge Uría, ‘Traditional Popular Culture and Industrial Work Discipline’, in José A. Piqueras and Vicent Sanz Rozalén (eds), *A Social History of Spanish Labour. New Perspectives on Class, Politics and Gender*, (New York/Oxford, 2007), pp. 153-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Sánchez Collantes, ‘Democracia, republicanismo y librepensamiento en Mieres’, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 42; Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de Langreo*, p. 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For housing, see José Sierra Álvarez, ‘Política de vivienda y políticas industriales paternalistas’, *Ería*, 8 (1985), pp. 61-71; Covadonga Álvarez Quintana, ‘Casa y carbón. La vivienda obrera en la cuenca del Caudal, 1880- 1936’, *Liño: Revista anual de historia del arte*, 6, 1986, pp. 83-100; Jorge Muñiz Sánchez, ‘La vivienda de empresa en Asturias’, *Boletín de la Fundación Emilio Barbón*, IV (2011), pp. 71-88. For education, María Violeta Álvarez Fernández, *La escuela del paternalismo industrial asturiano (1880-1937)*, (Gijón, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. *Región*, 24 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Sierra Álvarez, *El obrero soñado*. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Jorge Muñiz Sánchez, ‘Paternalismo y construcción social del espacio en el poblado de Arnao (Asturias), 1855-1937’, *Scripta Nova -Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, 11.249 (2007), <http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-249.htm> [Accessed 25 May 2015]. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Sierra Álvarez, *El obrero soñado*, pp. 253-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Muñiz Sánchez, *Del pozo a casa*, p. 23. Shubert previously argued that paternalism was a way of attracting, moulding and disciplining the workforce. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 82-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Jorge Uría, *Una historia social del ocio. Asturias, 1898-1914*, (Madrid, 1996) and ‘Traditional Popular Culture and Industrial Work Discipline’, pp. 166-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Jorge Uría, ‘Asturias 1898-1914. El final de un campesinado amable’, *Hispania,* LXII/3.212 (2002), pp. 1059-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See, in addition to articles specifically on Asturias, Jean-Louis Guereña, *Sociabilidad, cultura y educación en Asturias bajo la Restauración (1875-1900)*, (Oviedo, 2005); *La prostitución en la España contemporánea*, (Madrid, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Jorge Uría, ‘La taberna en Asturias a principios del siglo XX: Notas para su estudio’, *Historia contemporánea*, 5 (1991), pp. 53-72 and ‘La taberna: un espacio multifuncional de sociabilidad popular en la Restauración española’, *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 63.214 (2003), pp. 571-604. A recent article has focused explicitly on cider-drinking and the communal practice of *espichas*. Luis Benito García Álvarez, ‘Comensalidad, sociabilidad y rituales de consumo. La *espicha* en Asturias en el primer tercio del siglo XX’, *Historia Social*, 71 (2011), pp. 21-40. See brief comments in Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Uría, ‘La taberna en Asturias a principios del siglo XX’, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Uría, ‘La taberna: un espacio multifuncional de sociabilidad popular’, p. 586. Beyond Asturias, Sierra Álvarez has analysed the stereotype of violent and drunk mine workers in the Andalusian mining locality of Linares. He explains alcohol consumption and theft in relation to the proliferation of bars, the need for calories and extreme poverty, adding that bars were also places where miners not only drank, but also socialised and tried to find work through networking. José Sierra Álvarez, ‘“Rough Characters”: Miners, Alcohol and Violence in Linares at the End of the Nineteenth Century’, in Piqueras and Sanz Rozalén (eds), *A Social History of Spanish Labour*, p. 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Luis Arias González and Manuel Jesús García, *Los palacios obreros. Casas del Pueblo socialistas en Asturias (1902-1937)*, (Oviedo, 2010). Ángel Mato Díaz, *La Atenas del Norte. Ateneos, sociedades culturales y bibliotecas populares en Asturias (1876-1937)*, (Oviedo, 2008) does not go beyond a compendium. See also Ángel Mato Díaz, *El Ateneo Obrero de Gijón (1881-1937)*, (Gijón, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Mato Díaz, *La Atenas del Norte*, p. 11, pp. 27-8, p. 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Muñiz Sánchez, ‘Encontrando el Norte’, pp. 812-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Arias González and Jesús García, *Los palacios obreros*, p. 45. See also Andrés Saborit, *Asturias y sus hombres*, (Toulouse, 1964), pp. 23-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Arias González and García, *Los palacios obreros*, p. 187, pp. 190-3, pp. 83-111. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. David Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934. Revolución en la República española*, (Madrid, 2008), pp. 206-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War*. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Marta Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3. Entre la democracia y la revolución, 1931-1936*, (Madrid, 2008), p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Antonio Ramón Felgueroso Durán and Aladino Fernández García, ‘La gestión de los socialistas en el Ayuntamiento de Langreo entre 1909 y 1936’, in Aladino Fernández García and José Girón (eds), *Historia del socialismo en Langreo* *1897-1997*, (Gijón, 1997), pp. 153-4; Moradiellos, *El sindicato de los obreros mineros de Asturias*, p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. See Shlomo Ben-Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain*, (Oxford, 1978), pp. 104-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 129-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War. Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic*, (London/New York, 1978), pp. 11-12. See also Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, pp. 104-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ben-Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain*, pp. 33-5, p. 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Fernández Pérez, *Juventudes y socialismo en Asturias*, p. 346, p. 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Bernardo Fernández Pérez *et al*., *Historia general de Asturias. VI. Asturias: 1918-1933*, (Gijón, 1978), p. 170; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 136-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Barrio Alonso, *Anarquismo y anarcosindicalismo en Asturias*, p. 310, p. 320. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, pp. 108-9; Rafael Cruz, *Una revolución elegante. España 1931*, (Madrid, 2014),pp. 58-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ruiz, *El movimiento obrero en Asturias*, p. 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, pp. 63-6. Ben-Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain*, pp. 213-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. *Región*, 7, 8 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Fernández Pérez *et al*., *Historia general de Asturias. VI*, p. 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, p. 66, pp. 73-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. *El Noroeste*, 3, 11 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. See *La Aurora Social*, 10 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. For example, *El Noroeste*, 5, 8, 11 April 1931; *La Aurora Social*, 3 April 1931. For Spain more widely, Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, pp. 68-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *La Aurora Social*, 10 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. *La Voz de Asturias*, 14 April 1931; *El Noroeste*, 14 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. See *La Voz de Asturias*, 14 April, 2 June 1931. For the rerunning of elections around Spain, which were an ‘almost complete Republican victory’, see Ben-Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain*, pp. 270-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Francisco Palacios, *Caciquismo, lucha localista y revolución en el Langreo contemporáneo*, (Gijón, 1992), p. 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, pp. 88-9; Santos Juliá, *Madrid, 1931-1934. De la fiesta popular a la lucha de clases*, (Madrid, 1984), p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Antonio L. Oliveros, *Asturias en el resurgimiento español (apuntes históricos y biográficos)*, (Gijón, 1989) [1935], p. 293. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Fernández Pérez *et al*., *Historia general de Asturias. VI*, pp. 187-8; *El Noroeste*, 15 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Felgueroso Durán and Fernández García, ‘La gestión de los socialistas en el Ayuntamiento de Langreo’, p. 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. *El Noroeste*, 15 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. *El Noroeste*, 16 April 1931. For the flag, Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, pp. 129-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. *Región*, 19 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. *El Noroeste,* 22 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Santos Juliá, ‘Los socialistas y el escenario de la futura revolución’, in Jackson *et al*., *Octubre 1934*, pp. 107-11. See also Santos Juliá, ‘De revolución popular a revolución obrera’, *Historia social*, 1 (1988), pp. 29-43. For further discussion and comparison with other regime changes, Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, pp. 95-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 53. See also Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, pp. 203-53; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. *El Noroeste,* 18 April 1931. Adding their support, the *ayuntamientos* of Langreo and Oviedo demanded the readmission of those sacked in 1917. Actas del ayuntamiento de Langreo: 29-01-1931 al 10-09-1931 [volume I] (henceforth AL, Actas [volume I]), f. 43; Actas de la comisión permanente del ayuntamiento de Oviedo: 20-02-1931 al 23-10-1931 [volume I] (henceforth AO, Actas [volumen I]), f. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. *El Noroeste,* 23 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 136; Barrio Alonso, *Anarquismo y anarcosindicalismo en Asturias*, p. 326, p. 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Down from 11,000 in 1918. Álvarez, *El Sindicato Único de Mineros de Asturias*, p. 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. New JS sections in Valdecuna (Mieres), Fuente de la Plata (Oviedo), Rozadas de Bimenes and La Canga. *La Aurora Social*, 5 June, 10 July, 4, 25 September 1931; new Juventud Comunista sections in La Rebollada (Mieres), Los Pontones (Mieres) and Figaredo. *El Noroeste*, 4 July, 12, 16 May 1931. For seamstresses, *La Aurora Social*, 2 October 1931; *Avance*, 4 December 1931. See also María Antonia Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras! Mujeres socialistas en Asturias (1900-1937)*, (Oviedo, 2007), pp. 108-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 153-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Diccionario Biográfico del Socialismo Español*, <http://www.fpabloiglesias.es/archivo-y-biblioteca/diccionario-biografico> [last accessed 27 May 2015]. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Conchita Fontalbat and Ceferino Álvarez, *Ceferino Álvarez Rey. Historia de un minero de Asturias (1907-2009)*, (Oviedo, 2010), pp. 54-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. ‘Personas asesinadas durante el cerco de Oviedo’, <http://www.fosacomun.com/recuerdos/victimas%20del%20cerco.doc> [last accessed 22 May 2015]. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Mateos, *¡Salud compañeras!*, pp. 99-100, pp. 114-15, pp. 129-30, p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. David Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva y revolución obrera: el octubre español de 1934*, (Barcelona, 1988), pp. 84-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona 1898–1937*, (London/New York, 2005), p. 76; Julián Casanova, *De la calle al frente. El anarcosindicalismo en España*, (Barcelona, 2010) [1997], pp. 14-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Rafael Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España en la Segunda República*, (Madrid, 1987), pp. 108-9, pp. 128-32; Hugo García, ‘De los soviets a las Cortes. Los comunistas ante la República’, in Fernando del Rey (ed.), *Palabras como puños. La intransigencia política en la Segunda República española*, (Madrid, 2011), pp. 124-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1998*, (Washington, 2000), p. 276; Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy. The Catholic Church in Spain 1875-1975*, (Oxford, 1987), pp. 179-80 and her ‘The Church’s crusade against the Republic’, in Paul Preston (ed.), *Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939*, (London, 1984), p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. *Boletín oficial eclesiástico* *del obispado de Oviedo*, 2 May 1931; Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, pp. 279-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. *El Noroeste*, 23 May 1931. A priest in Navelgas (Tineo) was fined 125 pesetas for his criticism of the regime, ibid*.*, 31 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 27-8; Lannon, ‘The Church’s crusade against the Republic’, pp. 38-9; José Ramón Montero, *La CEDA: El catolicismo social y político en la II República*, vol. I, (Madrid, 1977), pp. 93-143. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. *El Noroeste*, 20 June 1931; *Región*, 20 June 1931. See also Oliveros, *Asturias en el resurgimiento español*, pp. 311-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. For details about Vigil Montoto’s life, see Manuel Vigil Montoto, *Recuerdos de un octogenario*, (Madrid/Oviedo, 1992) and Saborit, *Asturias y sus hombres*, pp. 27-43. For Fernández, ibid*.*, pp. 129-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Carlos Martínez, *Al final del sendero*, (Gijón, 1990), pp. 192-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Approximately half of the Federal-Agrarian vote came from Gijón. See figures in *El Noroeste*, 30 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. *Región*, 27 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. *Región*, 5 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. See Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, (London, 1961); Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *La Segunda República*, 2 vols, (Madrid, 1976); Edward Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War*, (New Haven, 1970); Stanley Payne, *Falange. A history of Spanish fascism*, (Stanford, 1961); Javier Tusell, *Las elecciones del Frente Popular*,(Madrid, 1971) and *Historia de la Democracia Cristiana en España. Tomo I: antecedentes y CEDA*, (Madrid, 1974). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. For example, Santos Juliá, *La izquierda del PSOE (1935-1936)*, (Madrid, 1977); Marta Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista de la Segunda República’, *Estudios de Historia Social*, 16-17 (1981), pp. 227-459 and *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3*; Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*; Helen Graham, *Socialism and War. The Spanish Socialist Party in Power and Crisis, 1936–1939*, (Cambridge, 1991); Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*; Casanova, *De la calle al frente*; Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona*. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Montero, *La CEDA*, 2 vols; Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain 1931-1939*, (Cambridge, 1975); Sheelagh M. Ellwood, *Spanish fascism in the Franco era: Falange Española de las JONS, 1936-76*, (Basingstoke, 1987); Ismael Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, (Valencia, 2004); Javier Jiménez Campo, *El fascismo en la crisis de la Segunda República española*, (Madrid, 1979); Francisco Cobo Romero, *Labradores, campesinos y jornaleros: protesta social y diferenciación interna del campesinado jiennense en los orígenes de la Guerra Civil (1931-1936)*, (Córdoba, 1991) and *Revolución campesina y contrarrevolución franquista en Andalucía: conflictividad social, violencia política y represión franquista en el mundo rural andaluz, 1931-1950*, (Granada, 2004); Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*; Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy*; Mary Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic. Religion and Politics in Salamanca, 1930-1936*, (Oxford, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Santos Juliá, *Vida y tiempo de Manuel Azaña (1880-1940),* (Madrid, 2008); Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain. Centrist Politics under the Spanish Second Republic*, (Brighton/Portland, 2000); Octavio Ruiz-Manjón Cabeza, *El partido republicano radical, 1908-1936*, (Madrid, 1976). See the special edition of *Ayer*,14 (1994) on political violence edited by Julio Aróstegui. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Sandra Souto Kustrín, *Paso a la juventud. Movilización democrática, estalinismo y revolución en la República Española*, (Valencia, 2013) and ‘Taking the Street: Workers’ Youth Organizations and Political Conflict in the Spanish Second Republic’, *European History Quarterly*, 34.2 (2004), pp. 131-156; Sid Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism*, (Eastbourne/Portland, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. For example, the two essay collections edited by Julio de la Cueva Merino and Feliciano Montero García, *Laicismo y catolicismo. El conflicto político-religioso en la Segunda República*, (Alcalá de Henares, 2009) and *Izquierda obrera y religión en España (1900-1939)*, (Alcalá de Henares, 2012). See also Joseba Louzao Villar, ‘Nación y catolicismo en la España contemporánea. Revisitando una interrelación histórica’, *Ayer*, 90 (2013), pp. 65-89 and ‘La Virgen y la salvación de España: un ensayo de historia cultural durante la Segunda República’, *Ayer*, 82 (2011), pp. 187-210; Maria Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*. *Popular Anticlerical Violence and Iconoclasm in Spain, 1931-1936*, (Eastbourne/Portland, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
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114. José Ramón Rodríguez Lago, ‘La Iglesia Católica y la II República española. Resistencias, progresos y retos pendientes’, *Hispania Nova. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 11 (2013), pp. 351-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. For example, Inmaculada Blasco Herranz, *Paradojas de la ortodoxia: política de masas y militancia católica femenina en España, (1919-1939)*, (Zaragoza, 2003); Mónica Moreno Seco, ‘República, género y religión. Las mujeres ante la política laicista republicana’, in María de la Concepción Marcos del Olmo and Rafael Serrano García (coords), Mujer y política en la España contemporánea (1868-1936), (Valladolid, 2012), pp. 183-202. Mary Vincent, ‘The Politicization of Catholic Women in Salamanca, 1931-1936’, in Frances Lannon and Paul Preston (eds), *Elites and Power in Twentieth Century Spain. Essays in Honour of Sir Raymond Carr*, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 107-26. Masculinity has received less attention, but see work by Aresti and Vincent, including Nerea Aresti, *Masculinidades en tela de juicio. Hombre y género en el primer tercio del siglo XX*, (Madrid, 2010) and Mary Vincent, ‘Gender and morals in Spanish Catholic youth culture: a case study of the Marian Congregations 1930-1936’, *Gender History*, 13.2 (2001), pp. 273-97. For masculinity and anticlerical violence, see Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*, and Mary Vincent, ‘“The keys of the kingdom”: religious violence in the Spanish civil war, July-August 1936’, in Ealham and Richards (eds), *The Splintering of Spain*,pp. 68-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Rafael Cruz, *En* *el nombre del pueblo. República, rebelión y guerra en la Espa‏ña de 1936*, (Madrid, 2006), and *Una revolución elegante*. For cultural approaches, see also the chapters in Ealham and Richards (eds), *The Splintering of Spain*. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. For a similar attempt to weave together regional studies, see López Villaverde’s recent attempt, though the geographical lacunas in current research are evident. Ángel Luis López Villaverde, *El gorro frigio y la mitra frente a frente. Construcción y diversidad territorial del conflicto político-religioso en la España republicana*, (n.p., 2008). Fernando del Rey, *Paisanos en lucha. Exclusión política y violencia en la Segunda República española*, (Madrid, 2008); José Manuel Macarro Vera, *Socialismo, República y revolución en Andalucía (1931-1936)*, (Seville, 2000); Carlos Gil Andrés, *Echarse a la calle. Amotinados, huelguistas y revolucionario (La Rioja, 1890-1936)*, (Zaragoza, 2000).  [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. See recent work by Villa García, including, ‘The Failure of Electoral Modernization: The Elections of May 1936 in Granada’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 44.3 (2009), pp. 401-29. In a recent study, Julio Prada Rodríguez set out to analyse the relationship between the centre and the *ayuntamientos*. In truth, he concentrated mainly on the elections and how elites adapted to the Republican framework. Power is merely presented in terms of the post, the political parties and political influence. Julio Prada Rodríguez, ‘Clientelismo y poder local en la Segunda República’, *Hispania Nova. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 11 (2013), pp. 215-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. For work by this wave of historians, see the edited collections Fernando del Rey (ed.), *Palabras como puños* and Manuel Álvarez Tardío and Fernando del Rey (eds), *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited. From Democratic Hopes to the Civil War (1931–1936)*, (Eastbourne, 2011). For the definition of politics, Álvarez Tardío and Rey, ‘Introduction’, in ibid.,p. 5. There have been bitter debates between historians over this recent wave of studies. For criticism, see Chris Ealham, ‘The Emperor’s New Clothes: “Objectivity” and Revisionism in Spanish History’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48.1 (2013), pp. 191-202 and Ricardo Robledo, ‘De leyenda rosa e historia científica: notas sobre el último revisionismo de la Segunda República. La Segunda República demonizada, rehabilitada y de nuevo denostada’, *Cahiers de civilisation espagnole contemporaine*, (2015), <http://ccec.revues.org/5444> [last accessed 9 March 2015]. For Rey’s self-defence, Fernando del Rey, ‘Revisionismos y anatemas. A vueltas con la II República’, *Historia social*, 68 (2010), pp. 155-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Fernando del Rey, ‘Policies of Exclusion during the Second Republic’, in Álvarez Tardío and Rey (eds), *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, p. 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. See Rey, *Paisanos en lucha*. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Álvarez Tardío and Rey, ‘Introduction’, in Álvarez Tardío and Rey (eds), *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, p. 8. For a subtler analysis of democracy in 1930s Europe, Tom Buchanan, ‘Anti-fascism and Democracy in the 1930s’, *European History Quarterly*, 32.1 (2002), pp. 39-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Juliá, *La izquierda del PSOE*, p. 1; Stanley Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936. The origins of the Civil War*, (New Haven/London, 2006), p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Souto Kustrín, ‘Taking the Street’, p. 132, p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. José Manuel Macarro Vera, ‘Causas de la radicalización socialista en la II República’, *Revista de historia contemporánea*, 1 (1982), p. 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. See Julio Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero. El tesón y la quimera*, (Barcelona, 2013), p. 297; Andrés de Blas Guerrero, *El socialismo radical en la II República*, (Madrid, 1978), p. 20. See also Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 53-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Shubert, ‘Revolution in Self-Defence’, p. 267. For Largo Caballero responding to the grassroots see, for example, Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 44-7; Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 17, p. 21; Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. For Preston, it was the summer of 1933 when Largo Caballero’s ‘radical’ attitude was first publicly displayed. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 85. Payne also cites the summer. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, p. 54. For Aróstegui, it was ‘decisive’ from September 1933. Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero*, p. 297. Blas sees the election campaign from autumn 1933 as key as does Bizcarrdondo. Blas Guerrero, *El socialismo radical*, p. 41; Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, p. 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Heywood criticises the ‘personalistic’ approach to radicalisation. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Juliá, ‘Los socialistas y el escenario de la futura revolución’, pp. 103-130. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Macarro Vera, ‘Causas de la radicalización socialista’, p. 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. For example, Souto Kustrín, ‘Taking the Street’, p. 134; Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 18-19; Blas Guerrero, *El socialismo radical*, pp. 70-1; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Graham, *Socialism and War*, p. 15, pp. 34-41. Indeed, the proclamation of the Republic and the ensuing celebrations were only the ‘illusion of socialist unity’. Santos Juliá, ‘República, revolución y luchas internas’, in Santos Juliá (coord.), *El socialismo en España. Desde la fundación del PSOE hasta 1975*, (Madrid, 1986), p. 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. He maintains that this moderation extends at least to Jaén, Vizcaya and Asturias in 1933. Macarro Vera, ‘Causas de la radicalización socialista’, pp. 183-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 152-3; Barrio Alonso, *Anarquismo y anarcosindicalismo en Asturias*, p. 378. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Fernando del Rey, ‘La República de los socialistas’, in Rey (ed.), *Palabras como puños*, pp. 197-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Blas Guerrero, *El socialismo radical*, pp. 20-1; Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. For example, Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, passim. Taibo also cites disenchantment with the Republic. Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Asturias, octubre 1934*, (Barcelona, 2013), p. 12. See also Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero*, p. 297, p. 372 and Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 53-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, p. 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 52-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, p. 289; Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Souto Kustrín, ‘Taking the Street’, pp. 134-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Jorge Uría, ‘Asturias 1920-1937, el espacio cultural comunista y la cultura de la izquierda: historia de un diálogo entre dos décadas’, in Francisco Erice (coord.), *Los comunistas en Asturias (1920-1982)*, (Gijón, 1996), pp. 271-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. See Souto Kustrín, ‘Taking the Street’. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Eric Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance. The Power of Story*, (London/New York, 2010), p. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *La* *revolución de octubre de 1934*, (Madrid, 1972); Bernardo Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana. Revolución de octubre de 1934*, (Bilbao, 1974); Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Historia general de Asturias. VIII. Octubre de 1934. Segunda parte: ‘La caida’*, and *Historia general de Asturias. VII. Octubre de 1934. Primera parte: ‘El ascenso’*, (Gijón, 1978), re-edited as Taibo, *Asturias*; Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*; Jackson *et al.*, *Octubre 1934*; *Estudios de Historia Social*, 31 (1984). In addition, there was the publication of a collection of martyrologies of the members of the clergy and religious who died in 1934 in Ángel Garralda García, *La persecución religiosa del clero en Asturias 1934, 1936 y 1937. Martirios y odiseas*, (Avilés, 2009) [1977]. For a recent military history, which is undermined by a number of factual errors, see José E. Álvarez, ‘The Spanish Foreign Legion during the Asturian Rising of October 1934’, *War in History*, 18.2 (2011), pp. 200-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. The tendency towards reconstruction from empirical detail can be interpreted a reaction to the studies from the aftermath of the Revolution, when each political group interpreted the events of October according to its own ideas in the political battle for the ‘truth’. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Juan Avilés, ‘Los socialistas y la insurrección de octubre de 1934’, *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*, 20 (2008), p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Javier Rodríguez Muñoz, *La Revolución de Octubre de 1934 en Asturias: orígenes, desarrollo y consecuencias*, (Oviedo, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. See Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, especially pp. 70-82;Francisco Erice, ‘El octubre asturiano. Entre el mito y la interpretación histórica’, in Alejandro Andreassi and José Luis Martín Ramos (coords), *De un Octubre a otro. Revolución y fascismo en el periodo de entreguerras, 1919-1934*, (Madrid, 2010); Sandra Souto Kustrín, ‘Octubre de 1934: historia, mito y memoria’, *Hispania Nova. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 11 (2013), pp. 473-506; Brian D. Bunk, *Ghosts of passion. Martyrdom, gender, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*, (Durham (NC)/London, 2007); Rubén Vega discusses the relationship between 1934 and 1962 in ‘De la dinamita a la huelga del silencio. Los mineros asturianos entre la revolución proletaria y la resistencia antifranquista (1934-1962),’ in Encarnación Nicolás and Carmen González (eds), *Ayeres en discusión. Temas clave de Historia Contemporánea hoy*, (Murcia, 2008). See also Francisco Erice, ‘Entre el mito y la memoria histórica: las huelgas del 1962 y la tradición épica de la *Asturias Roja*’, in Rubén Vega García (coord.), *Hay una luz en Asturias…Las huelgas de 1962*, (Gijón, 2012), pp. 413-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. See Paul Preston, ‘Spain’s October Revolution and the Rightist Grasp for Power’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 10.4 (1975), pp. 555-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Shubert, ‘Revolution in Self-Defence’, pp. 265-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Avilés, ‘Los socialistas y la insurrección de octubre de 1934’, pp. 131-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Shubert, ‘Revolution in Self-Defence’, p. 269. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Erice, ‘Entre el mito y la memoria histórica’, p. 416. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Dick Geary, ‘The Myth of the Radical Miner’, in Stefan Berger, Andy Croll and Norman LaPorte (eds), *Towards a Comparative History of Coalfield Societies* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 43-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Andrew Taylor, ‘So Many Cases but So Little Comparison: Problems of Comparing Mineworkers’ in Berger, Croll and LaPorte (eds), *Towards a Comparative History of Coalfield Societies*, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, ‘The Interindustry Propensity to Strike—An International Comparison’, in Arthur Kornhauser, Robert Kubin and Arthur Ross (eds), *Industrial Conflict* (New York/Toronto/London, 1954), pp. 191-3, p. 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Martin Bulmer, ‘Sociological Models of the Mining Community’, *Sociological Review*, 23 (1975), p. 71; P. K. Edwards, ‘A critique of the Kerr-Siegel Hypothesis of Strikes and the Isolated Mass: A study of the falsification of sociological knowledge’, *Sociological Review*, 25.3 (1977), p. 568. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Such as Rimlinger’s ‘separatist group’ whereby miners, with close mutual ties and shaped by the nature of mine work, ‘may or may not be socially integrated and may or may not be strike prone’, and Bulmer’s ‘occupational community’, where there is a technological and economic origin of mining communities, but the articulation of relationships and identity defined by a local culture ‘may in time even become relatively autonomous in relation to the dominant local economic activity’. Gaston V. Rimlinger, ‘International Differences in the Strike Propensity of Coal Miners: Experience in Four Countries’, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 12.3 (1959), pp. 395-6, p. 405; Bulmer, ‘Sociological Models of the Mining Community’, p. 74, p. 82, p. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. E.g. Daunton, who emphasises the importance of geology and the resulting extraction processes, technological advances, work practices and division of labour. Protest was determined relationships shaped by work practices. Martin Daunton, ‘Down the Pit: Work in the Great Northern and South Wales Coalfields, 1870–1914’, *Economic History Review*, 34.4 (1981), p. 579 [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. *Estadística Minera y Metalúrgica de España*, 1934, p. 180, pp. 208-9, p. 469, p. 477. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. *Estadística Minera y Metalúrgica de España*, 1934, p. 477; *Estadística Minera y Metalúrgica de España*, 1930, p. 507. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. *El Noroeste*, 15 August 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. *Estadística Minera y Metalúrgica de España*, 1930, p. 512; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 53; Muñiz Sánchez, *Del pozo a casa*, p. 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Nevares, *El patrono ejemplar*, pp. 16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Muñiz Sánchez, *Del pozo a casa*, p. 190, p. 76, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Faustino Suárez Antuña, *Carbón para España. La organización de los espacios hulleros asturianos*, (Oviedo, 2006), p. 31, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 57-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Quintana y Bertrand-Mina Cristina-Olloniego. Resumen de personal, 1929, Archivo de HUNOSA, Hulleras de Veguín y Olloniego, caja 178, expediente 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Ramón García Montes, *Ángeles Rojos sin alas para volar*, (Siero, 2009), pp. 19-20; *El Noroeste*, 12 May 1931, 13 September 1933. Anecdotal evidence supports this. An individual who owned a bar in Turón at which a violent incident occurred in 1935 was also a miner. Archivo Histórico Provincial de Asturias (henceforth AHPA), Audiencia Provincial, caja 78442, expediente 15, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. *Diccionario Biográfico del Socialismo Español*. For Vallina, *La Libertad*, 7 August 1930; *Avance*, 14 April 1932; AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 79435, expediente 280, 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 462-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. An early example is Royden Harrison (ed.), *The Independent Collier*, (Hassocks, 1978). [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Geary, ‘The Myth of the Radical Miner’, p. 51. As Gilbert called for in 1995. David Gilbert, ‘Imagined communities and mining communities’, *Labour History Review*, 60.2 (1995), pp. 52-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. For an example of the shift towards considering previously overlooked groups, see the in the recent Berger, Croll and LaPorte (eds), *Towards a Comparative History of Coalfield Societies*. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 65-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Fiona Measham and Sheila Allen, ‘In Defence of Home and Hearth? Families, Friendships and Feminism in Mining Communities’, *Journal of Gender Studies*, 3.1 (1994), p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Oral history can also help to give a voice to those who are historically invisible. See, for example, Margaret Williamson, ‘Gender, leisure and marriage in a working-class community, 1939-1960’, *Labour History Review*, 74.2 (2009), pp. 185-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. See a female witness of a violent incident whose occupation was defined as ‘her labours’, though she actually ran the local bar. AHPA, Audience Provincial, caja 79435, expediente 251, 1934. For women working the land more than men, José María Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de Laviana*, (Madrid, 1927), p. 63. Police investigations offer anecdotal evidence of lodging houses, e.g. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78436, 1934. For coal-picking, see the report of a child crushed to death as women and children searched for coal, *Región*, 28 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. José María Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de San Martín del Rey Aurelio*, (Madrid, 1923), p. 64, pp. 84-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Ministerio del Trabajo, *Censo de la población de España* [1930]*…Regiones de Asturias y León. Cuadernos III y X*, (Madrid, 1942), pp. 40-1, pp. 44-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life. An analysis of a Yorkshire mining community*, (London, 1969) [1956]. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Gilbert, ‘Imagined communities and mining communities’, pp. 47-8. See also Rosalind Williams, *Notes on the Underground. An Essay on Technology, Society and the Imagination*, (Cambridge [Mass.], 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. García García, ‘Trabajo y espacio social’, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. As noted by Hester Barron, *The 1926 Miners’ Lockout. Meanings of Community in the Durham Coalfield*, (Oxford, 2009), pp. 5-6. Even now, it continues to be ‘elusive’. Elizabeth Frazer, *The Problems of Communitarian Politics. Unity and Conflict*, (Oxford, 1999), p. 5. The traditional starting point is the classic work by Tönnies and developed by Weber. Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society*, (Newton Abbot, 2002) [1887]; Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, (Berkeley, 1978) [1922]. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Dennis Warwick and Gary Littlejohn, *Coal, Capital and Culture. A sociological analysis of mining communities in West Yorkshire* (New York/London, 1992), p. 31, p. 14, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. See Frazer, *The Problems of Communitarian Politics*, pp. 7-8; Gerard Delanty, *Community*, (London/New York, 2010) [2003], p. 4. For an example, see Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson, ‘The politics of the doorstep: female survival strategies and the legacy of the miners’ strike 1984–85’, *Community, Work and Family*, 10.3 (2007), pp. 309-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. Gilbert, ‘Imagined communities and mining communities’, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. David Smith, ‘Tonypandy 1910: Definitions of Community’, *Past and Present*, 87 (1980), pp. 158-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Barron, *The 1926 Miners’ Lockout*, p. 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. There are a number of classic anthropological studies of the Spanish pueblo. E.g. Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The People of the Sierra*, (Chicago/London, 1971) [1954]; Carmelo Lisón-Tolosa, *Belmonte de los Caballeros. Anthropology and History in an Aragonese Community*, (Princeton, 1966). [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. ‘Alteraciones de los municipios en los Censos de Población desde 1842’, <http://www.ine.es/intercensal/> [last accessed 31 March 2015]. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de San Martín del Rey Aurelio*, pp. 50-1, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 66, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. Aladino Fernández García, *Langreo. Industria, población y desarrollo urbano*, (Gijón, 1980), p. 262. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Nevares, *El patrono ejemplar*, p. 211. For biographical details of Nevares, see Manuel Revuelta González, ‘El P. Sisino Nevares. Etapas de su acción social y promoción de los sindicatos agrarios palentinos’, *Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses*, 76 (2005), pp. 355-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de Langreo*, p. 100; Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de San Martín del Rey Aurelio*, p. 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Fernández García, *Langreo. Industria, población y desarrollo urbano*, p. 282. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de Langreo*, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Belarmino Tomás was born in a small village between the coalfields and Gijón. His family moved to La Felguera when he was thirteen. Juan José Menéndez García, *Belarmino Tomás. Soberano de Asturias*, (Gijón, 2000), pp. 23-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. *Avance*, 20 July 1933. For tourism en masse, such as Caborana to Grado, Ribadesella to Caborana, Moreda to San Esteban to Pravia and Sama to Pravia, see *El Noroeste*, 23 June 1932, 24 June 1933, 10, 12 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Carmen Benito del Pozo, *El ayuntamiento republicano de Oviedo, 1931-1936*, (Oviedo, 1989), pp. 54-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 71-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. See brief comments in Uría, ‘Traditional Popular Culture and Industrial Work Discipline’, p. 164. See also Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de San Martín del Rey Aurelio*, pp. 66-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. *Región*, 29 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. *Avance*, 11 July 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Taibo, ‘Las diferencias asturianas’, in Jackson *et al.*, *Octubre 1934*, p. 238. See also, Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, pp. 94-7; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. Jorge Uría, ‘Cultura y comunicación de masas en Asturias (1931-1934). Aproximación a su estudio, *Estudios de Historia Social*, 31 (1984), p. 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. Uría, ‘Cultura y comunicación de masas en Asturias’, p. 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. For example, Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 15-50; Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, passim; Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, pp. 227-459. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, pp. 242-55; Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. For the quotation, Macarro Vera, ‘The Socialists and Revolution’, p. 41. See also Rey, ‘La República de los socialistas’, pp. 158-225; Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 42-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, p. 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. As recognised by Macarro Vera, ‘The Socialists and Revolution’, pp. 44-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 110; Santos Juliá, ‘“Preparados para cuando la ocasión se presente”: los socialistas y la revolución’, in Santos Juliá (ed.), *Violencia política en la España del siglo XX*, (Madrid, 2000), p. 166. See also *La Aurora Social*, 12 June, 25, 18 September, 23 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. *La Aurora Social*, 15 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. *La Aurora Social*, 29 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. See Secundino Palacios’ article in *La Aurora Social*, 14 August 1931. For socialists as sensible, as opposed to the CNT, ibid*.*, 31 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. *La Aurora Social*, 11 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. *La Aurora Social*, 26 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. *La Aurora Social*, 24 July, 14 August 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. As is evident in the editorial of *La Aurora Social*, 4 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. For the reaction of the *patronal*, see Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain*, p. 147; *Región*, 31 May 1931. See also *La Aurora Social*, 5 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 344. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. Telegram from civil governor to Minister of the Interior, 1 June 1931, Archivo Histórico Nacional (henceforth AHN), Gobernación (A), legajo 7A, expediente 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 344-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. *El Noroeste*, 9 June 1931. The Blimea SOMA section published a note to combat rumours about the level of strike support in San Martín del Rey Aurelio and Laviana. *La Aurora Social*, 19 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. Such as at the SUM conference in Mieres, *El Noroeste*, 12 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. *El Noroeste*, 27, 29 August 1931; Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. *El Noroeste*, 3, 5, 11 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. *El Noroeste*,4, 6, 10 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. *El Noroeste*, 12 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. *La Aurora Social*, 5 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War*, p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. ‘The inhabitants of Turón voted for the right’, *La Voz de Asturias*, 21 November 1933. While clearly not all did, a joint AP-PRLD candidacy polled more than the communists in the municipal district of Mieres. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. *El Noroeste*, 11 August, 6 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. *Región*, 26 September 1931. An ‘ex-miner’ criticised the SOMA strike in Hulleras del Veguín. *La Aurora Social*, 2 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. *El Noroeste*, 11 November 1931; *Avance*, 21 November 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78437, expediente 335, 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 79435, expediente 319, 1934. See a description of the practice in Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de San Martín del Rey Aurelio*, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. *La Aurora Social*, 21 August 1931; *Avance*, 2 December 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. *La Aurora Social*, 16 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. The sections which made up the SUM-CNT, which claimed 678 members, were the following: Turón, Ciaño-Santa Ana, Cotorraso, San Andrés, La Nueva, Tras el Canto, Barros, Sama, La Felguera, Lada, Lieres. *El Noroeste*, 2 March 1932. The SUM-CNT grew over the following months and by September sections claimed to have between 40 and 185 members. *El Noroeste*, 28 September 1932; Manuel Villar, *El anarquismo en la insurrección de Asturias. La CNT y la FAI en octubre de 1934*, (Madrid, 1994) [1935], p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. *El Noroeste*, 21 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. *Avance*, 10 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. *El Noroeste*, 15 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. *Avance*, 25 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. *Avance*, 2 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de San Martín del Rey Aurelio*, p. 59. See also Uría, ‘La taberna en Asturias a principios del siglo XX’, pp. 53-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. A poetic letter in *La Aurora Social* described how the author regretted having spent more time reading books than in bars, after finally understanding the key role of *chigres* in local politics. *La Aurora Social*, 17 July 1931. See also Uría, ‘Asturias 1920-1937’, p. 272 and ‘La taberna en Asturias a principios del siglo XX’, pp. 64-7; Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War*, p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. Francisco Erice, ‘El PCE en Asturias, de los orígenes a la guerra civil’, in Erice (coord.), *Los comunistas en Asturias*, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. At least twenty *ateneos* were created in Oviedo and the coalfields during the Republic, Mato Díaz, *La Atenas del Norte*, pp. 78-81, pp. 90-2, pp. 97-104. See further Arias González and García, *Los palacios obreros*, pp. 83-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. Arias González and García, *Los palacios obreros*, p. 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. Mato Díaz, *La Atenas del Norte*, p. 96; *El Noroeste*, 20 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. See Uría, *Una historia social del ocio*. *Ateneos* offered French and mathematics classes, and even Marxist book clubs, *El Noroeste*, 6, 8 November, 23 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. *El Noroeste*, 27 August 1931, 18, 26 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. Such as the *Cuadro* formed by young men and women within the communist miners’ union in 1932. *El Noroeste*, 10 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. See Uría, ‘Traditional Popular Culture and Industrial Work Discipline’, pp. 166-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. *El Noroeste*, 27 March, 6 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. *El Noroeste*, 4 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. Though groups could also avoid *controversias*, which was the accusation made by young communists at the JS in Aller in August 1932. *El Noroeste*, 2 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. *El Noroeste*, 14 May 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. The PCE, in accordance with united front policy, had orators at various meetings and rallies. Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*, p. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. *El Noroeste*, 12 May 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. In 1931 Gutiérrez’s bookshop had been a communist recruitment centre*. El Noroeste*, 12 May 1931. For communist rhetoric, Tim Rees, ‘Living Up to Lenin: Leadership Culture and the Spanish Communist Party, 1920–1939’, *History*, 97 (2012), p. 249. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. *Región*, 2, 30 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. See Domingo Benavides, ‘Arboleya y su interpretación de la Revolución de Octubre’, in Jackson *et al*, *Octubre 1934*, pp. 259-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. *El Noroeste*, 2 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. The SOMA Executive was chosen as it represented 90% of miners at the mine. *Avance*, 17 August 1933. This would seem to match strike figures from late 1932—85 workers (out of a total of 800) at La Nueva continued to work after the SOMA had called at end to the general strike. *Región*, 22November 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. *El Noroeste*, 15 October 1932; *Avance*, 18 October 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. *Avance*, 23 April 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. *El Noroeste*, 6 April 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras!*, pp. 108-10, pp. 129-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. *Avance*, 8 May, 15 June 1932. A female section was created by the end of the year in Laviana. Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras!*, p. 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, pp. 114-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. Rees, ‘Living Up to Lenin’, p. 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*, p. 77. Rees also highlights the PCE members struggled to understand concepts taught by the party. Rees, ‘Living Up to Lenin’, pp. 251-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. Souto Kustrín, *Paso a la juventud*,p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. Uría, ‘Asturias 1920-1937’, p. 249, p. 258, p. 271. For favourable comments on the Russian Revolution in the anarchist press based in Gijón, see *Solidaridad*, 18 July 1931. For analysis of the image of the USSR and its reception in Spain, see Rafael Cruz, ‘¡Luzbel vuelve al mundo! Las imágenes de la Rusia soviética y la acción colectiva en España’, in Manuel Pérez Ledesma and Rafael Cruz (eds), *Cultura y movilización en la España contemporánea*, (Madrid, 1997), pp. 273-303. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. *Avance*, 19 July, 18 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. See *Avance*, 27, 29 November 1931.For the young socialists, see *Avance*, 6, 9 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. For example, *Avance*, 2 December 1931, 31 May 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. *El Noroeste*, 29 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. For ‘red’ baptisms, see Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*, p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. Adolfo Fernández Pérez, *Concejo de Lena (Asturias*)*: Cien años del socialismo,* (Oviedo, 2010), pp. 39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. E.g. *El Noroeste*, 5 June, 3 November 1931, 15 October 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. *Avance*, 1 February, 22, 28 June 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. *El Noroeste*, 4 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. *El Noroeste*, 23 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. See, for example, *Avance*, 26 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. Uría, ‘Cultura y comunicación de masas en Asturias’, pp. 156-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. *El Noroeste*, 15 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. *El Noroeste*, 5 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. *El Noroeste*, 19 October 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. *El Noroeste*, 21 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. *Región*, 26 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. There is frequent mention of such projects in the *actas* of the *ayuntamientos* and Provincial Deputation. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. *Avance*, 13 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. *El Noroeste*, 27 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. Macarro Vera, *Socialismo, República y revolución en Andalucía*, at p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. See Juliá, *Madrid, 1931-1934*, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. Cruz, *Una revolución elegante*, p. 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. *El Noroeste*, 19 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. *Región*, 25 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. Felgueroso Durán and Fernández García, ‘La gestión de los socialistas en el Ayuntamiento de Langreo entre 1909 y 1936’, pp. 160-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Fernández García, *Langreo. Industria, población y desarrollo urbano*, pp. 266-7; Felgueroso Durán and Fernández García, ‘La gestión de los socialistas en el Ayuntamiento de Langreo’, pp. 168-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. *Región*, 15, 16 March 1932; *Avance*, 15 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. Telegram from Laviana to the Minister of the Interior, 14 March 1932, AHN, Gobernación (A), legajo 7A, expediente 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. *Avance*, 18 November 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. *La Aurora Social*, 10 July 1931; *Avance*, 14 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 30 December 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 12 March 1932. It was followed by a further decree ordering courts to make sure that rent levels were sufficient to cover upkeep costs, taxes and provide some profit, ibid., 18 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona*, pp. 93-5; Nick Rider, ‘The practice of direct action: the Barcelona rent strike of 1931’, in David Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism. History, Theory, and Practice*, (London/New York, 1989), pp. 88-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona*, p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. *Avance*, 14 May 1932. Mieres published the first list of agreements reached in late May. In Ujo, a landlord had ordered the immediate eviction of tenants on being given a ‘notification’ from the League. *Avance*, 28 May 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. See further Pamela Radcliff, ‘Women's Politics: Consumer Riots in Twentieth-Century Spain’, in Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Radcliff (eds), *Constructing Spanish Womanhood. Female Identity in Modern Spain*, (New York, 1999), pp. 301-23; Temma Kaplan, ‘Redressing the Balance: Gendered Acts of Justice around the Mining Community of Río Tinto in 1913’, in ibid., pp. 283-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. *Avance*, 21, 15 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. *Avance*, 10 July 1932. In Trubia the phrasing was practically the same. *Avance*, 15 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War*, p. 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. *Avance*, 1 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. *Avance*, 1 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. *Avance*, 10 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. *Avance*, 1 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. *Avance*, 2 July 1932. Days later, the League protested at the ‘campaign’ by landlords against the leadership, ibid*.*, 12 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. *Avance*, 10 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. *Avance*, 19 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. *Avance*, 10 October 1932. See also ibid., 14 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. As Shubert notes, the ‘Republic had a special meaning for the Spanish working class’ linked to social justice, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. *Avance*, 5 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. *El Noroeste*, 1 January 1932. Similarly, Marta Bizcarrondo describes democracy for many as the ‘synonym of improvement in living conditions’ in 1931. Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3*, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. *La Aurora Social*, 15 May, 10 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. Nerea Aresti, ‘El crimen de Trubia. Género, discursos y ciudadanía republicana’, *Ayer*, 64 (2006), p. 266, p. 282. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. *Avance*, 14 May 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. *Avance*, 8 October 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. *La Aurora Social*, 9 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. *Avance*, 4 December 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. AL, Actas [volume I], f. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. Archivo de Aller, Actas de los plenos del ayuntamiento de Aller: 2-10-1930 al 3-10-1931 (henceforth AA, Actas [volume I]), ff. 184-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. Archivo de Mieres, Actas del ayuntamiento de Mieres: 08-08-1931 al 10-03-1932 (henceforth AM, Actas [volume II]), f. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. AM, Actas [volume II], f. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de Langreo*, pp. 44-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. Jove y Canella, *Topografía médica del concejo de San Martín del Rey Aurelio*, p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. Nevares, *El patrono ejemplar*, p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. AL, Actas [volumen II], f. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. AA, Actas [volume I], f. 150. At the following meeting, it was reported that the company had installed water in the doctor’s office and the Civil Guard post in Boo without authorisation, and the council asked SHE to pay the relevant taxes and not to install water facilities without authorisation. AA, Actas [volume I], f. 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria. Politics, History and National Identity in Spain, 1875-1975*, (Princeton, 1997), p. 194. See further Maitane Ostolaza Esnal, ‘La “guerra escolar” y la movilización católica en la II República (1931-1936)’, in Cueva Merino and Montero García (eds), *Laicismo y catolicismo*, p. 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy*, pp. 72-3. The civil governor declared 705 new schools were needed in Asturias. *Región*, 19 June 1931. The Ministry of Education estimated that Spain needed 27,000 primary schools, and thanks to the emphasis placed on education, 9325 classrooms were created in the first biennium, followed by 5,500 in the second. Boyd, *Historia Patria*, p. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. Ángel Mato Díaz, *La escuela primaria en Asturias (1923-1937). Los procesos de alfabetización y escolarización*, (Oviedo, 1992) pp. 159-61, p. 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. Mato Díaz, *La escuela primaria en Asturias*, p. 166, pp. 169-70, p. 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. Mato Díaz, *La escuela primaria en Asturias*, p. 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. See María del Mar Pozo Andrés and Borja Hortañón González, ‘El laicismo en la escuela pública’, in Cueva Merino and Montero García (eds), *Laicismo y catolicismo*, p. 297. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. *El Noroeste*, 21 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. AA, Actas [volume I], f. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. Álvarez Fernández, *La escuela del paternalismo asturiano*, p. 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. *Avance*, 15 December 1931. *El Noroeste*, 13 January 1932. *Avance* even dedicated its *Actualidad regional* column to the criticisms made by priests. *Avance*, 17, 19 December 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 368-9. Castejón argues that these day-to-day struggles have been ignored in the traditional dichotomy of *patronos* against the workforce. This is a caricature of the historiography, which does engage with this matter, though without deep analysis, ibid., p. 367. See Moradiellos, *El sindicato de los obreros mineros de Asturias*, p. 367; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. See *Avance*, 20 November 1931; Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 370. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. *La Aurora Social*, 17 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. *Avance*, 17 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. *Avance*, 17 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78436, expediente 192, 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. *El Noroeste*, 7 August 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. Castejón also cites the pressure from foremen’s and deputies’ associations that dissuaded the companies from transferring foremen and deputies. The influence of such associations was perhaps less important than the attitude of the company bosses themselves, given that Castejón also notes that in 1930 the mining bosses did not even bother to reply to a request for a salary increase by the association of deputies. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 369-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. *La Aurora Social*, 31 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. *El Noroeste*, 9 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. *El Noroeste*, 3 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. *Avance*, 2 March 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. *Avance*, 10 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. *El Noroeste*, 24 September 1932. See also Fontalbat and Álvarez, *Ceferino Álvarez Rey*, p. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. *Avance*, 17 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. *Avance*, 23 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. In terms of accidents, too, the ‘indifferent’ and ‘cold’ attitude and ‘inertia’ of the companies was contrasted with the knowledge of the workforce. *Avance*, 24 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. E.g., when the situation at Industrial Asturiana came to a head in September, with closure threatened, mine workers proposed a collective contract as a solution, which the company did not accept. *Avance*, 13, 21 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. As the secretary of the union of deputies explained. *El Noroeste*, 26 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. *Avance*, 13 May 1932. A collective contract was signed after ‘complex’ negotiations. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 373-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. After five months, the collective contract at La Justa was still in force, though not without problems, *El Noroeste*, 11 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. *Región*, 12 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. *El Noroeste*, 10 September 1931. Ministerial order in *Gaceta de Madrid*, 29 August 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. The situation was muddied further by the call by the SUM in the same edition of *El Noroeste* for their members to work no longer than seven hours. *El Noroeste*, 4 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. *El Noroeste*, 6 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. *Región*, 8 May 1931; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain*, pp. 143-4; *El Noroeste*, 26 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. Shubert, ‘Revolution in Self-Defence’, pp. 274-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 144. Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3*, p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. See Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 7-9 and Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero*, pp. 259-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. *La Aurora Social*, 11 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. *Avance*, 20 November 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. *Avance*, 21 November 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. *Avance*, 29 November 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. *Avance*, 4, 5, 6 December 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. *Avance*, 3 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. *Avance*, 7 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. *Avance*, 10 May 1932. González Peña echoed Barbón’s comments by attributing the strike to the ‘spirit [*fogosidad*] of youth, very excusable [...]’, ibid., 11 May 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. *El Noroeste*, 20 June, 17, 19 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. E.g. those building roads for the Provincial Deputation, *El Noroeste*, 5 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. *El Noroeste*, 14, 17 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. *El Noroeste*, 1, 16 August 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. *El Noroeste*, 8, 15 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. In the end the trial did not take place until June. See *El Noroeste*, 19 January, 1, 2, 3 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. *El Noroeste*, 1, 3 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. As at the Mosquitera mine in June 1931. Work stopped once the accident happened and no one worked the following day as a ‘sign of mourning’. *El Noroeste*, 20 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. The death of three mine workers due to firedampin Boo (Aller) led to a lengthier strike than the traditional twenty-four hour protest stoppage. Lasting for several days, it was a protest strike at technical staff at the conditions in the mine. *Avance*, 20, 21, 22, 26 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. *Región*, 8 May 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. *Región*, 6 April 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. *El Noroeste*, 11, 13 August 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. *El Noroeste*, 16 August 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. *El Noroeste*, 4, 10 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. *El Noroeste*, 5, 6 June 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. *El Noroeste*, 16 July 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. Castejón also identifies this practice by SOMA of ‘redirecting spontaneous strikes’ and ‘channelling them through the relevant institutions’. They ‘admonished’ strikers for striking in this manner, even if they achieved their objectives. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 361-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. *La Aurora Social*, 6 November 1931; *Avance*, 20 November, 13 December 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. *Avance*, 5 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. *El Noroeste*, 15 July 1931. As Castejón notes, the SOMA manifesto issued during the June SUM strike was contradictory: it blamed coercion for socialist affiliates not working, but appealed to their discipline so that they would return to work. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 345-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. See Smith and Barron analysis of community and identity through case studies of particular conflicts, as identities are reaffirmed even as local society is placed under great pressure. Barron, *The 1926 Miners’ Lockout*; Smith, ‘Tonypandy 1910’. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. For these quotations and discussion of the Radical leader, Lerroux, see Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 130-45. On the coup, see Eduardo González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios. Radicalización violenta de las derechas durante la Segunda República, 1931-1936*, (Madrid, 2011), pp. 81-106. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. *El Noroeste*, 13 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. *La Aurora Social*, 18 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, pp. 288-9. See Víctor Manuel Arbeloa, *La Semana Trágica de la Iglesia en España (8-14 octubre de 1931)*, (Madrid, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. From late 1931 *Avance* published reports of the ‘first’ secular burials in towns and villages around Asturias. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. See López Villaverde, *El gorro frigio y la mitra frente a frente*, pp. 190-245. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*,p. 35. For rallies in Salamanca, Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic*, pp. 180-3. See also Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, p. 310. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. *Región*, 8 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. *Región*, 21 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. *Región*, 16, 17 October 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 36-7, p. 42. *Región*, 10 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. *Acción*, 27 February 1932. For discussion of Salamanca, Vincent, ‘The Politicization of Catholic Women in Salamanca’, pp. 115-26. See also Inmaculada Blasco Herranz, ‘“Tenemos las armas de nuestra fe y de nuestro amor y patriotismo; pero nos falta algo”. La Acción Católica de la Mujer y la participación política en la España del primer tercio del siglo XX’, *Historia Social*, 44 (2002), pp. 15-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. *Avance*, 9 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. As in Salamanca. See Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic*, pp. 185-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. *Avance*, 10 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. *Avance*, 20 May, 16 August, 21 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras!*, pp. 121-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. See Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War*, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. *Avance*, 24 November 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. *Avance*, 21 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. *Región*, 24 February 1932. The appearance of crucifixes was often applauded in the Catholic publication run by women. E.g., *Acción*, 26 March, 16 April, 14, 21 May, 4 June 1932. There were street protests in Salamanca over the removal of crucifixes. Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic*, p. 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 14 January 1932. For the order in Aller, *Avance*, 24 February 1932. Women complained to *Región* that their children could no longer receive religious education at public schools *Región*, 24 February 1932. In May, the *ayuntamiento* of Mieres insisted teachers stop teaching religious education. AM, Actas [volume III], f. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. *Avance*, 30 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. *Región* criticised the authorities for their passivity in letting this provocation happen. *Región*, 22 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
447. For Mieres, *El Noroeste*, 13 April 1932. For Sama, *Región*, 25 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
448. Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, 1997), p. 106. See the classic study by Natalie Zemon Davis, ‘The Reasons of Misrule’, in *Society and Culture in Modern France*, (Stanford, 1965), pp. 97-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
449. For the quotation, Uría, ‘Traditional Popular Culture and Industrial Work Discipline’, p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
450. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
451. *El Noroeste*, 8 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
452. *Avance*, 7 June 1932; AA, Actas [volume II], ff. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
453. *El Noroeste*, 30 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
454. AHPA, Actas de la comisión de la Diputación Provincial: 29-12-1931 al 12-09-1933 (henceforth AHPA, Actas [volumen II]), ff. 196-9, ff. 208-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
455. See *Región*, 17, 18 June 1932; *El Noroeste*, 17, 19 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
456. *Avance*, 2 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
457. AL, Actas [volume III], f. 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
458. AL, Actas [volume II], f. 198. García Muñiz later requested that the school be closed as the institution was not need. AL, Actas [volume III], f. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
459. Álvarez Fernández, *La escuela del paternalismo asturiano*, p. 281. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
460. *El Noroeste*, 17 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
461. Álvarez Fernández, *La escuela del paternalismo asturiano*, pp. 281-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
462. *El Noroeste*, 24 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
463. *El Noroeste*, 26 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
464. Mato Díaz, *La escuela primaria en Asturias*, p. 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
465. Álvarez Fernández, *La escuela del paternalismo asturiano*, pp. 282-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
466. *Avance*, 13 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
467. *Avance*, 10 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
468. *Avance*, 13 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
469. Álvarez Fernández, *La escuela del paternalismo asturiano*, p. 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
470. *Avance*, 27 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
471. *Región*, 28 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
472. *Avance*, 29 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
473. *Avance*, 4 October 1932;Álvarez Fernández, *La escuela del paternalismo asturiano*, pp. 284-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
474. Mato Díaz, *La escuela primaria en Asturias*, p. 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
475. *El Noroeste*, 18 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
476. *La Aurora Social*, 6 November 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
477. *El Noroeste*, 13 November 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
478. *Avance*, 24 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
479. *Avance*, 16, 18 July 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
480. See Delgado Ruiz, ‘Anticlericalismo, espacio y poder’, p. 169 passim. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
481. María Pilar Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo en Aragón. Protesta popular y movilización cívica (1900-1939)*, (Zaragoza, 2002), p. 339; Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic*, pp. 185-6. Legislation from 1934 actually reiterated the mayor’s authority to ban Catholic funeral processions for public order reasons. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 24 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
482. López Villaverde, *El gorro frigio y la mitra frente a frente*, p. 232; Manuel Delgado Ruiz, ‘Anticlericalismo, espacio y poder. La destrucción de los rituales católicos, 1931-1939’, *Ayer*, 27 (1997), p. 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
483. Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*, pp. 54-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
484. *Región*, 15 September 1932; *Avance*, 14, 15 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
485. In Sobrescobio an image of Saint Anthony was paraded around the pueblo before being left underneath an *hórreo* (granary), *Región*, 18 June 1932. In Santa Rosa images were targeted and the assailants defecated inside the church, ibid*.*, 17 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
486. *Región*, 19, 30 September 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
487. AL, Actas [volume III], ff. 98-9, f. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
488. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
489. *Avance*, 12, 13 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
490. Adrian Shubert, ‘The epic failure: the Asturian revolution of October 1934’, in Preston (ed.), *Revolution and War*, p. 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
491. *Avance*, 12 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
492. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
493. *Avance*, 25 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
494. *Avance*, 6 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
495. *Avance*, 23 March, 15 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
496. *Avance*, 23 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
497. *Avance*, 15 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
498. *Avance*, 30 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
499. *Avance*, 24 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
500. *Avance*, 17 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
501. Workers at El Caudal had been working only two to three days a week for nearly two months. *Avance*, 3 January 1932. Similarly, the working week was cut by three days at Minas Desquite, ibid*.*, 17 January 1932. See also *Región*, 15 January 1932; *Avance*, 19 February 1932. There were 800 unemployed in Hulleras de Riosa on 15 May when work stops *Región*, 10 May 1932. For El Caudal’s bankruptcy, see ibid., 14 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
502. *Región*, 3 March, 6 May 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
503. *Región*, 19 February 1932. Similarly comments were made by Eustaquio Miranda, manager of IA, ibid*.*, 20 February 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
504. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
505. *Región*, 4 May, 30 April 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
506. Letter from Aurora García (and others) to the *ayuntamiento* of Aller [unnumbered document], 19 June 1932, AA, caja 532, legajo: Asuntos obreros 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
507. Posters at a demonstration in Oviedo declared ‘we do not ask for work, we demand it’. *El Noroeste*, 7 May 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
508. Benito del Pozo, *El ayuntamiento republicano de Oviedo*, pp. 88-9. In July the *ayuntamiento* of Mieres dismissed its temporary workers. *El Noroeste*, 22 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
509. Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3*, p. 64, pp. 78-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
510. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 71-2. See also Macarro Vera, *Socialismo, República y revolución en Andalucía*, pp. 86-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
511. *Avance*, 9 March, 27 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
512. *Avance*, 2 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
513. *El Noroeste*, 2 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
514. *Avance*, 24 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
515. *Avance*, 9 August 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
516. *Avance*, 15 March 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
517. *Avance*, 30 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
518. *Avance*, 9 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
519. *El Noroeste*, 9 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
520. *El Noroeste*, 10 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
521. For the strike, *El Noroeste*, 24 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
522. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 373-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
523. *El Noroeste*, 9 September 1932; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 144-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
524. *El Noroeste*, 6 September 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
525. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
526. *Avance*, 7 September 1932; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
527. The first strike was cancelled when Hulleras del Turón and Fábrica de Mieres offered temporary solutions as was the second when the companies promised to normalise the working week. *Avance*, 18 September, 23 October 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
528. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
529. *Avance*, 22 November 1932; *Región*, 22November 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
530. Combined figures from *Avance*, 10 December 1932 and *Región*, 10 December 1932. For the civil governor, see Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 382. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
531. Only 1,442 of a workforce of 3,600. *Avance*, 14 December 1932. For Carbones Asturianos, see *Región*, 14 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
532. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
533. *Avance*, 6, 22 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
534. *Avance*, 4 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
535. ‘There are those who think that a strike is not revolutionary if violence is not employed’ declared an article from Hueria de San Andrés (San Martín del Rey Aurelio). *Avance*, 30 July 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
536. As an article from Boo (Aller) defended. *Avance*, 2 June 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
537. See comments from Sama and Bazuelo (Mieres) respectively. *Avance*, 22, 25 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
538. *Región*, 6 October 1932; *Avance*, 13 October, 30 January 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
539. Castejón Rodríguez, ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 380-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
540. *Avance*, 8 October 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
541. *Avance*, 29 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
542. For example, *Avance*, 6 December 1932. [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
543. Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3*, p. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
544. For detailed analysis of the impact of Casas Viejas, Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 152-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
545. See Juliá, ‘Los socialistas y el escenario de la futura revolución’, pp. 103-130. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
546. Mary Vincent, ‘Spain’, in Richard J. B. Bosworth (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, (Oxford, 2009), p. 362. [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
547. For fascism as the frame, see Macarro Vera, ‘Causas de la radicalización socialista’, pp. 179-80. Avilés does make an attempt to show how the socialists ‘framed’ the situation in 1934. Avilés, ‘Los socialistas y la insurrección de octubre de 1934’, p. 156. Blas, many years earlier, made similar observations, describing the ‘fascist threat’ as providing the ‘adequate climate’. Blas, *El socialismo radical en la II República*, pp. 114-15. For rejection, see Rey, ‘La República de los socialistas’, pp. 199-200. [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
548. Thus I share García’s understanding that the ‘likelihood of the danger is not what is relevant’. Hugo García, ‘El antifascismo en España (1933-1939): una historia pendiente’, in Teresa María Ortega López and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco (eds), *Claves del Mundo Contemporáneo. Debate e investigación. Actas del IX Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea,* (Granada, 2013), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
549. That organization structures themselves are not sufficient is noted by Goldstone in his review of revolutionary movements. Jack Goldstone, ‘Towards a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory’, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4 (2001), p. 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
550. See Goldstone for reflection on the need for a stimulus to maintain protest identities, which can be provided by the state, which, contrary to its objectives, manages to foment protest through repression. Goldstone, ‘Towards a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory’, p. 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
551. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
552. *El Noroeste*, 15 January 1933. Further closures and dismissals were announced, ibid*.*, 5, 21, 26, 27 January 1933. ‘Estado númerico de los distintos oficios inscritos en la relación de obreros parados’ [unnumbered document], 4 January 1933, AA, caja 532, legajo: Asuntos obreros–1932; ‘Obreros parados en 23 septiembre de1933’ [unnumbered document], ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
553. *Avance*, 2, 7 February 1933. See alsoShubert, *The Road to Revolution*,pp. 145-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
554. Barrio Alonso, *Anarquismo y anarcosindicalismo en Asturias*, p. 377. See also *Avance*, 7, 8, 9 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
555. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
556. *Avance*, 3 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
557. *Revista Industrial Minera Asturiana*, 16 March 1933. See also Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 243-4. The decree at the end of March tried to sort out a temporary solution for mining companies to balance the books through compensation for companies and restrictions on coal production. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 29 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
558. Workers downed tools in La Rebollada (Mieres) over talk of dismissals, in Mieres a strike erupted over older workers refusing to retire, young men were arguing heatedly in Sama and in Ablaña (Mieres) there was anger that over 55s were not retiring, *Avance*, 8, 17, 18, 21 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
559. *Avance*, 15, 17 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
560. *El Noroeste*, 26, 28 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
561. *Revista Industrial Minera Asturiana*, 16 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
562. *Avance*, 4 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
563. *El Noroeste*, 9 April 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
564. *El Noroeste*, 6 April 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
565. See Eduardo González Calleja and Sandra Souto Kustrín, ‘De la dictadura a la república: orígenes y auge de los movimientos juveniles en España’, *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 67.225 (2007), pp. 73-102; Souto Kustrín, ‘Taking the Street’, pp. 131-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
566. *Avance*, 9 May 1933. For biographical details of Rojo see *Diccionario Biográfico del Socialismo Español*. [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
567. *Avance*, 14 May 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
568. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
569. *Avance*, 22 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
570. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 394. [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
571. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 146; *El Noroeste*, 2 September 1933. According to the governor, the strike was almost complete. *El Noroeste*, 5 September 1933. Even as the CNT changed tack ‘to avoid incidents’, *El Noroeste* published a call by the SUM-CNT in Carbayín for members to continue working. *El Noroeste*, 6 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
572. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 146; *Avance*, 29 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
573. *El Noroeste*, 1 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
574. More than 2,000 went on a spontaneous strike in Mieres because of Fábrica de Mieres’ non-payment of owed wages. *El Noroeste*, 13 October 1933; *Avance*, 13 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
575. *El Noroeste*, 26 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
576. *Avance*, 12 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
577. *Avance*, 15, 18 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-577)
578. *El Noroeste*, 26 September 1933. See also ibid*.*, 13, 29 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-578)
579. There were (critical) reports of a joint SU-SOMA-SCOM and non-affiliated strike committee, a united front, and of mining and strike committees in Vegadotos and Figaredo (Mieres), which were described as a ‘comedy’. *Avance*, 5, 19, 21, 23 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-579)
580. *El Noroeste*, 6 April 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-580)
581. *El Noroeste*, 26 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-581)
582. The CPUT usually only receives a brief mention or footnote in the historiography. See Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 88; Eusebio Izquierdo, ‘Hacia la unidad sindical, 1933-1934’, *Estudios de Historia Social*, 31 (1984), p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-582)
583. *El Noroeste*, 1, 5 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-583)
584. *Avance*, 8 January 1933. José Estrada had been president of the Agrupación Socialista in Blimea and secretary of the SOMA Regional Committee in 1931. Adolfo Fernández Pérez, *Tiempos heroicos. Diccionario biográfico del socialismo asturiano*, (Oviedo, 2013), pp. 282-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-584)
585. *El Noroeste*, 1 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-585)
586. *Avance*, 4 January 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-586)
587. *El Noroeste*, 7 April 1933 [↑](#footnote-ref-587)
588. It did survive at least until the summer. *El Noroeste*, 11 June, 23 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-588)
589. For the quotation, Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 117. For the traditional way of writing the history of the Workers’Alliance, see Navarro who begins her article on united fronts and Workers’ Alliances with ‘[a]t the beginning of 1933 Joaquín Maurín, leader of the Bloc Obrer i Camperol (BOC), decided to launch the idea of the Workers’ Alliance’. Rocío Navarro Comas, ‘El Frente Único, las Alianzas Obreras y el Frente Popular. La evolución teórica de los anarquistas ante la colaboración obrera’, *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 41.1 (2011), pp. 103-20. See also Blas Guerrero, *El socialismo radical*, pp. 132-3. Concise summaries of Maurín’s ideas in Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain*, pp. 154-5 and Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, pp. 142-3. For a recent study, see Thomas Corkett, ‘Interactions between the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and the Unión General de Trabajadores in Spain and Catalonia, 1931-1936’, Ph.D. thesis, (University of Glasgow, 2011), pp. 41-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-589)
590. Corkett, ‘Interactions between the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and the Unión General de Trabajadores’, p. 41; Antonio Elorza, ‘Los revolucionarios y la revolución: debates’, *Estudios de Historia Social*, 31 (1984), p. 67; Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 135. Though Durgan underlines that the BOC considered the situation in Spain to be different to that of Germany. Andy Durgan, *Comunismo, revolución y movimiento obrero en Catalunya 1920-1936. Los orígenes del POUM*, (n.d., n.p.) [Revised and updated version of *B.O.C. 1930-1936. El Bloque Obrero y Campesino*, (Barcelona, 1996)], pp. 112-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-590)
591. Corkett, ‘Interactions between the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and the Unión General de Trabajadores’, p. 41; Durgan, *Comunismo, revolución y movimiento obrero en Catalunya*, pp. 113-14, pp. 132-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-591)
592. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 136, p. 138; Corkett, ‘Interactions between the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and the Unión General de Trabajadores’, pp. 42-4; Juliá, ‘República, revolución y luchas internas’, p. 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-592)
593. Communist policy in 1933 and ‘the first half of 1934 was that of united front from below with all of its elements that characterise it’. Santos Juliá, *Orígenes del frente popular en España*, (Madrid, 1979), p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-593)
594. *El Noroeste*, 4 January, 1 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-594)
595. *El Noroeste*, 11 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-595)
596. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 80; Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero*, p. 297; Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 53-4; Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 43-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-596)
597. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain*, p. 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-597)
598. José Girón, ‘Asturias, Octubre de 1934: El fracaso de un intento de alianza electoral entre socialistas y comunistas’, in Jackson *et al.*, *Octubre de 1934*, pp. 199-201. [↑](#footnote-ref-598)
599. *Avance*, 22 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-599)
600. *Avance*, 24 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-600)
601. For the ‘unbridgeable distance’ between Largo Caballero’s rhetoric and practice, Juliá, ‘Los socialistas y el escenario de la futura revolución’, pp. 124-5. It was the revolutionary insurrection which ‘raised the fundamental problem of the socialist left’s real nature as against its own revolutionary perceptions of itself’. Graham, *Socialism and War*, p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-601)
602. *Avance*, 4 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-602)
603. *Avance*, 7 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-603)
604. *Avance*, 1 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-604)
605. *Avance*, 17 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-605)
606. *Avance*, 16 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-606)
607. *Avance*, 19 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-607)
608. *Avance*, 11 February 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-608)
609. *Avance*, 14 February, 2, 3 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-609)
610. *Avance*, 27 April 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-610)
611. *Región*, 18 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-611)
612. *La Voz de Asturias*, 18, 19 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-612)
613. *Avance*, 15, 16, 22 February, 1, 16 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-613)
614. See reports in *Avance*, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27 June 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-614)
615. AA, Actas [volume III], f. 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-615)
616. Benito del Pozo, *El ayuntamiento republicano de Oviedo*, p. 88. AL, Actas, [volume IV], f. 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-616)
617. AA, Actas [volume III], f. 18, f. 73. AM, Actas [volume IV], f. 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-617)
618. *El Noroeste*, 5 July 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-618)
619. See Barrio Alonso, *Anarquismo y anarcosindicalismo en Asturias,* pp. 369-71, pp. 384-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-619)
620. AL, Actas [volume III], ff. 193-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-620)
621. *Región*, 25 February, 26 April 1933. Associations and unions had to present their statutes to provincial officials. The law was criticised by the CNT as a measure that targeted at restricting their ability to act. Casanova, *De la calle al frente*, p. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-621)
622. *Región*, 27 April 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-622)
623. *El Noroeste*, 28 February 1933; *Región*, 3 March 1933. The attack was condemned by councillors. AL, Actas [volume IV], f. 44. For further incidents, see *El Noroeste*, 16 February 1933; Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 383. [↑](#footnote-ref-623)
624. AL, Actas [volume V], ff. 29-30. García Muñiz declared that after so many ‘complaints, *denuncias* and fines’ imposed on Carbones Asturianos, the only options left were the ‘governmental and judicial channels’ and even called for the arrest of the company directors. Ibid., ff. 39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-624)
625. AL, Actas [volume IV], ff. 181-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-625)
626. *El Noroeste*, 6 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-626)
627. For complaints, see *El Noroeste*, 19 April 1934; *Región*, 24 May 1934; *El Noroeste*, 10 July 1934. For the announcement, *Avance*, 28 August 1934; Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 399-400. [↑](#footnote-ref-627)
628. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 398. [↑](#footnote-ref-628)
629. *Región*, 31 March, 4, 17 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-629)
630. *El Noroeste*, 12 April, 12 May 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-630)
631. *Avance*, 5 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-631)
632. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 397-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-632)
633. The civil governor called for a clampdown on the young people who plastered up the posters, while *El Noroeste* called talk of fascism was ‘ridiculous’ as there were only a ‘couple of them’. *El Noroeste*, 19 March 1933. For rallies, see ibid*.*, 22, 30 March, 6 April, 12 May 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-633)
634. See *El Noroeste*, 25 March, 26 May, 21 June 1933. Erice, ‘El PCE en Asturias’, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-634)
635. *Avance*, 8, 12 March 1933. For rallies, *Avance*, 11, 22, 31 March 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-635)
636. *Avance*, 18 July, 11 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-636)
637. Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*, p. 158. Bizcarrondo also highlights this lack of ‘specificity of the fascist phenomenon’, Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, p. 267. See also Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, ‘*Negras tormentas* sobre la República. La intransigencia libertaria’, in Rey (ed.), *Palabras como puños*, pp. 93-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-637)
638. Souto Kustrín, ‘Octubre de 1934’, pp. 488-9. For continued use, Jiménez Campo, *El fascismo en la crisis de la Segunda República española*, pp. 53-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-638)
639. Hugo García, ‘Was there an antifascist culture in Spain during the 1930s?’, [typescript kindly provided by the author], p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-639)
640. Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3*, pp. 85-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-640)
641. *Avance*, 16 August, 5 September 1933. While in Figaredo (Mieres) a report on anti-CEDA protests did not use the word fascism, ibid, 27 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-641)
642. Jiménez Campo, *El fascismo en la crisis de la Segunda República española*, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-642)
643. García, ‘Was there an antifascist culture in Spain during the 1930s?’, p. 5; Vincent, ‘Spain’, pp. 364-72. Recently, Lowe has argued that the ‘the JAP’s confessionalism does not negate its fascistic characteristics’. Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism*, pp. 32-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-643)
644. Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, p. 125, pp. 154-6, p. 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-644)
645. *Avance*, 19 August 1933; González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios*, pp. 166-7. See also Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977*, (Madison, 1999), pp. 85-88 and for Asturias, García de Tuñón Aza, *Apuntes para una historia de la Falange asturiana*, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-645)
646. *Avance*,20 August 1933. Three members of the Catholic Youth demanded *Avance* retract the description. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-646)
647. *Avance*, 10 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-647)
648. *Avance*, 6 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-648)
649. Julio de la Cueva Merino, ‘Socialistas y religión en la Segunda República: De la Liga Nacional Laica al inicio de la Guerra Civil’ in Cueva Merino and Montero García (eds), *Izquierda obrera y religión en España*, pp. 91-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-649)
650. Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, p. 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-650)
651. Jiménez Campo, *El fascismo en la crisis de la Segunda República española*, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-651)
652. *Avance*, 25 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-652)
653. *Avance*, 1 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-653)
654. *Avance*, 20 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-654)
655. Souto Kustrín, ‘Octubre de 1934’, p. 488. [↑](#footnote-ref-655)
656. Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, p. 153; *Avance*, 30 August 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-656)
657. *El Noroeste*, 17, 21 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-657)
658. *Avance*, 26 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-658)
659. E.g. *Avance*, 16 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-659)
660. *Avance*, 19 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-660)
661. *Avance*, 29 October 1933. In Sama, too, shopkeepers were identified as those recruiting for the rightists, ibid., 1 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-661)
662. *Avance*, 2, 10 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-662)
663. *Avance*, 28 October 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-663)
664. Such as in Tiraña (Laviana) and Cabañaquinta. See *Avance*, 8, 9 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-664)
665. Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras!*, pp. 152-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-665)
666. Vincent, ‘The Politicization of Catholic Women in Salamanca’, p. 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-666)
667. *El Noroeste*, 21 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-667)
668. *Avance*, 23, 24 November 1933; *El Noroeste*, 23 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-668)
669. Other candidacies who received even fewer votes were the Unión de Izquierdas Republicanas, the Radical Socialistas Independientes and the Federals. *Boletín oficial de la provincia de Oviedo*, 28 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-669)
670. *Avance*, 1, 2 December 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-670)
671. Juliá, ‘República, revolución y luchas internas’, p. 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-671)
672. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, p. 28, p. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-672)
673. Francisco Largo Caballero, *Escritos sobre la República. Notas históricas de la guerra en España (1917-1940)*, (Madrid, 1985), pp. 43-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-673)
674. Juliá, ‘República, revolución y luchas internas’, p. 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-674)
675. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 149-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-675)
676. *El Noroeste*, 23 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-676)
677. *Avance*, 25 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-677)
678. *Avance*, 25 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-678)
679. *Avance*, 17 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-679)
680. *Avance*, 23 February 1934. Ramón Rico, Julia’s husband, is noted as the miner who ‘most risked himself’ for the SOMA in Pola de Laviana. Saborit, *Asturias y sus hombres*, p. 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-680)
681. *Avance*, 7 December 1933. *Región* denounced the boycotting of businesses run by AP voters in Aller and Turón and called on the civil governor to intervene. *Región*, 7 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-681)
682. *Avance*, 28 November 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-682)
683. *Región*, 3 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-683)
684. *Región*, 27 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-684)
685. *Avance*, 9 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-685)
686. *Avance*, 15 March, 23 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-686)
687. Cerviño was also described, somewhat bizarrely, as the local head of ‘Acción Popular-freemasonry-fascism’. *Avance*, 26 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-687)
688. *Avance*, 17 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-688)
689. Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT, vol. 3*, p. 87; Souto Kustrín, ‘Octubre de 1934’, pp. 489-90; Juan Simeón Vidarte, *El bienio negro y* *la insurrección de Asturias*, (Barcelona, 1978), p. 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-689)
690. *Avance*, 4 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-690)
691. *Avance*, 15 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-691)
692. *Avance*, 6, 20 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-692)
693. *El Noroeste*, 26 September 1933; *Avance*, 20 July 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-693)
694. *Avance*, 23 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-694)
695. Shubert highlights that ‘it did not draw a response from all Socialist and Communist party workers’. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 152. It was certainly uneven; Fábrica de Mieres did not close until lunchtime, but shops closed in Mieres and Aller and some railway workers were on strike. *Avance*, 20 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-695)
696. *Avance*, 5, 9, 12 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-696)
697. *Avance*, 7 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-697)
698. Jiménez Campo, *El fascismo en la crisis de la Segunda República española*, pp. 267-8; Payne, *Fascism in Spain*, p. 155. For Asturias, Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, p.159, p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-698)
699. Arrests, too, took place outside of the mining valleys, including in Grado, Tineo and Salas. García de Tuñón Aza, *Apuntes para una historia de la Falange asturiana*, pp. 19-21; Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, pp. 160-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-699)
700. *Avance*, 11 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-700)
701. Jiménez Campo, *El fascismo en la crisis de la Segunda República española*, p. 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-701)
702. For the fascist style of the JAP, see Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism*, pp. 15-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-702)
703. Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, p. 125, p. 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-703)
704. Souto Kustrín, ‘Octubre de 1934’, p. 502. [↑](#footnote-ref-704)
705. *Avance*, 6 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-705)
706. See, for example *Avance*’s framing of state repression aimed at the working class. *Avance*, 30 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-706)
707. See Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 72; Blaney, ‘The Civil Guard and the Spanish Second Republic’, p. 44, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-707)
708. Blaney, ‘The Civil Guard and the Spanish Second Republic’, pp. 105-6, p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-708)
709. González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 98, p. 141, p. 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-709)
710. Nevares, *El patrono ejemplar*, p. 29, p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-710)
711. Communist councillors tabled a motion in Langreo demanding the dissolution of the Civil Guard. AL, Actas [volume I], f. 39. In Mieres, a motion wanted the dismissal of three civil guards, including a *teniente*, and proposed the creation of a Republican guard. AM, Actas [volume I], f. 104. In Aller in May 1931 the *ayuntamiento* decided to stop paying Civil Guards’ bills for lodgings. AA, Actas [volume I], f. 40, f. 53. For the telephone line in Mieres, AM, Actas [volume II], f. 183. In 1932 councillors in Mieres reacted to the Sanjurjo coup by calling for the dissolution of the Civil Guard. AM, Actas [volume III], f. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-711)
712. AL, Actas [volume II], f. 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-712)
713. AO, Actas [volume IV], ff. 174-5, ff. 184-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-713)
714. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-714)
715. González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 217; *Avance*, 11 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-715)
716. ‘Passers-by who look like workers are searched meticulously. The individual is searched and if he takes offence, he is maltreated’. *Avance*, 13 February 1934. See also, *El Noroeste*, 20 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-716)
717. *Avance*, 20, 21 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-717)
718. Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 211-222. [↑](#footnote-ref-718)
719. González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 227; Blaney, ‘The Civil Guard and the Spanish Second Republic’, p. 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-719)
720. Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 222-3, pp. 247-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-720)
721. See Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust. Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain*, (London, 2012), pp. 72-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-721)
722. González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 122; Blaney, ‘The Civil Guard and the Spanish Second Republic’, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-722)
723. González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 328. [↑](#footnote-ref-723)
724. *El Noroeste*, 9 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-724)
725. *Avance*, 24 March 1934. *Avance* frequently pointed out that right-wing organisations and centres were not being searched and that the rich were treated differently, e.g. ibid*.*, 21 February, 27 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-725)
726. *Avance*, 25, 27, 29*,* 30 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-726)
727. *Avance*, 29 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-727)
728. *Avance*, 28 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-728)
729. *El Noroeste*, 29 March 1934; *La Voz de Asturias*, 29 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-729)
730. See Radcliff, ‘Women's Politics: Consumer Riots in Twentieth-Century Spain’, pp. 301-23. The classic work on female working class collective action in Spain is Temma Kaplan, ‘Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918’, *Signs*, 7.3 (1982), pp. 545-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-730)
731. *Avance*, 25 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-731)
732. AL, Actas [volume V], ff. 141-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-732)
733. AL, Actas [volume V], ff. 141-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-733)
734. AO, Actas [volume IV], f. 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-734)
735. For the protests by the *ayuntamientos* see, for example: Langreo on the legislation with regards to the clergy, amnesty legislation and the death penalty. In Oviedo a motion was passed showing the *ayuntamiento*’s support of Santander. AL, Actas [volume V], ff. 132-4, ff. 147-8; AO, Actas [volume IV], f. 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-735)
736. AL, Actas [volume VI], ff. 47-9; *Región*, 29 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-736)
737. *Avance*, 28 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-737)
738. *Avance*, 27 March 1934. The term ‘*razzia*’, or ‘razia’ according to the Real Academia Española, translates as a raid and is from Algerian Arabic. [↑](#footnote-ref-738)
739. *Avance*, 31 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-739)
740. For the strikes, appeal and meetings, see *Avance*, 3, 4, 5 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-740)
741. *Avance*, 31 March 1934; *La Voz de Asturias*, 31 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-741)
742. *Avance*, 8 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-742)
743. *Avance*, 5 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-743)
744. *Región*, 31 March, 1 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-744)
745. Late on 7 April 1934, a bomb exploded in the window of the sacristy of San Andrés de Linares, which also caused damage. A week later on 14 April 1934, the hermitage of Santísimo Cristo de la Paz in Cocañín was burnt. Two months later, on the night of 17 June 1934, images and other objects were burnt in Cocañín. Senén Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo. Historia del martirio y persecución de los sacerdotes en el Arciprestazgo de Langreo, durante los sucesos revolucionarios del año 1934*, (La Felguera, 1935), pp. 99-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-745)
746. *Región*, 19 May 1934. Delgado Ruiz, ‘Anticlericalismo, espacio y poder’, p. 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-746)
747. Despite the atmosphere, some religious processions did take place outside in honour of local patron saints, particularly in Aller. See *Región*, 27 June, 22, 31 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-747)
748. *Acción*, 28 July 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-748)
749. *Acción*, 15 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-749)
750. *Avance*, 18 January, 20 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-750)
751. *Avance*, 11 September 1933. [↑](#footnote-ref-751)
752. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-752)
753. Souto Kustrín, ‘Taking the Street’, p. 136-42. [↑](#footnote-ref-753)
754. Largo Caballero, *Escritos sobre la República*, passim. [↑](#footnote-ref-754)
755. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 80-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-755)
756. As noted briefly by Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-756)
757. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 151-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-757)
758. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-758)
759. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78436, expediente 257, 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-759)
760. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 79435, expediente 280, 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-760)
761. Ignacio Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, (Gijón, 2004), p. 59; Fernando Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre. Quince días de Comunismo Libertario*, (Madrid, 1994) [1936], p. 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-761)
762. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 151. See also Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 55-73; Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, pp. 94-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-762)
763. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-763)
764. *Avance*, 11 July 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-764)
765. *Avance*, 21 July 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-765)
766. *Avance*, 21 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-766)
767. *Región*, 29 July 1934; González Calleja*, En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-767)
768. *Avance*, 1 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-768)
769. One individual was ordered to remove his tie on his way to a *jira*. *Avance*, 4 August 1934. Sixteen members of the JS were arrested in Boo (Aller) for wearing red shirts. They were freed after a demonstration, ibid*.*, 14 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-769)
770. *Avance*, 29 August 1934. The national JS also labelled the decree ‘fascist’. Souto Kustrín, *Paso a la juventud*, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-770)
771. *Avance*, 26 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-771)
772. Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, p. 263. [↑](#footnote-ref-772)
773. *Avance*, 15, 19 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-773)
774. *Avance*, 30 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-774)
775. *Avance*, 4 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-775)
776. *El Noroeste*, 16 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-776)
777. *Región*, 3 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-777)
778. Shubert, ‘The epic failure’, p. 127. See also Durgan, *Comunismo, revolución y movimiento obrero en Catalunya*, p. 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-778)
779. Largo Caballero, *Escritos sobre la República*, p. 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-779)
780. *Avance*, 26 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-780)
781. *Avance*, 6 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-781)
782. Socialists included Juan Pablo García, socialist candidate in the 1933 national elections and a member of the National Federation of the JS, Antonio Llaneza, son of the SOMA founder and Manuel Otero. For biographical details, see the *Diccionario Biográfico del Socialismo Español*. Communists involved included Ramón Rodríguez, Simón Díaz, Fernando Rodríguez and Carlos Vega. The last three had all been Communist candidates in the 1933 elections. Ramón Rodríguez was on the regional committee of the PCE in 1933-4 and had been a candidate for the Constituent Cortes in June 1931. Erice, ‘El PCE en Asturias’, p. 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-782)
783. No anarchists signed the note or appear to have spoken at rallies, though they were addressed by the orators. *Avance*, 26 January, 6 February 1934. For positive reactions from Laviana, Aller and a union based in the Nalón valley, see ibid*.*, 2, 16 February 1934; *El Noroeste*, 6 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-783)
784. For Fábrica de Mieres, *Avance*, 21 January 1934. For the Ateneo, Mato Díaz, *La Atenas del Norte*,p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-784)
785. *Avance*, 14, 3 March 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-785)
786. *Avance*, 9 March 1934. Durgan maintains that this developed out of the Federación Comunista Ibérica initiative in Mieres, *Comunismo, revolución y movimiento obrero en Catalunya*, pp. 137-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-786)
787. Though some have recognised that there were ‘occasions’ in which socialists and communists –above all the youth wings– collaborated against the perceived fascist threat Juliá, *Orígenes*, p. 16. Miller highlights that communist participation in unity initiatives in early 1934 was ‘fundamental’. Paul Miller, ‘Un movimiento de oposición radical: el PCE en Asturias, 1931-1934’, *Estudios de Historia Social*, 31 (1984), p. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-787)
788. *Avance*, 7 January 1934. It was not just the socialists; the communist Central Committee also condemned the Comite Pro-Frente Único de Langreo. Miller, ‘Un movimiento de oposición radical: el PCE en Asturias’, p. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-788)
789. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 138; Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero*, p. 355. [↑](#footnote-ref-789)
790. *Avance*, 7 February 1934. For Largo Caballero’s similar position, see Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero*, p. 354. [↑](#footnote-ref-790)
791. *Avance*, 10 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-791)
792. The negotiations are covered in Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 156-7. See also Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 31-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-792)
793. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de la CNT de Asturias sobre su actuación y la de la Alianza Obrera Regional Revolucionaria en los sucesos revolucionarios ocurridos en la provincia de marzo a octubre de 1934’, Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica (henceforth CDMH), PS-Gijón, serie J, caja 12, expediente 2, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-793)
794. For the quotation, see ‘Informe del Comité Regional de la CNT de Asturias sobre su actuación’, pp. 12-3. Avilés underlines the importance of this. Avilés ‘Los socialistas y la insurrección de octubre de 1934’, p. 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-794)
795. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de Asturias de la CNT elevado al Pleno Regional de sindicatos sobre los acontecimientos de octubre de 1934 y otro informe de la Comisión de la Alianza Obrera Regional Revolucionaria remitido al Comité citado’, CDMH, PS-Gijón, serie J, caja 12, expediente 3, p. 5. See also Taibo, *Asturias* pp. 38-40 and, for the pact, Víctor Alba, *La Alianza Obrera. Historia y análisis de una táctica de unidad en España*, (Madrid/Gijón, 1978), pp. 205-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-795)
796. The Workers’ Alliance pact saw the ‘constitution of a National Committee’ as an ‘indispensable premise’. Alba, *La Alianza Obrera*, p. 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-796)
797. The National Committee did not want the Asturian Regional Committee to spread the Alliance. It was extended to León and there was a proposal to do the same in Palencia. Talks were held in La Coruña and Madrid. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de la CNT de Asturias sobre su actuación’, p. 10, p. 15, p. 20, pp. 24-5. José María Martínez was criticised at the plenary of Regional Committees in June. Casanova, *De la calle al frente*, pp. 134-5. In September the Asturian CNT sent a letter to UGT asking them to approach the national CNT to negotiate an Alliance. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de la CNT de Asturias sobre su actuación’, pp. 32-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-797)
798. See the manifesto published by the Federación Comunista Ibérica and an article by the Agrupación Socialista in Figaredo, *Avance*, 11, 19 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-798)
799. *El Socialista*, 23 January 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-799)
800. *Avance*, 4 February 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-800)
801. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de Asturias de la CNT elevado al Pleno Regional’, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-801)
802. Barrio Alonso, *Anarquismo y anarcosindicalismo en Asturias*,p. 401. [↑](#footnote-ref-802)
803. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de la CNT de Asturias sobre su actuación’, pp. 30-1. Those that voted for: unions in Gijón, railway unions, unions in Cangas de Onís, Ribadesella, Villaviciosa, Candás, Grado and León. Four mining unions voted for the pact: La Nueva, Trechorio, Blimea and San Miguel (Langreo). Those that voted against: Metal union from La Felguera, Oficios Varios and Paleta from La Felguera. There was also the Oficios Varios in Mieres, Construcción in Oviedo and Luz y Fuerza from the Nalón Valley. Mining sections: La Felguera, Lada, Puente Carbón, Turón, Sama, Mieres, Barros, Cotorraso, Santa Ana, Carbayín, in addition to 6 SUM Leon, 2 SUM Palencia and other unions from Leon, Avilés and Luarca. *El Noroeste*, 20 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-803)
804. Letter from the Comité Regional de los Grupos Anarquistas de Asturias, León y Palencia to the Comité Peninsular, 21 September 1934, International Institute for Social History, Federación Anarquista Ibérica Archive, Regional Asturiana, carpeta 12 C. [↑](#footnote-ref-804)
805. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 152; Taibo labels it a ‘relative triumph’. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-805)
806. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 50-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-806)
807. *Avance*, 9 May 1934. From the beginning, the strikers had asked the municipal authorities to negotiate a solution. AO, Actas [volume IV], f. 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-807)
808. *El Noroeste*, 19 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-808)
809. *El Noroeste*, 17 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-809)
810. *Avance*, 9, 23 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-810)
811. *El Noroeste*, 17 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-811)
812. *Avance*, 24 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-812)
813. *Avance*, 26 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-813)
814. *Avance*, 24 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-814)
815. *El Noroeste*, 27 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-815)
816. *Avance*, 11, 29 July 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-816)
817. *El Noroeste*, 22 June 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-817)
818. Alba, *La Alianza Obrera*, pp. 105-8; García, ‘De los soviets a las Cortes’, pp. 139-40; Juliá, *Orígenes del frente popular en España*, p. 15. Only days after the announcement of the Workers’ Alliance, in one of the remotest areas of the mining valleys—Villoria, Las Quintanas and Tolivia (Laviana), the SOMA and SUM-ISR had organised an ‘asamblea magna’ to reach agreements over unemployment. *Avance*, 11 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-818)
819. The Asturian Communists asked to join the Workers’ Alliance on 27 September, two weeks after the plenary of the Central Committee had requested Communist involvement in the Alliances. Erice, ‘El PCE en Asturias’, p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-819)
820. Miller, ‘Un movimiento de oposición radical: el PCE en Asturias’, p. 134. Both Cruz and García emphasise discipline, rigidity and hierarchy yet highlight instances when Comintern policy was not followed. Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*, pp. 32-3, pp. 148-9; García, ‘De los soviets a las Cortes’, p. 124, pp. 125-7. For the PCE’s weakness, ibid*.*, p. 133, p. 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-820)
821. Izquierdo, ‘Hacia la unidad sindical (1933-1934)’, p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-821)
822. *Avance*, 3 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-822)
823. *Avance*, 29, 22 April, 3 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-823)
824. Such as preparations in Santa Cruz (Mieres), La Oscura (San Martín del Rey Aurelio), Tudela Veguín (Oviedo), Olloniego (Oviedo) and Sotrondio, *Avance*, 28, 29 April 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-824)
825. *Avance*, 3 May 1934. There were similar scenes in La Felguera, ibid*.*, 5 May 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-825)
826. *Avance*, 8, 29 July, 19 August 1934; *El Noroeste*, 25 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-826)
827. *Avance*, 1 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-827)
828. *Avance*, 21 August 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-828)
829. *Avance*, 26 August 1934. Previously, the socialists in Figaredo had publicly rejected an invitation to a meeting to discuss antifascist and anti-war tactics and methods, highlighting the contradictions of the communists of wanting to fight with the socialists while calling the socialists ‘socialfascists’. If the communists really wanted to collaborate, they would join the Workers’ Alliance, ibid*.*, 13 July 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-829)
830. Largo Caballero, *Escritos sobre la República*, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-830)
831. Largo Caballero, *Escritos sobre la República*, pp. 93-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-831)
832. See Amaro del Rosal, *1934: El movimiento revolucionario de octubre*, (Madrid, 1984), pp. 229-49; Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 106; Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 80-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-832)
833. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 83, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-833)
834. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-834)
835. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 108; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 4. See also the summary in Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 114-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-835)
836. AL, Actas [volume VI], f. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-836)
837. *Avance*, 2 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-837)
838. *Avance*, 2 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-838)
839. Basilio Fernández had been a miner and UGT member. *Avance*, 4 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-839)
840. *Avance*, 4 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-840)
841. *Avance*, 6 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-841)
842. The governor cited potential sabotage and that nothing prevented the strikers from leaving the mine as reasons for the ban. *Avance*, 8 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-842)
843. *Región*, 8 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-843)
844. Though it was criticised by some anarchists for being political. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de la CNT de Asturias sobre su actuación’, p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-844)
845. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 122. For discussion of the aesthetics of El Escorial, seeLowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism*, pp. 20-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-845)
846. *Avance*, 8 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-846)
847. *Región*, 11 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-847)
848. *Región*, 11 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-848)
849. Train lines were sabotaged, stones and tree trunks blocked roads, while copies of *El Debate* and *ABC* were burnt in Sama. *Avance*, 11 September 1934. For Madrid, see Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism*, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-849)
850. *Avance*, 11 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-850)
851. Most accounts of the October revolutionary insurrection discuss the Turquesa affair. For example, Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 111-32; Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 34; Aguado Sánchez, *La revolución de octubre*, pp. 79-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-851)
852. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-852)
853. *Avance*, 12, 13 September 1934. Delegates were also appointed for Bimenes, Castrillón, Coaña, Morcín, Riosa, Onís and Ribera de Arriba. [↑](#footnote-ref-853)
854. *El Noroeste*, 12 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-854)
855. *Avance*, 14, 16 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-855)
856. The motion tabled by the socialist councillors of Langreo protesting at the ‘arbitrary arrest’ of Belarmino Tomás insisted there was no reason for Tomás to be held ‘*incomunicado*’ on his arrest. AL, Actas [volume VI], ff. 53-4; *Avance*, 20 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-856)
857. *Región*, 7 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-857)
858. *Región*, 15 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-858)
859. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-859)
860. *El Noroeste*, 22 September 1934; *Avance*, 22 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-860)
861. *El Noroeste*, 19, 26 September 1934; *Región*, 28 September 1934; *Avance*, 28 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-861)
862. *Avance*, 22 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-862)
863. *Avance*, 25 September 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-863)
864. Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-864)
865. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-865)
866. Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 266-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-866)
867. For Madrid, Sandra Souto Kustrín, ‘De la paramilitación al fracaso: las insurrecciones socialistas de 1934 en Viena y Madrid’, *Pasado y memoria*, 2 (2003), pp. 193-220; for the Basque Country, Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, ‘Nacionalismo y revolución: octubre de 1934 en el País Vasco’, in Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, *El País Vasco. Autonomía. Revolución. Guerra Civil*, (Madrid, 2002), pp. 177-201; for Catalonia, Norman Jones, ‘Regionalism and revolution in Catalonia’, in Preston (ed.), *Revolution and War*, pp. 85-112. See also Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, pp. 41-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-867)
868. For martyrological accounts, see *Los mártires de Turón. Notas biográficas y reseña del martirio de los religiosos bárbaramente asesinados por los revolucionarios en Turón (Asturias) el 9 de octubre de 1934,* (Madrid/Barcelona, 1934); Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*; Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas de Oviedo, *Asturias Roja (Octubre de 1934). Sacerdotes y religiosos perseguidos y martirizados*, (Oviedo, n.d. [1935]); *Episodios de la Revolución en Asturias. Los pasionistas de Mieres (Asturias) y la revolución de octubre de 1934. Episodios narrados por los mismos protagonistas*, (Santander, 1935); Francisco Martínez, *Dos jesuitas mártires en Asturias*, (Burgos, 1936). For eyewitness accounts, see Aurelio de Llano Roza de Ampudia, *Pequeños Anales de Quince Días. Revolución en Asturias Octubre de 1934*, (Oviedo, 1935); Alfonso Camín, *El Valle Negro*, (Mexico, 1940). For leftist accounts, see for example, Manuel Benavides, *La revolución fue así (octubre rojo y negro)*, (Barcelona, 1935); Manuel Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, (Madrid/Gijón, 1978) [1935]; Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*; Villar, *El anarquismo*; Narcís Molins i Fábrega, *UHP. La insurrección proletaria en Asturias*, (Gijón, 1977) [1935]; José Canel, [José Díaz Fernández], *Octubre rojo en Asturias*, (Barcelona, 1984) [1935]; XXX, *Lo que yo he visto. La Felguera en la revolución asturiana*, (New York, 1935). [↑](#footnote-ref-868)
869. See *El Socialista*, 18-25 January 1936. It has recently been edited as Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*. [↑](#footnote-ref-869)
870. See Bunk, *Ghosts of Passion* and Sarah Sánchez, *Fact and Fiction: Representations of the Asturian Revolution (1934–1938)*, (Leeds, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-870)
871. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-871)
872. Avilés, ‘Los socialistas y la insurrección de octubre de 1934’, pp. 131-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-872)
873. Ruiz conceptualised October 1934 as a ‘defensive insurrection’ as is explicit in his title, *Insurrección defensiva y revolución obrera*. Shubert explains that the socialist plan was ‘to topple the right-wing government of the Republic and replace it with a left-wing government that would implement a number of reforms’ while Avilés disagrees: the socialists’ insurrection ‘meant a rupture with Republican democracy’ and ‘the path was that of social revolution’. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 165; Avilés, ‘Los socialistas y la insurrección de octubre de 1934’, pp. 152-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-873)
874. Vega, ‘De la dinamita a la huelga del silencio’, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-874)
875. Juliá, ‘República, revolución y luchas internas’, pp. 240-1. While there were differences between the socialists about the plan (Prieto was not convinced by the plan for an armed insurrection), there was no alternative presented. Juliá, ‘Los socialistas y el escenario de la futura revolución’, p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-875)
876. Aróstegui, *Largo Caballero*, p. 363; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-876)
877. Cited in Shubert, ‘Revolution in Self-Defence’, p. 269. [↑](#footnote-ref-877)
878. *La Tarde*, 24, 27 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-878)
879. Largo Caballero, *Escritos sobre la República*, pp. 92-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-879)
880. For accounts, see Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 169-70; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-880)
881. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 179-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-881)
882. The first confrontation had actually taken place near Oviedo late on 4 October due to a moment of nervousness. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 169-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-882)
883. Prior to the order, the socialist militias had been on guard for two nights previously, according to Belarmino Tomás. Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 30, p. 41, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-883)
884. Rodríguez Muñoz, *La Revolución de Octubre de 1934,* p. 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-884)
885. ‘Informe del Comité Regional de la CNT de Asturias sobre su actuación’, pp. 36-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-885)
886. Juan Andrés Blasco Rodríguez, ‘Las MAOC y la tesis insurreccional del PCE’, *Historia contemporánea*, 11 (1994), p. 129. Armed struggle was already part of the PCE strategy for taking power, though its members were not well organised into militias, ibid., pp. 132-9. For the MAOC report, ‘Informe del camarada Juan González al Comité Central de la Unión de Juventudes Comunistas de España sobre los sucesos revolucionarios de Octubre de 1934 en Asturias. Diciembre de 1934’ in Erice (coord.), *Los comunistas en Asturias*, p. 518. For the 150 communists, Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE por Carlos Vega relativo a los sucesos revolucionarios de octubre de 1934’, CDMH, PS-Madrid, caja 721, expediente 3, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-886)
887. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 2, p. 3; XXX, *Lo que yo he visto*, pp. 9-10; Villar, *El anarquismo*, p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-887)
888. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 172; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-888)
889. See Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 196-8; Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, pp. 292-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-889)
890. Juan Antonio Cabezas, *Morir en Oviedo. Historia en directo (vivencias de un periodista)*, (Madrid, 1984), pp. 56-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-890)
891. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 201-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-891)
892. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-892)
893. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-893)
894. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 32, p. 42, p. 75; XXX, *Lo que yo he visto*, pp. 29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-894)
895. Bomb manufacturing and armour plating took place in Mieres and Turón. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, pp. 37-8, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-895)
896. Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, p. 279. [↑](#footnote-ref-896)
897. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 220, p. 224. [↑](#footnote-ref-897)
898. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 122; Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, pp. 98-9. All fled in Mieres except the communists. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-898)
899. In Oviedo a younger JS-communist committee was proclaimed. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 405-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-899)
900. Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 139; Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, p. 360; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 8; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 428. [↑](#footnote-ref-900)
901. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 428. Rightists who had taken control of the *ayuntamiento* in Aller were removed and imprisoned. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-901)
902. Canel, *Octubre rojo*, pp. 162-3; *La Voz de Asturias*, 20 October 1934; Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-902)
903. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 239; Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-903)
904. Erice recently cited the figure of 1,400 in total, of which 1,100 were civilians and revolutionaries, while Rodríguez Muñoz arrived at the similar figures of 1,051 civilian dead and 326 of the armed forces, as a minimum. Taibo follows Díaz Nosty, who proposed a minimum of 1,100. González Calleja proposes a lower total figure of 1,196 while Preston elevates the number of civilian deaths to ‘nearly two thousand’. Erice, ‘El octubre asturiano’, p. 200; Rodríguez Muñoz, *La Revolución de Octubre de 1934*, pp. 825-6; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 476, Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 337-8; González Calleja*, En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 233; Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-904)
905. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 338-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-905)
906. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 476-9, pp. 548-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-906)
907. *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1934; Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, p. 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-907)
908. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 454-5. Díaz Nosty holds the opposing view, seeing the news as a continuation to the previous ideas espoused in *Avance*. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 276. Ruiz describes the information as ‘fraudulent’ and produced to counter the news from the rest of Spain, with the ‘exaltation’ giving way to a ‘persuasive tone’. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-908)
909. Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance*, p. 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-909)
910. Cruz has analysed the Spanish imaginary of 1917 and the USSR, and the way they were used to interpret events and inform collective action. Interestingly, while he traces this from 1917 through the Second Republic, he does not mention October 1934. Cruz, ‘¡Luzbel vuelve al mundo!’, pp. 273-303. [↑](#footnote-ref-910)
911. See Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 455. For Benavides, ‘[t]he ingenuousness, the simplicity and the revolutionary fervour of some of these sheets constitute their greatest beauty’. Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, p. 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-911)
912. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 274. [↑](#footnote-ref-912)
913. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-913)
914. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-914)
915. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 152, p. 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-915)
916. ‘Comité revolucionario de Alianza de Obreros y Campesinos de Asturias’, cited in Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, pp. 51-2. For the communist language of ‘workers and peasants [and soldiers]’ see Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*, especially p. 77, pp. 133-4, p. 195, p. 206; ‘El comité provincial revolucionario de Asturias. Proletarios todos, Obreros y Campesinos’, reproduced in Molins i Fábrega, *UHP*, pp. 130-1. For the third committee, see Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva,* p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-916)
917. ‘El comité provincial revolucionario de Asturias. Proletarios todos, Obreros y Campesinos’, reproduced in Molins i Fábrega, *UHP*, pp. 130-1; Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-917)
918. As emphasised by Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-918)
919. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 26; Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 468-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-919)
920. Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 146, p. 157, p. 171, p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-920)
921. Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 181; *El Noroeste*, 17 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-921)
922. Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-922)
923. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-923)
924. Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-924)
925. Grossi, a BOC member, pointed the finger at the PCE as the focal point for ‘discrepancies’ during the insurrection, despite claiming credit for convincing the socialists and anarchists to accept communist representatives on the Mieres committee. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, pp. 27-8, p. 45, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-925)
926. ‘Comité revolucionario de Mieres y su concejo’, reproduced in David Ruiz, *Asturias contemporánea (1808-1936)*, (Madrid, 1975), pp. 104-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-926)
927. Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 120-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-927)
928. ‘A los trabajadores y campesinos del Concejo de Grado’, reproduced in Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 90-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-928)
929. Molins i Fábrega, *UHP*, pp. 141-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-929)
930. Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras!*, p. 180. See also *El Noroeste*, 20 Octubre 1934; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 313. [↑](#footnote-ref-930)
931. Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, p. 248; Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 37, p. 58; Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-931)
932. *El Noroeste*, 9 December 1934; Martínez, *Dos jesuitas mártires en Asturias*, pp. 50-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-932)
933. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 415-17. For further discussion of Lafuente, see Brian. D. Bunk, ‘Revolutionary Warrior and Gendered Icon. Aida Lafuente and the Spanish Revolution of 1934’, *Journal of Women's History*, 15.2 (2003), pp. 99-122. [↑](#footnote-ref-933)
934. *El Noroeste*, 20 September 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-934)
935. *El Noroeste*, 9 December 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-935)
936. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-936)
937. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 457. [↑](#footnote-ref-937)
938. See ‘Comité revolucionario de Mieres y su concejo’, reproduced in Ruiz, *Asturias contemporánea*, pp. 104-5. See also Shubert, ‘The epic failure’, p. 132; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 457. [↑](#footnote-ref-938)
939. The second committee reportedly changed the password to ‘PP’ (*poder proletario—*proletarian power) according to Cabezas, and Ruiz cites other passwords such as ‘Trabajadores Rojos Salud’ (‘*salud*, red workers’), ‘FAI’ and ‘Pablo Iglesias’. Nevertheless, it is clear that UHP was main password. Cabezas, *Morir en Oviedo*, p. 114; Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 98, n. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-939)
940. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 13. See also Vega, ‘Notas complementarias al informe elevado al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-940)
941. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-941)
942. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-942)
943. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934; Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 54; Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 219. See also Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, p. 228. [↑](#footnote-ref-943)
944. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, pp. 81-2. A red flag was raised in Grado, too, Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, p. 302. [↑](#footnote-ref-944)
945. Cabezas, *Morir en Oviedo*, p. 94; *La Veu de Catalunya,* 28 October 1934. See also Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 81. It is also an emblematic feature of photographs from the Civil War. [↑](#footnote-ref-945)
946. In Mieres the committees were planned on 6 October and organised the following day. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-946)
947. See Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 126; Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 114-15. All cars were seized in Sotrondio and two hospitals set up. *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-947)
948. As in Sotrondio. *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. In La Felguera the distribution committees distributed the vouchers for goods. XXX, *Lo que yo he visto*, p. 15. See also *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1934. A voucher was even issued for hair-curling. Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, p. 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-948)
949. Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 67, pp. 177-8; Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 77. According to Solano Palacio, money was banned everywhere, except in Sama. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-949)
950. Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 123-4. Camín highlights the case of a man who was put in charge of requisitioning cattle and kept the best for himself. Camín, *El valle negro*, pp. 178-9. Díaz Nosty also reports that a group of thieves masqueraded as revolutionaries in order to steal cattle. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 262. [↑](#footnote-ref-950)
951. *Cruz y raya. Revista de afirmación y negación*, November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-951)
952. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 52; *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934; Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-952)
953. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-953)
954. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-954)
955. Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 75. See also Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, pp. 158-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-955)
956. *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-956)
957. *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-957)
958. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-958)
959. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 28, pp. 41-2. See also Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 48. *Región* and *El Noroeste* later reported cases, including how looting was used to take revenge in Olloniego. *Región*, 15, 18 December 1934; *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-959)
960. *La Voz de Asturias*, 18 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-960)
961. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-961)
962. Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, p. 273. [↑](#footnote-ref-962)
963. For what happened to the money, see Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 583-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-963)
964. For Mieres, Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 48. Vázquez claimed only one shop had been assaulted in Mieres. Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, pp. 33-4. Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War*, pp. 50-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-964)
965. *La Veu de Catalunya*, 28 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-965)
966. *El Noroeste*, 29 November 1934. Villar, *El anarquismo*, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-966)
967. See *El Noroeste*, 29 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-967)
968. Vega explains that the plan was to take the garrisons and arrest enemies of the insurrection, Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 6. One of the first decisions of the committee in Sotrondio was to ask the local population to hand in their arms, *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. In Turón, the company guards employed by Hulleras de Turón were disarmed, Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-968)
969. Villar, *El anarquismo*, p. 120; *La Voz de Asturias*, 17 October 1934; *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1934. At six o’clock in the morning on 5 October the church in Ciaño (Langreo) was searched for arms while the house of the parish priest of Pelúgano (Aller) was searched in the early hours of 6 October. Garralda García, *La persecución religiosa*, pp. 243-5, pp. 384-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-969)
970. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-970)
971. *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1934. For example, in Sotrondio engineers, foremen, local business ownersand priests were arrested. *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-971)
972. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-972)
973. This would fit with one of the three reasons for anticlerical violence identified by José María Sánchez; that of ‘The clergy perceived as military enemies in the specific circumstances of the uprising and war’. José María Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, (Indiana, 1987), p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-973)
974. Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*, pp. 120-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-974)
975. Canel, *Octubre rojo*, pp. 145-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-975)
976. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, pp. 125-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-976)
977. For the treatment of female religious see Llano, who visited several convents. Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 17, p. 26, p. 35, p. 50, pp. 61-2, pp. 81-2. For medical care and food preparation in the coalfields, Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, p. 33, p. 107; ACNP, *Asturias Roja*, p. 76; Taibo, *Historia general de Asturias. VIII*, p. 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-977)
978. Such as the parish priests of Sama and of Santa María la Real de la Corte (Oviedo). [↑](#footnote-ref-978)
979. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 555-6; Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, p. 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-979)
980. Canel, *Octubre rojo en Asturias*, p. 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-980)
981. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 404, p. 415. [↑](#footnote-ref-981)
982. Including the church of San Salvador in Cabañaquinta, the church of San Pedro in La Felguera and the convent of the Passionists in Mieres. In Nembra (Aller), the images from the chapels and the church were destroyed and devotional objects were destroyed in Suares (Bimenes). *Región*, 11 November 1934. The churches in Piñeres (Aller), Moreda and Pola de Siero were also targeted. *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-982)
983. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 175; XXX, *Lo que yo he visto*, p. 11; Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 160, p. 177; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 188; *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-983)
984. Canel, *Octubre rojo*, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-984)
985. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-985)
986. Ruiz, *Insurrección defensiva*, p. 134; Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 219-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-986)
987. *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-987)
988. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-988)
989. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 447; Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, p. 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-989)
990. The Holy Chamber (an ancient chapel inside Oviedo Cathedral) was blown up as the first committee discussed the withdrawal of the revolutionaries. See Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 204-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-990)
991. ACNP, *Asturias Roja*, p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-991)
992. *El Noroeste*, 19 September 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-992)
993. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-993)
994. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 324-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-994)
995. Garralda García, *La persecución religiosa del clero*, pp. 158-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-995)
996. ACNP, *Asturias Roja*, p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-996)
997. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, p. 44; Garralda García, *La persecución religiosa*, pp. 264-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-997)
998. Cabezas, *Morir en Oviedo*, p. 102; Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 279. [↑](#footnote-ref-998)
999. Martínez, *Dos jesuitas mártires en Asturias*, pp. 43-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-999)
1000. *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1934. This was echoed by Manuel Valcárcel, the parish priest of Ciaño who had been imprisoned with others in the church. He declared that one day a group of ‘strangers’ had come from Turón and ‘prowled’ the exterior of the building with the intention of assaulting it. Noval Suárez, *Langreo Rojo*, pp. 86-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-1000)
1001. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 16. Vincent has highlighted that this is often a feature of local investigations and questions the differentiation between inside and outside. Vincent, ‘“The keys of the kingdom”: religious violence in the Spanish civil war’, p. 71. There are recent reflections on violence from within and outside of the community, and the representation and role of the ‘stranger’ in Assumpta Castillo Cañiz, ‘El forastero en la Guerra Civil Española. Las dinámicas intra y extracomunitarias de la violencia en la retaguardia republicana’, *Revista Universitaria de Historia Militar*, 6.3 (2014), pp. 12-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-1001)
1002. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1002)
1003. ACNP, *Asturias Roja*, p. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-1003)
1004. *Los mártires de Turón*, p. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-1004)
1005. ACNP, *Asturias Roja*, p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-1005)
1006. ACNP, *Asturias Roja*, p. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-1006)
1007. Canel, *Octubre rojo en Asturias*, p. 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-1007)
1008. For two exceptions, see *bandos* from the second committee and from Grado: ‘Comité revolucionario de alianza obrera y campesina de Asturias a todos los trabajadores’, reproduced in Ruiz, *Asturias contemporánea*, p. 106 and ‘República de obreros y campesinos de Asturias’, reproduced in Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, pp. 149-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1008)
1009. Cited in Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, pp. 178-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-1009)
1010. Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-1010)
1011. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 26; ‘Comité revolucionario de La Felguera’, reproduced in Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-1011)
1012. ‘A los trabajadores y campesinos del Concejo de Grado’, reproduced in Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 90-2. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 150, p. 152; Ruiz attributes the authorship of this *bando* to a federalist. Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, p. 303. [↑](#footnote-ref-1012)
1013. ‘A los trabajadores y campesinos del Concejo de Grado’, reproduced in Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 90-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1013)
1014. ‘República de obreros y campesinos de Asturias’, reproduced in Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, pp. 149-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1014)
1015. Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance*, p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-1015)
1016. ‘Comité revolucionario de alianza obrera y campesina de Asturias a todos los trabajadores’, reproduced in Ruiz, *Asturias contemporánea*, p. 106; ‘El comité provincial revolucionario de Asturias. Proletarios todos, Obreros y Campesinos’, reproduced in Molins i Fábrega, *UHP*, pp. 130-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1016)
1017. ‘Comité Provincial Revolucionario, a todos los trabajadores’, reproduced in Ruiz, *Asturias contemporánea*, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-1017)
1018. ‘Comité Revolucionario de La Felguera’, reproduced in Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 136-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1018)
1019. Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 159; Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-1019)
1020. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-1020)
1021. Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, p. 217, p. 242, p. 278; Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 24. See also, Molins i Fábrega, *UHP*, pp. 128-9. Solano Palacio wrote that in Mieres while some were optimistic on seeing the planes, not all were. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1021)
1022. There was some awareness in Oviedo of what was going on thanks to the radio and telephone. *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1934; Cabezas, *Morir en Oviedo*, p. 73, p. 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-1022)
1023. For radio as way of connecting to the wider world, see Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 277.For the speakers, see *El Noroeste*, 23 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1023)
1024. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 67. Luis Bolín, *Spain: the vital years* (London, 1967), p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-1024)
1025. See the following *bandos* from Grado and Valdesoto (Siero): ‘A los trabajadores y campesinos del Concejo de Grado’, reproduced in Villar, *El anarquismo*, pp. 90-2 and ‘El Comité Revolucionario de Valdesoto, al pueblo en general’, ibid*.*, p. 121. Similarly, from Grado the ‘progressive advance of our glorious movement’ was said to be spreading through Spain and ‘in a large number of towns the movement has been consolidated with the triumph of workers, peasants, and soldiers’. ‘República de obreros y campesinos de Asturias’, reproduced in Llano, *Pequeños anales*, pp. 149-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1025)
1026. ‘Parte del día de hoy recogido por nuestra estación receptora’, reproduced in Llano, *Pequeños anales*, p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-1026)
1027. ‘Noticias oficiales de la revolución’ reproduced in Llano, *Pequeños anales*, pp. 150-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1027)
1028. Fontalbat and Álvarez, *Ceferino Álvarez Rey*, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-1028)
1029. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-1029)
1030. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-1030)
1031. Canel, *Octubre rojo*, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-1031)
1032. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p.53. Newspapers and pamphlets were thrown out of planes which read, ‘[t]he whole of Spain, with all of its force, is against you and is willing to smash you without pity, as a just punishment for your criminal madness’, Villar, *El anarquismo*, p. 108. See also Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 24 and Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-1032)
1033. Vega, ‘Copia de un informe remitido al Comité Central del PCE’, pp. 30-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1033)
1034. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 390. [↑](#footnote-ref-1034)
1035. ‘Comité revolucionario de alianza obrera y campesina de Asturias a todos los trabajadores’, reproduced in Ruiz, *Asturias contemporánea*, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-1035)
1036. ‘Bando del Comité de Guerra’, reproduced in Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-1036)
1037. *El Noroeste*, 20 October 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1037)
1038. Grossi, *La insurrección de Asturias*, p. 80.Aerial warfare was discussed at the Washington Conference of 1921-2 and as a result a commission of jurists was set up to study the issue. The Hague Rules of Air Warfare were ‘adopted and signed on 19 February 1923’ but only had ‘semi-official status’ before World War II. Heinz Marcus Hanke, ‘The 1923 Hague Rules of Air Warfare—A contribution to the development of international law protecting civilians from air attack’, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 33.292 (1993), pp. 12-44. Aerial bombardment had been banned by declarations signed at The Hague in 1899 and 1907. See Dietrich Schindler and Jirí Toman (eds), *The Laws of Armed Conflicts*, (Dordrecht, 1988), pp. 201-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1038)
1039. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 51. Díaz Fernández points to the invocation of international treaties in response to bombing. Canel, *Octubre rojo*, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-1039)
1040. Mathieu Corman, *Incendiarios de ídolos. Un viaje por la revolución de Asturias*, (Oviedo, 2009) [1935], trans. Carlos García Velasco, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-1040)
1041. Vega, ‘Notas complementarias al informe elevado al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-1041)
1042. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 276, n. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-1042)
1043. See Cruz, ‘¡Luzbel vuelve al mundo!’, pp. 273-303. [↑](#footnote-ref-1043)
1044. Molins i Fábrega, *UHP*, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-1044)
1045. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 152, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-1045)
1046. Villar, *El anarquismo*, p. 115, p. 118. Taibo also divides attitudes according to politics. The communists ‘insisted’ on the red army, the socialists spoke of it, and the anarchists attacked it. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 457. [↑](#footnote-ref-1046)
1047. As it would during the Civil War two years later. [↑](#footnote-ref-1047)
1048. Llano, *Pequeños Anales*, p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-1048)
1049. Solano Palacio’ criticism of the red army formed by communists in Mieres centres on the obsession with drills. Solano Palacio, *La Revolución de Octubre*, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-1049)
1050. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 457. [↑](#footnote-ref-1050)
1051. Cruz*, El Partido Comunista de España*, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-1051)
1052. Vega claimed Grado was a ‘soviet’ regime and had been told that ‘true soviets’ in Bimenes and Lada, but has no details. The third committee was portrayed as more representative and therefore more ‘soviet-like’. Vega, ‘Notas complementarias al informe elevado al Comité Central del PCE’, p. 10, p. 16, p. 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-1052)
1053. Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 18-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-1053)
1054. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, p. 101. Trade unions and political parties were banned and only functioned clandestinely. Their centres, an integral part of day-to-day life for many, were closed. It was hardly business as usual. [↑](#footnote-ref-1054)
1055. There is a relatively extensive historiography of the socialist left and the divisions within the socialist movement. See Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 17-50; Juliá, *La izquierda del PSOE*; Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, pp. 345-459; Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*,pp. 132-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1055)
1056. For the alliances and Popular Front, the best work is that of Juliá, particularly, *Orígenes del frente popular en España*. See also Martin Alexander and Helen Graham (eds), *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts. Comparative Perspectives*, (Cambridge, 1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-1056)
1057. See Montero, *La CEDA*, vol. II, pp. 173-207; Tusell, *Historia de la Democracia Cristiana en España*, pp. 282-312. [↑](#footnote-ref-1057)
1058. Cruz, *En* *el nombre del pueblo*, p. 181. The theme of polarisation runs through Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic* and Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, who offer opposing views. Polarisation and the difficulty of coexistence are also central to the studies included in Rey (ed.), *Palabras como puños*. Tellingly, the attempt to forge a national government by the socialists and the CEDA is overlooked given that it contradicts this narrative. [↑](#footnote-ref-1058)
1059. Stanley Payne, ‘Political Violence during the Spanish Second Republic’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25.2/3 (1990), p. 279. For a recent summary of the historiography, see González Calleja, ‘La historiografía sobre la violencia política en la Segunda República española’, pp. 403-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-1059)
1060. Eduardo González Calleja, ‘La necro-lógica de la violencia sociopolítica en la primavera de 1936’, *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 41.1 (2011), p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-1060)
1061. Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 164-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-1061)
1062. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 222-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1062)
1063. Gabriele Ranzato, ‘El peso de la violencia en los orígenes de la guerra civil de 1936-1939’, *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*, 20 (2008), pp. 159-82; Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 197-215. [↑](#footnote-ref-1063)
1064. *Región*, 28 April, 7 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1064)
1065. González Calleja*, En nombre de la autoridad*, pp. 259-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-1065)
1066. Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 142-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1066)
1067. Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace. Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War*, (Oxford, 2002), pp. 251-2; Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 82-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1067)
1068. For a military history of the operation, see Álvarez, ‘The Spanish Foreign Legion during the Asturian Rising’, pp. 200-24. The figures are from López Ochoa, cited in Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 476. [↑](#footnote-ref-1068)
1069. See Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 474. [↑](#footnote-ref-1069)
1070. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 533, p. 593; *La Tarde*, 4 May 1936. They were looked after by the International Mining Federation. Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, pp. 360-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1070)
1071. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 300; María Rosa de Madariaga, *Los moros que trajo Franco*, (Barcelona, 2006), p. 143. See also Lavilla, *Los hombres de octubre*, pp. 145-6; Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, p. 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-1071)
1072. Aguado Sánchez, *La* *revolución de octubre*, p. 301. [↑](#footnote-ref-1072)
1073. For the ‘culture of war’ derived from ‘colonial warfare’, Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, p. 253. See also Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, p. 82; Madariaga, *Los moros que trajo Franco*, p. 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-1073)
1074. Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, p. 253; Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, p. 84; Rodríguez Muñoz, *La Revolución de Octubre de 1934*, p. 706; Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 475. For a list of detention facilities, see Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 513. [↑](#footnote-ref-1074)
1075. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 542. [↑](#footnote-ref-1075)
1076. *Los presos de Asturias ¡Acusamos!...*, (n.p., 1935). [↑](#footnote-ref-1076)
1077. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 503. Methods included regular beatings, the ‘laughter pipe’, ‘the *bain-marie*’, ‘aviation’ and ‘*el cepo*’. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 520. [↑](#footnote-ref-1077)
1078. Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 87-8; Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 420-1. In 1936, López Ochoa and Doval would be tried for their actions in the repression. Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, p. 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-1078)
1079. Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, pp. 355-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-1079)
1080. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 484-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1080)
1081. Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, p. 85; Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 485-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1081)
1082. González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 234; Aguado Sánchez, *La revolución de octubre*, p. 304; Rodríguez Muñoz, *La Revolución de Octubre de 1934*, p. 714. [↑](#footnote-ref-1082)
1083. Cited in Díaz Nosty, *La comuna asturiana*, p. 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-1083)
1084. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 500. [↑](#footnote-ref-1084)
1085. See *El Noroeste*, 26, 30 January 1935. According to Taibo, 82 were disabled from being able to work and at least 11 ‘went mad’, while a councillor from Mieres died from injuries suffered from torture. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 519, pp. 529-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-1085)
1086. Benavides, *La revolución fue así*, p. 460. [↑](#footnote-ref-1086)
1087. Taibo*, Asturias*, pp. 474-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1087)
1088. The SOMA was accused of participation in the insurrection and of organisational irregularities. *Región*, 30 November 1934; *El Noroeste*, 30 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1088)
1089. *El Noroeste*, 24 November 1935; *Boletín oficial de la provincia de Oviedo*, 27 November 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1089)
1090. At the end of February there were still 600 children without classes in the third district of Oviedo and children in San Martín del Rey Aurelio could not attend school. *Región*, 24 February 1935; *El Noroeste*, 27 February 1935. In April, there were 2,000 children without a school place in Mieres and in late October the situation had not returned to normal in La Felguera, ibid., 17 April, 22 October 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1090)
1091. *El Noroeste*, 12 December 1934. For official figures ten days later, *El Noroeste*, 21 December 1934. San Vicente did not open until January. *El Noroeste*, 17 January 1935.Even by February, only 531 were back at Fábrica de Mieres. *Región*, 3 February 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1091)
1092. Initially, 95 were called to work at the arms factory of La Vega. *El Noroeste*, 28 December 1934 [↑](#footnote-ref-1092)
1093. After the elections in 1936 a collection was organised to pay for a new organ. *Avance*, 27 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1093)
1094. AL, Actas [volumen VI], f. 81; *Región*, 20 January 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1094)
1095. Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, p. 279. [↑](#footnote-ref-1095)
1096. Benito del Pozo, *El ayuntamiento republicano de Oviedo*, pp. 111-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-1096)
1097. AO, Actas [volumeV], f. 64, f. 77. For Langreo and the Deputation, see, for example, AL, Actas [volumen VI], f. 103; AHPA, Actas [volume III], ff. 297-8, ff. 304-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1097)
1098. Benito del Pozo, *El ayuntamiento republicano de Oviedo*, p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-1098)
1099. Borque estimates that approximately 30 teachers were arrested after the insurrection. Leonardo Borque López, *El magisterio primario en Asturias (1923-1937). Sociedad y educación*, (Oviedo, 1991), p. 206, p. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-1099)
1100. García Montes, *Ángeles Rojos sin alas para volar*, p. 24; Ángeles Flórez Peón, *Memorias de Ángeles Flórez Peón “Maricuela”*, (Oviedo, 2009), p. 34, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-1100)
1101. *El Noroeste*, 6, 15 November, 11 December 1934. There were other hints of desperation in the press: a mother and son died in a *chamizo* and food was stolen from a market in Mieres. *Región*, 20 December 1934; *El Noroeste*, 16 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1101)
1102. *Región*, 13 December 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1102)
1103. Laura Branciforte, ‘Legitimando la solidaridad femenina internacional: el Socorro Rojo’, *Arenal*, 16.1 (2009), p. 43, pp. 45-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1103)
1104. Branciforte, ‘Legitimando la solidaridad femenina internacional’, p. 46. See further her *El Socorro Rojo Internacional en España (1923-1939). Relatos de la solidaridad antifascista*, (Madrid, 2009) and Francisco Erice, ‘Mujeres comunistas. La militancia femenina en el comunismo asturiano, de los orígenes al final del franquismo’, in Erice (coord.), *Los comunistas en Asturias*, especially p. 322; Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras!*, p. 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-1104)
1105. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1105)
1106. *Región*, 20 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1106)
1107. The individual was drunk and reportedly attacked the assault guard as he was being taken away. The assault guard shot him. *El Noroeste*, 9 April 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1107)
1108. *Asturias*, 26 October 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1108)
1109. *El Noroeste*, 11 December 1934; Flórez Peón, *Memorias de Ángeles Flórez Peón*, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-1109)
1110. Camín, *El Valle Negro*, p. 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-1110)
1111. E.g. *El Noroeste*, 15 September 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1111)
1112. *El Noroeste*, 30 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1112)
1113. *El Noroeste*, 9 June 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1113)
1114. *El Noroeste*, 26 June, 28, 30 July 1935. In March in Sotrondio there was no ‘real’ carnival, ibid*.*, 8 March 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1114)
1115. *La Tarde*, 24 June, 1 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1115)
1116. *Asturias*, 19 October 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1116)
1117. *Región*, 13 January 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1117)
1118. *El Noroeste*, 25 October 1934. Ruiz hints that there may have been some truth in this. Ruiz, *Octubre de 1934*, pp. 310-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-1118)
1119. Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, p. 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-1119)
1120. *El Noroeste*, 21, 30 March 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1120)
1121. *El Noroeste*, 22 March 1935. See also ibid*.*, 10 March 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1121)
1122. *Región*, 20 November 1934. The attitude towards the security forces is evident in isolated incidents reported in the press. For example, Rafael Hernández was reported to have been singing in calle Fruela in Oviedo. The night watchman asked him to stop and Rafael was accused of attacking him and of saying that ‘he wanted another revolution in order to kill all of the guards’ at the police station. *Región*, 6 September 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1122)
1123. *Región*, 20 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1123)
1124. Borque López, *El magisterio primario en Asturias*, p. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-1124)
1125. *El Noroeste*, 17 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1125)
1126. *El Noroeste*, 2 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1126)
1127. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78442, expediente 15, 1935; González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios*, p. 301. [↑](#footnote-ref-1127)
1128. This was not the only survival strategy: Belarmino was transferred from the prison to the mental hospital in December. However, psychiatric doctors declared that he only had a ‘light mental deficit’ which was ‘compatible with normal civil life’. The prison in Oviedo, full of detained revolutionaries, would not have been a comfortable place for someone who had collaborated with the repression. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78438, expediente 158, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1128)
1129. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 79460, expediente 138, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1129)
1130. *Región*, 25 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1130)
1131. José was sentenced to eight years and fined 10,000 pesetas. *Región*, 12 September 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1131)
1132. *El Noroeste*, 23 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1132)
1133. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78437, expediente 167, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1133)
1134. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78451, expediente 44, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1134)
1135. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78437, expediente 178, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1135)
1136. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78437, expediente 167, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1136)
1137. *El Noroeste*, 20 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1137)
1138. González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-1138)
1139. Document n. 868, 11 May 1935, AA, caja 3, legajo: Gobierno civil—1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1139)
1140. For Turón, *El Noroeste*, 27 September 1935. For the incident at the FE-JONS centre, which resulted in one fatality, *Región*, 13, 14, 21 June, 16 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1140)
1141. *El Noroeste*, 16 April 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1141)
1142. *La Tarde*, 8 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1142)
1143. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 421-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1143)
1144. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 578-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-1144)
1145. For governor Velarde, the construction strike was ‘an attempt at revolutionary recovery’. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 423. [↑](#footnote-ref-1145)
1146. *Región*, 21 March 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1146)
1147. *Región*, 6 October 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1147)
1148. In mid-April, there were still 4,200 soldiers in Asturias. *Región*, 13 April 1935. In May military operations in Pola de Lena were reported, followed by reports on military manoeuvres in Urbiés (Turón), Oviedo and Trubia. They were hardly small affairs: in Urbiés 3,000 soldiers were mobilised, ibid*.*, 15, 17, 18, 25 May 1935. Marches took place in August. *El Noroeste*, 11 August 1935. For other manoeuvres see, ibid., 25 September, 8 November 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1148)
1149. *El Noroeste*, 23 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1149)
1150. *Región*, 27 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1150)
1151. *Región*, 31 January 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1151)
1152. AO, Actas [volume V], f. 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-1152)
1153. *Región*, 18 May 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1153)
1154. For example, *El Noroeste*, 27 December 1934, 30 April, 7 June 1935; *Región*, 18 September 1935. For the authorities’ response, *El Noroeste*, 2 April 1935; *Región*, 20 September 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1154)
1155. García de Tuñón Aza, *Apuntes para una historia de la Falange asturiana*, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-1155)
1156. *La Nacion* declared: ‘In Asturias it is not a movement of men which has been repressed, but of monsters’. Cited in Taibo, *Asturias,* p. 477. [↑](#footnote-ref-1156)
1157. *Región*, 25 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1157)
1158. Canel, *Octubre rojo en Asturias*; *Región*, 7 August 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1158)
1159. Hugo García, *The Truth about Spain! Mobilizing British Public Opinion, 1936-1939*, (Eastbourne/Portland, 2010), p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-1159)
1160. Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, p. 255; Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 504-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-1160)
1161. *Región*, 12 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1161)
1162. *Región*, 30 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1162)
1163. The *ayuntamiento* agreed to send a telegram to the Minister of the Interior in protest. *Región*, 3 November 1934; AO, Actas [volume V], ff. 71-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1163)
1164. *Región*, 11 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1164)
1165. Though this was rejected by Doval. *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1165)
1166. *Región*, 16 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1166)
1167. *El Noroeste*, 16, 17 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1167)
1168. *Región*, 19 June 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1168)
1169. AO, Actas [volume V], f. 119; *Región*, 15 June 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1169)
1170. *Región*, 11, 13 October 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1170)
1171. *Región*, 6 October 1935; Flórez Peón, *Memorias de Ángeles Flórez Peón*, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1171)
1172. Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, p. 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-1172)
1173. Taibo, *Asturias*, pp. 547-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1173)
1174. Bunk, *Ghosts of Passion*, p. 73. For example, *La Libertad*, 4 February 1936; *El Socialista*, 18-25 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1174)
1175. *La Tarde*, 13 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1175)
1176. The SRI published *Los crímenes de la reacción espanola* in October 1935. See the summary in Bunk, *Ghosts of Passion*, p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-1176)
1177. *Región*, 11 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1177)
1178. As Townson notes, the ‘offensive’ by business leaders actually began in October 1934, not in December 1933, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 280-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1178)
1179. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 482. [↑](#footnote-ref-1179)
1180. *El Noroeste*, 15 November 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1180)
1181. *Boletín oficial de la provincia de Oviedo*, 5 December 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1181)
1182. *Región*, 25 April, 4 May 1935; *La Tarde*, 24 June 1935. When the Francoist state introduced the National Identity Document in 1944, those first in line were those released from prison. See Martí Marín Corbera, ‘La gestación del Documento Nacional de Identidad: un proyecto de control totalitario para la España Franquista’, in Carlos Navajas Zubeldía and Diego Iturriaga Barco (coords), *Novísima*: *II Congreso Internacional de Historia de Nuestro Tiempo* (Logroño, 2010), pp. 323-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-1182)
1183. Taibo, *Asturias*, p. 482; *El Noroeste*, 25 December 1934. [↑](#footnote-ref-1183)
1184. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 79458, expediente 138, 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1184)
1185. The cemetery was returned to the parish priest of Ciaño. AL, Actas [volumen VI], f. 79. In Mieres, a priest requested the return of the cemetery. *Región*, 23 March 1935. In San Martín del Rey Aurelio the previous agreement which had banned funeral processions with the raised cross was revoked, ibid*.*, 2 January 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1185)
1186. AL, Actas [volumen VI], f. 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-1186)
1187. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 416-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-1187)
1188. Shubert, *The Road to Revolution*, pp. 113-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-1188)
1189. Arboleya’s letter is cited in Benavides, *El fracaso social del catolicismo español*, p. 555. Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy*, p. 196. For Mendizábal’s account, see *Cruz y raya. Revista de afirmación y negación*, November 1934, pp. 129-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-1189)
1190. Benavides, *El fracaso social del catolicismo español*, pp. 618-19, p. 627, pp. 629-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-1190)
1191. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 421-2, p. 427, p. 429. [↑](#footnote-ref-1191)
1192. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 427-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1192)
1193. *Región*, 13, 28 December 1934, 20 July 1935; *El Noroeste*, 14 February 1935. For discussion of the Frente Nacional del Trabajo (Workers’ National Front), see Montero, *La CEDA*, vol. II, pp. 576-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-1193)
1194. *Región*, 23 June, 30 August 1935. The AP claimed over 50,000 members in the whole of Asturias in 1935. Montero, *La CEDA*, vol. I, p. 374. [↑](#footnote-ref-1194)
1195. *Acción*, 28 December 1935; *Región*, 13 October, 24 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1195)
1196. Adrian Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, (London, 1990), pp. 54-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1196)
1197. *Región*, 28 March 1935; *El Noroeste*, 5, 27 April 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1197)
1198. At the time it was feeding 220 children. *El Noroeste*, 14 April 1935. For earlier calls for help, see ibid, 21 February, 6 April 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1198)
1199. *Región*, 1 October 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1199)
1200. Pozo, *El ayuntamiento republicano de Oviedo*, pp. 90-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1200)
1201. *Región*, 26 July 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1201)
1202. *Región*, 6 October, 10 December 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1202)
1203. *Región*, 1 February 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1203)
1204. For the *straperlo* affair see Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 315-329. [↑](#footnote-ref-1204)
1205. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 165-71; Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 336-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1205)
1206. González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios*, p. 298. [↑](#footnote-ref-1206)
1207. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, p. 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-1207)
1208. Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, p. 157; Juliá, *Orígenes del frente popular en España*, pp. 50-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1208)
1209. Graham, *Socialism and War*, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-1209)
1210. Juliá, *Orígenes del frente popular en España*, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-1210)
1211. See the full text of *Octubre: Segunda etapa* in Carlos Ramírez, *Balance de una ruptura. Los socialistas en el gobierno, en la guerra y en la revolución*, (Madrid, 2012), pp. 277-328. For the Asturian JS’s response, ‘Escrito que dirigen los presos socialistas de la Cárcel Modelo de Oviedo a la Comisión Ejecutiva de la Federación Nacional de Juventudes Socialistas’, in Indalecio Prieto (ed.), *Documentos socialistas: escritos de Indalecio Prieto, Ramón González Peña, Toribio Echevarría, Amador Fernández, Antonio Llaneza, Alejandro Jaume, Francisco Torquemada, jóvenes presos de Asturias y de Madrid, etc., etc.*, (Madrid, n.d.), pp. 179-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-1211)
1212. Graham, *Socialism and War*, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-1212)
1213. For Largo Caballero’s refusal, Graham, *Socialism and War*, p. 21. See also Juliá, *La izquierda del PSOE*, pp. 5-28; Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organised Socialism*, pp. 164-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1213)
1214. Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 22-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1214)
1215. Cruz, *El Partido Comunista de España*, p. 217, pp. 225-6, pp. 236-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1215)
1216. Juliá, *La izquierda del PSOE*, pp. 176-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-1216)
1217. Álvarez, ‘El Sindicato Único de Mineros de Asturias’, p. 312. [↑](#footnote-ref-1217)
1218. *Asturias*, 26 October 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1218)
1219. *Asturias*, 23 November 1935; Mateos, *¡Salud, compañeras!*, pp. 184-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1219)
1220. *El Noroeste*, 1, 23 November 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1220)
1221. *El Noroeste*, 19 December 1935; Bizcarrondo, ‘Democracia y revolución en la estrategia socialista’, p. 344. [↑](#footnote-ref-1221)
1222. *El Noroeste*, 1, 4, 10, 17 December 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1222)
1223. *El Noroeste*, 21 December 1935; González Calleja, *En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-1223)
1224. *Asturias*, 21 December 1935; *El Noroeste*, 21, 29 December 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1224)
1225. *Asturias*, 28 December 1935. [↑](#footnote-ref-1225)
1226. *El Noroeste*, 4 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1226)
1227. *Región*, 5 January 1936. *Asturias*, 4 January 1936. Friera, the new governor, treated them as ‘citizens’. *El Noroeste*, 7 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1227)
1228. *El Noroeste*, 15 January 1936; AO, Actas [volumen VI], f. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1228)
1229. González Calleja*, En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-1229)
1230. *Región*, 12 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1230)
1231. *Región*, 14 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1231)
1232. *Región*, 16, 29 January 1936. See also arrests in Mieres for ‘subversive shouts’, *El Noroeste*, 5 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1232)
1233. Blasco Rodríguez, ‘Las MAOC y la tesis insurreccional del PCE’, pp. 140-2, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-1233)
1234. José C. Gibaja Velázquez, ‘La tradición improvisada: el socialismo y la milicia’, *Historia contemporánea*, 11 (1994), p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-1234)
1235. Juan Antonio de Blas *et al.*, *Historia general de Asturias. IX. La Guerra Civil. Primera parte*, (Gijón, 1978), p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-1235)
1236. *Región*, 7 January 1936; *La Tarde*, 13 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1236)
1237. *Región*, 1 February 1936; *El Noroeste*, 9, 14 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1237)
1238. E.g. *La Tarde*, 15 January 1936. According to the paper, an individual was stopped in Oviedo for wearing clothes interpreted as ‘subversive’. He was hit by the police, taken to the police station and later freed, ibid*.*, 22 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1238)
1239. See, for example, *La Tarde*, 5, 10 February 1936. There was criticism of treatment of prisoners in the wake of the insurrection and complicity of prison staff and directors in murder of prisoners in October 1934. See ibid*.*, 17 January, 14, 24 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1239)
1240. *La Tarde*, 4, 16 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1240)
1241. See Juliá, *Orígenes del frente popular en España*, pp. 216-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-1241)
1242. Montero, *La CEDA*, vol. II, p. 312. [↑](#footnote-ref-1242)
1243. Headed ‘For Spain!’, the first column was headed ‘Left’ with ‘freemasonry, separatism, revolution, marxism, hunger, death’ underneath. In the opposing ‘Right’ column there was ‘religion, national unity, prosperity, social justice, work, peace’. The insert ended ‘for Spain and against the Revolution!’. *Región*, 4 February 1936. See also Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-1243)
1244. *Región*, 1 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1244)
1245. *El Noroeste*, 16 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1245)
1246. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 171-4. See also, Montero, *La CEDA*, vol. II, pp. 317-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1246)
1247. ‘Asturias has no other flag than those of the revolution or counterrevolution [...] For this reason the centrist candidacy will be ineffective [*no podrá llegar a la opinión*]’. *El Noroeste*, 4 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1247)
1248. *Región*, 1 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1248)
1249. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-1249)
1250. As reported in *Región*, 6 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1250)
1251. *Región*, 16 February 1936; *Acción*, 16 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1251)
1252. *Región*, 16 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1252)
1253. *Región*, 14, 21 January 1936; *El Noroeste*, 4, 11 February 1936. For the funeral, ibid*.*, 18 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1253)
1254. Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-1254)
1255. *Región*, 8 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1255)
1256. *Región*, 7 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1256)
1257. *Región*, 13 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1257)
1258. *El Noroeste*, 18, 22 February 1936 [↑](#footnote-ref-1258)
1259. *Boletín oficial de la provincia de Oviedo*, 27 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1259)
1260. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 180. González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios*, pp. 302-3. *Región*, 19, 20, 21 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1260)
1261. Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism*, pp. 109-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-1261)
1262. Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, p. 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-1262)
1263. Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-1263)
1264. Flórez Peón, *Memorias de Ángeles Flórez Peón*, p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-1264)
1265. *La Tarde*, 9, 16 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1265)
1266. Ramón García Montes recalled that ‘the life of our family returned to normal. Everything began to function as it had before the revolution’, García Montes, *Ángeles Rojos sin alas para volar*, p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-1266)
1267. Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 110-11; González Calleja, *En el nombre de la autoridad*, pp. 265-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1267)
1268. *Región*, 22 February 1936. No one worked at El Viso mine either as they waited for the ex-prisoners to arrive. *El Noroeste*, 23 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1268)
1269. *El Noroeste*, 23 February 1936. There were similar scenes in San Martín del Rey Aurelio. *La Tarde*, 28 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1269)
1270. *La Tarde*, 2 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1270)
1271. Graham, *Socialism and War*, pp. 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-1271)
1272. See AO, Actas [volume VI], f. 20; AA, Actas [volume IV], ff. 43-4, f. 67; AHPA, Actas [volume IV], pp. 180-4. *Región* approved of San Martín del Rey Aurelio’s decision to allow appeals against dismissal. *Región*, 28 February 1936. See also González Calleja, *En el nombre de la autoridad*, pp. 263-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1272)
1273. Benito del Pozo, *El ayuntamiento republicano de Oviedo*, p. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-1273)
1274. The *ayuntamiento* of Langreo paid for female relatives of the Carbayín dead to go to Madrid to petition for ‘moral’ and ‘material [...] reparation’, *Región*, 13 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1274)
1275. AO, Actas [volume VI], f. 21, f. 79; AA, Actas [volume IV], f. 48, f. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-1275)
1276. AO, Actas [volume VI], f. 21; AL, Actas [volume VI], f. 105, f. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-1276)
1277. *Boletín oficial de la provincia de Oviedo*, 26 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1277)
1278. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 430; *El Noroeste*, 26, 28 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1278)
1279. *Avance*, 3 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1279)
1280. *La Tarde*, 24 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1280)
1281. *La Tarde*, 28 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1281)
1282. See also Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 120-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1282)
1283. The Agrupacion Socialista of Hueria de San Andrés held an assembly to judge the conduct of its members during the insurrection. *La Tarde*, 23 March 1936. Socialists in Sotrondio, too, decided to deal with the ‘delicate’ matter and invited the communists to participate, ibid*.*, 26 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1283)
1284. *La Tarde*, 22 April, 13 May 1936.For biographies, see *Diccionario Biográfico del Socialismo Español*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1284)
1285. Reports of the congress in *La Tarde*, 24, 27 April, 4 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1285)
1286. *Región*, 25 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1286)
1287. ‘Actas de la reunión extraordinaria celebrada por la Célula de Barrio no. 1, de Sama para tratar el caso de las críticas al camarada Damián’, AHPA, Sección: Guerra Civil, Fondo: PCE: Comité Comarcal de Sama de Langreo, Serie: correspondencia, caja h 15, expediente 18. Rees underlines the importance of ‘willpower’ in the PCE. Rees, ‘Living Up to Lenin’, p. 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-1287)
1288. *La Tarde*, 3 February 1936. An individual named Manuel Díaz wrote to *La Tarde* to reject rumours that he was a ‘fascist’ and claimed he had been fooled into joining a *sindicato profesional*, ibid*.*, 6 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1288)
1289. *La Tarde*, 11 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1289)
1290. *Avance*, 18 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1290)
1291. *La Tarde*, 4 March 1936. Accusations were often published, e.g. ibid*.*, 9 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1291)
1292. *La Tarde*, 23 March, 8 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1292)
1293. *La Tarde*, 30 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1293)
1294. *La Tarde*, 27 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1294)
1295. AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 78441, expediente 62, 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1295)
1296. *La Tarde*, 2 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1296)
1297. *La Tarde*, 7 February 1936; AA, Actas [volume IV], f. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-1297)
1298. *La Tarde*, 29 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1298)
1299. AA, Actas [volume IV], f. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-1299)
1300. *La Tarde*, 4 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1300)
1301. AL, Actas [volume VI], f. 81; AA, Actas [volume IV], f. 16, f. 19., f. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-1301)
1302. AA, Actas [volume IV], f. 53, f. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-1302)
1303. *La Tarde*, 6 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1303)
1304. The ‘red police’ in Malaga even received a daily wage. González Calleja*, En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 280. Before the elections a young man had been searched by several individuals, including one dressed in blue overalls, in calle de Toreno. *Región*, 11 January 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1304)
1305. *Región*, 1 April 1936. In Sama days later four individuals stopped and searched a doctor, ibid., 4 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1305)
1306. Letter to Comarcal de Langreo from Célula de Calle de Sama, 3 April 1936, AHPA, sección: Guerra Civil, fondo: PCE: Comité Comarcal de Sama de Langreo, serie: Correspondencia, caja h 15, expediente 18; Letter from Frente Popular de Langreo al Comarcal de Langreo, 2 June 1936, ibid*..* [↑](#footnote-ref-1306)
1307. With little effect, González Calleja*, En nombre de la autoridad*, pp. 284-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1307)
1308. Juliá, *La izquierda del PSOE*, pp. 30-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1308)
1309. *Región*, 30 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1309)
1310. Uría notes that boycotts reached their ‘maximum’ level of importance in 1936. Uría, ‘Asturias 1920-1937’, p. 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-1310)
1311. See Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, p. 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-1311)
1312. *La Tarde*, 27 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1312)
1313. Women in La Felguera tried to stop women from Noreña selling at the market for having voted for the right. *El Noroeste*, 21 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1313)
1314. *La Tarde*, 18 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1314)
1315. *La Tarde*, 23 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1315)
1316. *La Tarde*, 8 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1316)
1317. *Avance*, 7 July 1936; Uría, ‘Asturias 1920-1937’, p. 275. See announcements placed in *La Tarde*, 15, 22, 29 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1317)
1318. *La Tarde*, 2 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1318)
1319. *La Tarde*, 16 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1319)
1320. *La Tarde*, 2 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1320)
1321. For example, three cases in San Martín del Rey Aurelio. *La Tarde*, 15 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1321)
1322. *Avance*, 7 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1322)
1323. *La Tarde*, 11 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1323)
1324. Adrian Shubert, ‘A reinterpretation of the Spanish Popular Front: the case of Asturias’, in Alexander and Graham (eds), *The French and Spanish Popular Fronts*, pp. 223-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1324)
1325. *Avance*, 28 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1325)
1326. Shubert, ‘A reinterpretation of the Spanish Popular Front’, p. 224. [↑](#footnote-ref-1326)
1327. *Región*, 3 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1327)
1328. *Avance*, 11 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1328)
1329. *Avance*, 28 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1329)
1330. This was understood as the ‘feeling’ of the Popular Front, *Avance*, 17 July 1936. An ‘Antifascist Popular Front’ had been created in Oñón (Mieres), ibid*.*, 11 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1330)
1331. *Región*, 10 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1331)
1332. *Región*, 15 April 1936. Military parades were the salient feature of celebrations all over Spain. Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 134-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1332)
1333. Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*, pp. 69-70, p. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-1333)
1334. Manuel Álvarez Tardío and Roberto Villa García, ‘El impacto de la violencia anticlerical en la primavera de 1936 y la respuesta de las autoridades’, *Hispania sacra*, 65, 132 (2013), p. 705. [↑](#footnote-ref-1334)
1335. This information is taken from the appendix in Álvarez Tardío and Villa García, ‘El impacto de la violencia anticlerical en la primavera de 1936’, pp. 750-2. The provincial press was censored, but does allow the corroboration of some of the incidents. See *Región* for Valdecuna and Villoria. *Región*, 17 March, 11 April, 20 May 1936. See also AHPA, Audiencia Provincial, caja 79465, expediente 133, 1936; ibid., expediente 96, 1936; ibid*.*, expediente 9, 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1335)
1336. Álvarez Tardío and Villa García, ‘El impacto de la violencia anticlerical en la primavera de 1936’, pp. 750-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1336)
1337. *Región*, 8 May 1936. A parish priest was also expelled in Granada. González Calleja, *En el nombre de la autoridad*, p. 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-1337)
1338. Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, p. 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-1338)
1339. *Region*, 15 March 1936 [↑](#footnote-ref-1339)
1340. *Región,* 21 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1340)
1341. *La Tarde*, 13 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1341)
1342. *Región*, 21, 24 April 1936. There were also arrests in Gijón at the end of the month. García de Tuñón Aza, *Apuntes para una historia de la Falange asturiana*, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-1342)
1343. *La Tarde*, 11 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1343)
1344. *Región*, 12 May 1936; *La Tarde*, 20 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1344)
1345. Montero, *La CEDA*, vol. II, pp. 178-201, pp. 206-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1345)
1346. Tusell, *Historia de la Democracia Cristiana en España*, p. 358. [↑](#footnote-ref-1346)
1347. González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios*, pp. 340-61; Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, p. 251. [↑](#footnote-ref-1347)
1348. Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 193-4; González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios*, p. 366. [↑](#footnote-ref-1348)
1349. González Calleja*, En nombre de la autoridad*, p. 273; Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’,pp.437-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1349)
1350. Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, p. 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-1350)
1351. *Región*, 26 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1351)
1352. *La Tarde*, 3 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1352)
1353. *Región*, 12, 15, 17 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1353)
1354. Suárez Cortina, *El fascismo en Asturias*, p. 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-1354)
1355. *ABC*, 6, 31 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1355)
1356. *Región*, 6 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1356)
1357. *La Tarde*, 6 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1357)
1358. As explained in the previous article from Moreda. [↑](#footnote-ref-1358)
1359. *Región*, 24 March 1936; *La Tarde*, 27 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1359)
1360. *La Tarde*, 4 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1360)
1361. *Región*, 29 February 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1361)
1362. *Región*, 1, 23 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1362)
1363. *Avance*, 14 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1363)
1364. Borque López, *El magisterio primario en Asturias*, pp. 210-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-1364)
1365. *Región*, 24 March 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1365)
1366. *Región*, 7 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1366)
1367. *La Tarde*, 4 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1367)
1368. Even the applause of the crowd was described as a ‘machine gun’ in reference to its sound. *La Tarde*, 4 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1368)
1369. All agreed that it was an exhibition of power according to Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 146-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1369)
1370. *La Tarde*, 4, 6 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1370)
1371. *El Carbayón*, 15 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1371)
1372. Gerald Blaney, ‘New Perspectives on the Civil Guard and the Second Republic, 1931-1936’, in Álvarez Tardío and Rey (eds), *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, pp. 204-5. See also Blaney, ‘The Civil Guard and the Spanish Second Republic’, pp. 52-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1372)
1373. *La Tarde*, 27 May 1936; *Región*, 27 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1373)
1374. *La Tarde*, 27 May 1936; *Región*, 27 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1374)
1375. *Región*, 27 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1375)
1376. Blas *et al.*, *Historia general de Asturias. IX*, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1376)
1377. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 432, n. 450. [↑](#footnote-ref-1377)
1378. *Avance*, 7 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1378)
1379. *Avance*, 27 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1379)
1380. *Avance*, 30 June, 1, 2 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1380)
1381. *Avance*, 28 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1381)
1382. *Avance*, 11 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1382)
1383. *Avance*, 15 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1383)
1384. *Avance*, 7, 8 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1384)
1385. *Avance*, 9, 10 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1385)
1386. *Avance*, 9 July 1936. And there were some isolated incidents of retaliation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1386)
1387. *Avance*, 16 July 1936. For the quotation, Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, ‘El sable y la flor de los monárquicos contra la República’, in Rey (ed.), *Palabras como puños*, p. 479. [↑](#footnote-ref-1387)
1388. Despite Payne’s claim that the Popular Front was a ‘revolutionary process’. See Stanley Payne, ‘A Critical Overview of the Second Spanish Republic’, in Álvarez Tardío and Rey (eds), *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-1388)
1389. The communist newspaper *Mundo Obrero* declared in mid-June that the government could ‘rely on the militias for whatever it takes to maintain and develop the policies undertaken under the banner of the Popular Front’. Blasco Rodríguez, ‘Las MAOC y la tesis insurreccional del PCE’, p. 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-1389)
1390. *Avance*, 1 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1390)
1391. *Avance*, 2 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1391)
1392. *Avance*, 4 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1392)
1393. *La Tarde*, 8 April 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1393)
1394. *Avance*, 5 July 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1394)
1395. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 433. [↑](#footnote-ref-1395)
1396. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, pp. 434-5; *Región*, 16 May 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1396)
1397. *El Carbayón*, 4 June 1936; Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 436. [↑](#footnote-ref-1397)
1398. *La Tarde*, 1 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1398)
1399. Malefakis, *Agrarian reform*, pp. 368-71. See also Macarro Vera, *Socialismo, República y revolución en Andalucía*, pp. 428-38.Valencia, in contrast, was relatively calm. Richard Purkiss, *Democracy, Trade Unions and Political Violence in Spain. The Valencian Anarchist Movement, 1918-1936*, (Eastbourne, 2011), p. 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-1399)
1400. *La Tarde*, 22 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1400)
1401. Castejón Rodríguez*,* ‘La patronal hullera asturiana’, p. 436. The mixed juries were charged with sorting out the reduction of the working week inside the mines to 40 hours. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21 June 1936. The working day in Asturian coalmines to six hours 25 minutes, and piecework rates were raised by five per cent. *Avance*, 27 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1401)
1402. *La Tarde*, 22 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1402)
1403. *El Carbayón*, 7 June 1936. [↑](#footnote-ref-1403)
1404. Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936–1939*, (Cambridge, 2002), p. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-1404)
1405. Blas *et al.*, *Historia general de Asturias. IX*, p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-1405)
1406. For a first-hand account see Juan Ambou, *Los comunistas en la resistencia nacional republicana. La guerra en Asturias, el País Vasco y Santander*, (Madrid, 1978). [↑](#footnote-ref-1406)