



# Repression at the University of Zaragoza: The Role of *The Public Order Court*

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**Abstract:** The history of the University of Zaragoza during the last decade of Franco's dictatorship is not far from the reality experienced in other campuses such as Madrid's, Barcelona's, Valencia's or Seville's. Since 1965 the actions in the campus will evolve progressively, reaching days of real struggle that will lead to the direct confrontation with the academic authorities, and the resulting academic sanctions, detentions and identifications, the entry of law enforcement into the campus and even the closure of the university. Throughout the last ten years of the dictatorship, the anti-Franco student mobilisation will open up to the monopoly and personalism of the PCE to give rise to a considerable and constant increasing number of students who will not hesitate to get involved in the creation of new associations and upcoming forms of struggle. During the 1960s a new type of university protest began in which the protagonists, the objectives and the confrontational actions constituted an innovation that the regime failed to recognise and whose solution was physical and judicial repression. The University of Zaragoza became a continuous focus of challenge to the regime. The legal tools used were the Jurisdiction of Public Order and the Public Order Court. The analysis of their judgements constitutes a primary source of extraordinary importance that reveals that students in Zaragoza were an active and crucial element in the anti-Franco fight in the city. The campus led concentrations, assemblies and other dissatisfaction displays, highlighting the Communist Party of Spain and its pursuit to lead and promote student mobilisation.

**Keywords:** Public Order Court, Student Protests, University of Zaragoza, Youth, Repression, Detention

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## 1. Introduction

Two stages can be distinguished in the history of student opposition. The first of them corresponds to the 40s and the first half of the 50s, which would be, according to Marc Baldó, of a testimonial and minority phenomenon, almost isolated and located, exclusive from the two main universities: Madrid's and Barcelona's. [1] The turning point or hinge event that marked the transition from one phase to the next is constituted by the episodes of February 1956 in Madrid. Their importance not only lays on this being the first serious crisis during the dictatorship, but also on the conclusions reached by university students against the regime: "the regime was clearly unreformable", it was not "going to use reason, but repression" [2].

However, even in 1956 the student policy was the product of "no more than 20 people", just as described by José María Maravall in an interview done by an activist at that moment. [3] From February 1956 to 1965, as stated by Encarna

Nicolás, the student protest will claim increasing radical demands concerning the academic life and the right to have a democratic union different to the SEU [4] This particular university can be defined by its poor educational planification. The governments were always behind the needs in terms of their laws and investments, and they did not define a new educational model until 1970. [5]

The economic expansion stirred the social foundations, opening new expectations and altering customs, especially in young people [6]. Dissenting voices emerged from students and teachers. In the first case it is worth mentioning the criticism from Ángel Latorre, José Luis López Aranguren, Carlos Paris or Enrique Tierno Galván among others. Their claiming discourse was based on asking for a reform of the scholar system in political terms, with a real appliance of democratic principles. In their criticism it is also mentioned the situation of permanent teachers, whose recruitment had been necessary due to the increasing number of students.

During this period, new opposition groups emerged within

the environment of the universities. It is the case of the *University Socialist Group* (ASU), founded around 1956 and which had Boyer, Víctor Pradera, Vicente Girbau and Miguel Sánchez Mazas as its leaders. Its life was very short as a consequence of different detentions, and during the course of 1964-1965 the ASU turned into the *Socialist Youth*, that lumped together youngsters from different left-wing tendencies. In 1958 the *Popular Liberation Front* —known “Felipe”— emerged. Its origins were in the progressive concerns of a group of Catholics linked to the *Christian Worker Youth*. Its presence in the student movement became very important until the course of 1960-61, when its popularity decreased as a consequence of its position in of revolutionary mass action [7].

The *University Democratic Spanish Federation* (FUDE), a trade union founded in 1961 by members of the *Communist Party of Spain* (PCE), the *University Socialist Group* and the *Popular Liberation Front*, deserves a special mention. It was supposed to be a mass organization to fight the SEU at university. In December 1963 the FUDE was already there in 9 out of 12 university districts: Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Granada, Oviedo, Sevilla, Valencia and Zaragoza [8].

One of the strategies practised by the PCE, PLF and ASU, if not the most outstanding, was the infiltration of students in the SEU. Little by little they soon began to wear it out, getting ready to dynamite it. Not only did militants practice entryism, but also did students alien to the opposition and regime: they were “independent”. The official Labour Union, weakened by the anti-Franco mobilisation, began a functional and political stage of degradation, fuelled both by its divorce from the student movement, that undermined from within, and the emptying of competences that the technocrat governments encouraged by being pierced to the academic authorities [9].

## 2. Beginning of the Mobilisations

The course of 1964-1965 was the last one for the SEU, the Decree of Presidency of April 1965 converted the SEU, as an organisation, into a structure divided into branches of Professional Student Associations that only lasted for two years because the own students boycotted them [10]. This decree implied the final settlement of the SEU. Overall, the period from 1960 to 1965 was characterised by an effective deployment of force, a very rational political strategy and a clever pronouncement of claims. The new phase that begins from 1965 onwards was characterised from the beginning for being a phase of open political claims, generalised political participation and a more radical fighting [11].

In the 60s Franco’s regime had to face levels of conflict important enough to decisively affect the public life and political dynamic of the regime. This conflict manifested itself in four areas: working, student, regional and ecclesiastic. [12]

There is a general belief that claims that from 1965 onwards the university became a constant conflict factor. An event that adds importance to this matter is the “awakening” of many

university districts, those that had barely performed protests and claiming actions, as Zaragoza’s. Apart from that, in many cities a certain amount of frequent student protests became visible in universities. This is the case of Valladolid, Salamanca, Santiago, Murcia, Oviedo or La Laguna. [13] The period from 1965 to 1968 is characterised by an efficient process of organisation and structuring of the student movement.

In the last years plenty of research on this matter and at the local level has been carried. [14] A substantial part of it has undertaken the double task of describing and analysing the student mobilisation with the aim of making the key events in the different campuses of Spanish geography known, and determining their degree of involvement in the structuring of mobilisations in the national area.

The University of Zaragoza has been an exception. There are very relevant studies and approaches, as those carried by Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, but most of them focus on the years following the Civil War or have very descriptive shades without analysing interpretations. The article presented is in line with a further research that pretends to reconstruct, analyse and determine the characteristics of the university mobilisation in Zaragoza during the last decade of the dictatorship.

## 3. Creation of the Court of Public Order

The course 1967-1968, as well as the following one, was a period of continued radicalisation, especially in Barcelona and Madrid. There was not a single faculty that did not experience lockouts and the stoppage of academic life. The role of the police in universities between 1966 and 1968 had generally been of control and information, but after 1968 repression turned blind and systematic. The new academic conjuncture was beyond comprehension for the authorities, a determining factor that promoted the searching of repressive alternatives that could solve, understanding this as eradicate, the university problem. The result was the creation, among ordinary jurisdiction, of a new judicial body: The Jurisdiction of Public Order.

The new body was born as a special court created to repress all kinds of political or trade-union opposition, and whose number of causes increased in tandem with the growth of opposition activity. [15] The law 154/63, of 2 December 1963, initiated the Public Order Court and the Jurisdiction of Public Order, the former being in charge of instructing the summaries and establishing the interim measures found convenient. On its behalf, the Jurisdiction of Public Order was in charge of judging the facts gathered in those summaries and delivering the correspondent sentence.

To the new court:

- 1) “It is conferred exclusive jurisdiction in the whole national territory regarding the other courts.”
- 2) “It is conferred exclusive jurisdiction to know the crimes committed in the whole national territory, individualised by the tendency, in more or less extent of severity, to subvert the main principles of the State, disturb the public order or lead to the downfall of the

national consciousness.” [16]

As a previous step to the summary on the part of the Public Order Court, the Socio-Political Brigade was in charge of carrying all the previous preparatory actions that resulted in an initial report that should be referred to the JOP. These reports included the declaration of the detainee or detainees and the evidence that had been requisitioned (books, leaflets, flyers, and so on). This way the Socio-Political Brigade, one of the most important repression tools, alluded to a myriad of times because of its brutality and determination to obtain confessions, became the primary link of the judicial proceedings that began with the establishment of the new Jurisdiction of Public Order.

All the documentation was transferred to the judge of the corresponding instruction, depending on the place where the crime was committed, and it took statement and determined the detainee’s release or pre-trial detention. Depending on the measure, a trial was held in the headquarters of the Jurisdiction of Public Order located, according to section 3 of the Law 154 / 1963, in Madrid. The new court would share dependencies in Salesas’ Palace with the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General, the Provincial Court and the Duty Court of Madrid. [17]

With the TOP the regime tried to “civilise” justice specialised in the persecution of political crimes, as well as it diverted attention from the military courts.

The growing opposition activity caused the breakdown of the TOP from 1971 onwards. This is evidenced by the decree of 13 April 1972, under which the Public Order Court No. 2 was created. The TOP staff was expanded to two judges and one fiscal, the number of officials, assistants and agents was triplicated up to 33 public servants (14 in the TOP, 11 in the JOP No. 1, and 8 in the JOP No. 2), and from that moment onwards, trials were celebrated almost every day of the week. Once it disappeared, Franco’s regime was suspended through the Royal Decree-Law of 4 January 1977, coinciding with the Political Reform Law and the launching of the National Audience.

During the years that the JOP was active 22,660 judicial proceedings were initiated and resulted in 3,798 sentences, in which 8,943<sup>1</sup> people were proceeded, 74% with guilty verdicts. [18] However, the number of people affected by repression jumped to 50,609, people with a repressive crime policy were punished in different ways: sanctions, deprivation of liberty, endless examinations with all kinds of expletives, aggressions, etc. or even the sole act of identification, that without a doubt carried serious consequences.

Attention should be drawn, just as Juan José del Águila does in *The TOP. Liberty’s repression (1963-1977)*, reference book for mandatory consultancy, on the fact that not all the detainees by the socio-political police and at disposal of the Jurisdiction of Public Order (JOP) were proceeded, fact from which it can be assumed that the number of sentences dictated were clearly underneath the number of detentions

executed.

## 4. Sociological Profile of the Accused

### 4.1. Occupation

The sociological analysis of the defendants made by Juan José del Águila confirmed a reality: the leadership of the workers in the successive exhibitions against the regime, comprising the main spotlight of discomfort and mobilisation and followed by the student collective, whose activity was focused to a greater extent in the last decade of the dictatorship.

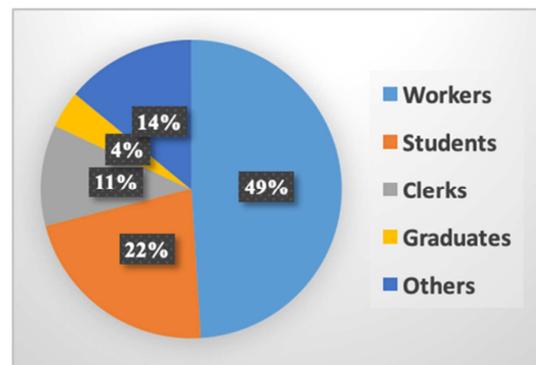


Figure 1. Professional activity of people processed by the TOP 1964-1976.

Source: Juan José Del Águila, *The Top. Liberty’s repression (1963-1977)* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2001), p. 278.

If we set the scene in Zaragoza and we scrupulously apply the principle of the crimes committed in this city, it can be observed that sentences from the TOP comprise the period from 1969 to 1976. The first sentence, even if set in 1969, assesses events committed in April 1968. The same happens with the sentence of 1976, that assesses events that took place in 1973. As a result of the time lag between the moment when the crimes were committed and the trial, the huge volume of work that the Jurisdiction of Public Order had to deal with during the last years of its existence can be confirmed.

Despite the time frame of the sentences, the existence of protest and discomfort actions against the regime were not a reality until the final eight years. A quick exploration of the main depositories and specialised bibliography presents a different scenery. The “awakening” of the campus took place in 1965 with the call for strikes and assemblies, and in the following two years the University of Zaragoza can be included among the universities where protests, at different levels, had a certain amount of continuity. The outburst would take place from 1968 onwards.

The University of Zaragoza had representatives in the different reunions that were carried along 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968, which constituted the beginning of the organisational process of the student movement. But not only did it play a part in the main organisational highlights, but also constituted a leading opposition focus. As an example of

<sup>1</sup>We understand as defendants those people who were given a bill of indictment with the consequential trial and correspondent sentence.

it, it is worth a mention the 48 hours strike that was called the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1967 as a response to the detentions of some students in Valencia, including the representatives of the student associations of Zaragoza's faculties of Philosophy and Literature, and Medicine, on the occasion of the meeting celebrated in January of that same year in Valencia.

The tracking was so high that the Governing Body of the University had to call for an extraordinary session the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February where it was agreed to open disciplinary files for students that did not go to class, which meant the loss of the entitlement to enrol, as mentioned in the section 1 of the decree 5 of September 1958 about the Disciplinary Regime.

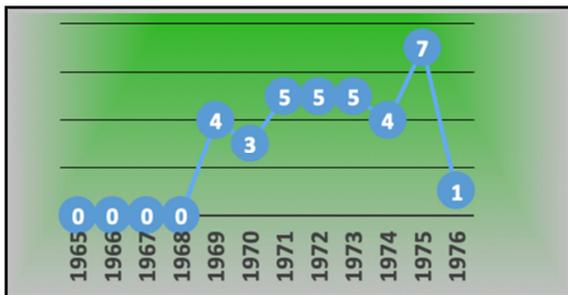


Figure 2. Sentences for crimes committed by students in Zaragoza. 1965-1976.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. "Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit" (2007).

The searching of sentences has been carried attending to the crimes committed in Zaragoza by defendants were students. Finally, I have been able to obtain the following results:

- 1) 33 sentences where students were processed. In some of them the defendants were all students whereas in others they share accusations with labourers.
- 2) An amount of 108 processed people, with a clear majority of students: 86.
- 3) An average of 3,27 people in each sentence, which is above the national average of 2,32.

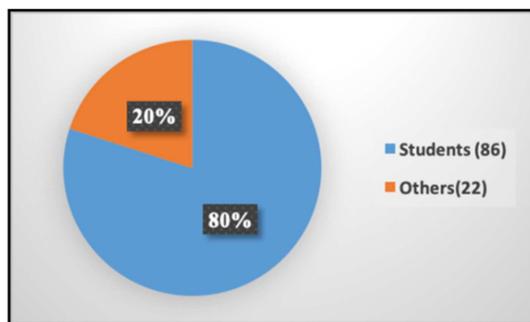


Figure 3. Number of defendants in sentences with student participation 1963-1976.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. "Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit" (2007).

To be able to correctly analyse these data it is necessary to

put them in relation with all the crimes committed in Zaragoza, regardless of the occupation of the defendants. Nevertheless, this first information already reveals an obvious fact: the little representativeness of students of Zaragoza in the global computation of students processed by the TOP in Spain. An affirmation that cannot be indicative of anything without taking into consideration, as previously stated in the explanation of the university context in Zaragoza, that the university district of Zaragoza was lagging in the number of enrolled students compared to those districts where mobilisations were more numerous and so "provided" with more students in the list of defendants.

By exploring the basis of the data from the sentences we can find a total number of 66 sentences in which crimes in Zaragoza are prosecuted, without discrimination of occupation or crime, being 180 indicted. In view of these data the extreme importance of the role of the student collective is obvious:

- 1) From 66 sentences, in 33 there is student participation (50%).
- 2) From 180 indicted, 86 are students (48%).

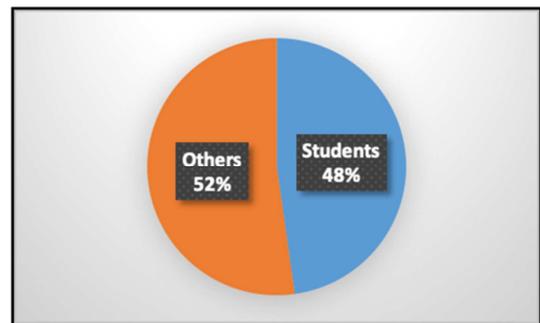


Figure 4. Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order 1963-1976. Crimes committed in Zaragoza: total of defendants.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. "Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit" (2007).

#### 4.2. Age of the Defendants

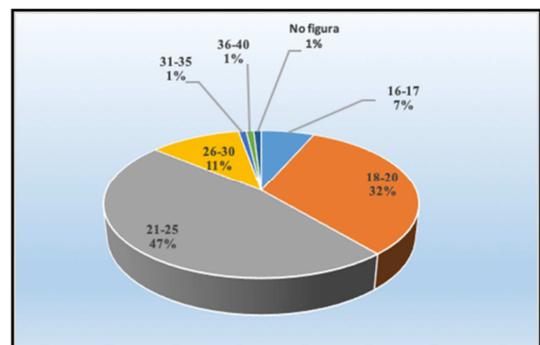


Figure 5. Defendants by age 1963-1976. Sentences with student participation.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. "Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit" (2007).

Another sociological trait analysed is the age of the defendants. If we take into account the age of the defendants in the sentences where there is student engagement, we can observe that the opposition essentially came from the youngsters: 86% were not even 26 years old. The average does not reach 22 years old. On the contrary, if we take into account all the sentences in which crimes were committed in Zaragoza, the percentage of people processed under 26 goes down to 69%, with an average age close to 30 years old. Despite the decline, these values are beyond the state level, in which we find that only 50% are younger than 26 years old.

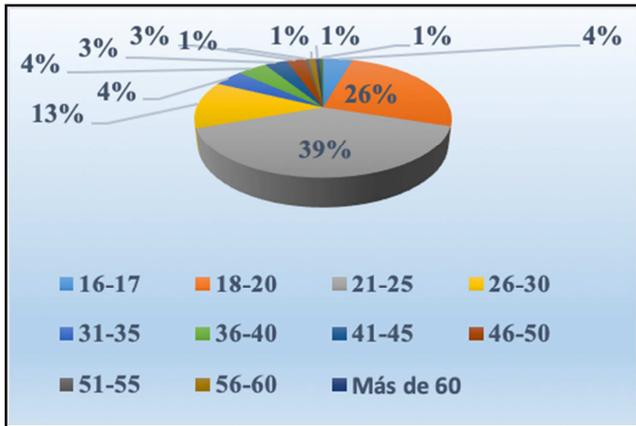


Figure 6. Defendants by age 1963-1976. Crimes committed in Zaragoza.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. "Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit" (2007).

It is a generation born after the Civil War, a new university generation that shows its disillusion with the regime in terms of their position within and the meaning of the dictatorial regime. The starting point of the student movement is found in the dissatisfaction of students against university and the political reality they lived. [19] Ultimately, we are talking about the importance of the generational factor in the growing opposition to the regime in Zaragoza.

### 5. Type of Crime of the Accused

Putting aside the sociological analysis of the defendants it is time to examine the crimes committed. In the course of the thirteen years of existence of the court, the behaviours that were subject of repression were those that infringed, according to the existing legislation, upon the "internal security of the nation":

- 1) Illicit association
- 2) Non-peaceful reunions or demonstrations
- 3) Gun ownership
- 4) Public disorder
- 5) Outrage to the nation
- 6) Crimes against the head of state, governing body, primary laws or form of government
- 7) Illegal propaganda

If we set Zaragoza as scenery, three are the crimes that stand out above the rest:

1. Illicit association
2. Illegal propaganda
3. Non-authorized demonstration

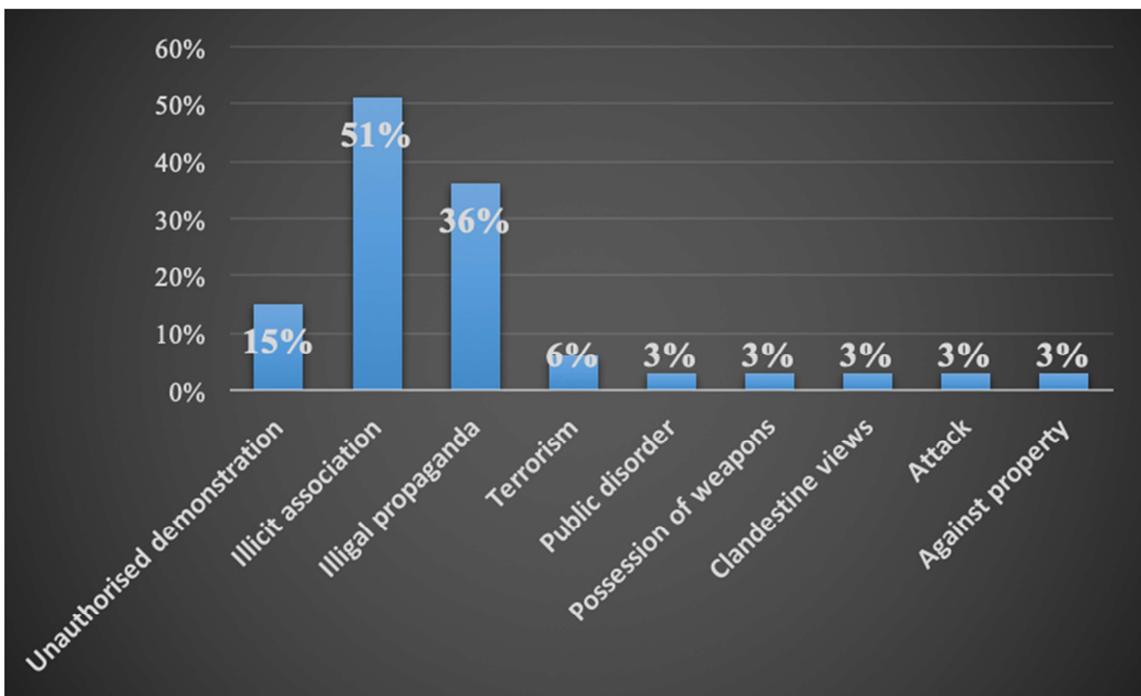


Figure 7. Percentage of sentences with crimes committed in Zaragoza with student participation 1963-1976.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. "Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit" 2007).

## 6. Political Affiliation of the Detainees

Beyond the kind of crimes that were more frequently committed, we can observe which public associations or organisations are more alluded. Standing out above the rest are those from the communist sphere. The PCE and its youth branch, The Communist Youth, are mentioned in 53% of the sentences. As far as the Workers Commissions concern, they are conceived as an organisation “under the sponsorship and patronage of the PCE” and as an “entity created by the PCE”. Even the Democratic University Federation of Students<sup>2</sup> is defined as a “student body from the PCE”.

The vast bibliography that exists about the student movement during the dictatorship stands, as Marc Baldó does, that the student movements owed a lot to the communists. These were intensively behind the events of 1956. They were also behind the democratic trade unions of the students. Both the police records and some of the main actors highlight this fact [20]. Ciscar Casabán, referring to the I RCP of 1967, states that “it is justice to highlight that the PCE was the main organisation that promoted, designed, boosted and supported the Congress... the communist strategy achieved all its objectives, backing in democratic students that wanted a regime of freedom and democracy” [21].

The role of the party was favoured with the statements of the state of emergency, at a national level, occurring during January 1969 and December 1970, as claimed by Elena Hernández Sandoica. She explains that a great number of students, members of the mobilisations independently of their precedence, were attracted and convinced by the PCE, not because of its programme, but probably because of its capacity of organisation and the personal strength of its militants, something that was favoured when repression headed the movement and the organised and coordinated suggestions of the party were regarded as an effective method of fighting. Against the sporadic and disorganised actions, the organisational capacity of the PCE acted as an appealing element. In any case, we cannot forget the importance, if not hegemony, of this party in many cases and not few scenarios. [22].

In the case of Zaragoza, the same relevance is given to communism. Even the authorities understood the student mobilisation in Zaragoza as a phenomenon nearly or completely promoted by communism. The Communist Party is defined as an “entity that advocates the disruption of the current Hispanic structure, relying on non-peaceful means”. [23] The vision and definition of the party had nothing to do with the objectives and strategies followed from 1956 onwards, and the application of the speech “for national reconciliation”.

This turning point radically modified the objectives of the

party in the short and medium term as well as its basic strategy; now socialism was something to reach only through a gradual procedure and by democratic means, being the most immediate objective for the establishment of a democratic regime. [24]

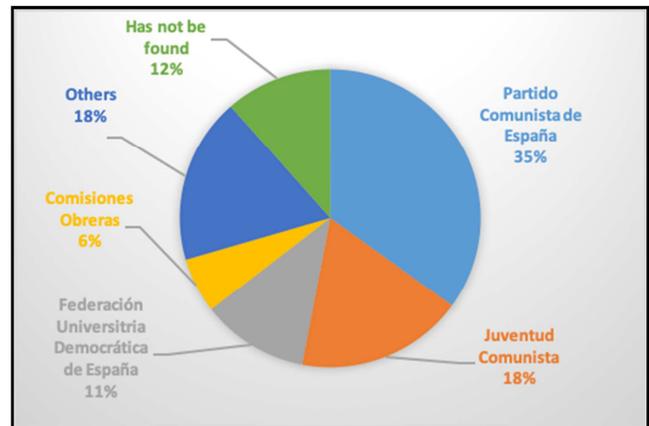


Figure 8. Percentage of sentences where political groups are condemned.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. “Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit” (2007).

Other facts that constituted a crime for the authorities, by virtue of the national legislation and the university law were, for example, the attempt to “structure an organisation called Student Comissions [31] in Zaragoza”, to mailbox duplicated printed papers with the title “The meaning of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May for the working class” [25] or to get out of the Medicine Faculty holding a sign of repulse against a teacher. [26]

In second place, and it is a worth mentioning aspect to consider, we find the typification of the illegal propaganda crime. It must be remembered that the making, possession, distribution and any other action that meant to give voice to the pursued and illegalised groups was considered a criminal action. In the case of the university students of Zaragoza, 36% of the sentences with their participation had to do with owning illegal propaganda, only in two cases they were accused of distributing, launching or “spreading” leaflets or any other kind of material, and just in one occasion it was about making illegal material.

A quick conclusion could state that the organisational capacity of the opposition, especially communist, was poor, with limited resources considering the scarce number of occasions where individuals in charge of making propaganda were arrested, or the absence of any kind of reference to the seizure of the machinery needed for its elaboration. However, by taking a deep look into the content of the sentences we can find very relevant information.

In some cases, the propaganda material was signed by the Provincial Committee of the Communist Movement of Zaragoza and the Local Committee of the Communist Party of Spain in Zaragoza. Both authorities inform us about the rallying capacity and willingness of the communist sectors of Zaragoza, of the structure, more or less consolidated, that

<sup>2</sup>Trade union founded in 1961 by members of the Communist Party of Spain, the University Socialist Group and the People’s Liberation Front. It was intended to be an organisation to fight the SEU at the university. In December 1963 the FUDE was already there in nine out of twelve university districts: Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Granada, Oviedo, Sevilla, Valencia and Zaragoza.

was in the university area on the side of the PCE, a fact proved by the vast amount of paperwork that can be found in the Historic Archive of the PCE and that comes to indicate the leading of the group in the university opposition to the dictatorship regime.<sup>3</sup>

Leaflets and other formats signed by the Working Commissions, the Communist Movement of Spain or even the International Communist Party of Spain were also requisitioned. In sum, regardless of the kind of document (books, booklets, manifests) or acquired form (graffiti, leaflets, etc) the signers are always of communist affiliation.

## 7. The Itinerary of the Protests

Thirdly, being one of the key aspects in the process of narrative reconstruction of the university protest, we find unauthorised reunions and demonstrations. Thanks to the information collected we can elaborate this small itinerary of the protests:

*5th April 1968*

“On the occasion of the detention of university students and their internment in the pre-trial prison of Zaragoza, a group of approximately 40 colleagues stood on the public road, in front of the said jail, without any kind of authorisation for that purpose”. [27]

*22nd January 1970*

“On the occasion of certain academic incidence, a small group of students, whose number has not been specified, went out of the Medicine Faculty of Zaragoza and, carrying a banner of repulsion towards a particular teacher, they headed to Independence Avenue and separated near Casa Jiménez Street when they noticed the presence of the public forces”. [28]

*28th January 1970*

“Around 1:00 pm, after celebrating an assembly in the university “campus”, in the vicinity of the Faculty of Sciences of Zaragoza, a group of about 2,000 students went out, without the necessary authorisation, screaming: “Liberty!”, “Police out of university!” and “No repression!”. They headed together down Pedro Cerbuna Street to Corona de Aragón where they increased their shouting, disturbing the normality of the street, and they invaded the pavement disrupting the traffic. They finally separated in the presence of the Public Order on the adjacent streets. [29]

*11st March 1970*

“In the morning there was an assembly in the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Zaragoza and when it ended, groups of 150-200 students went out together towards San Francisco Square, marching united, as they dispersedly screamed, interrupting the traffic and carrying several banners and booklets subscribed by the so-called Communist Party of Spain (International) that, on their way out, threw

from one of the highest floors of the faculty mentioned.

From that square they paraded in a cluster to General Mola’s Road, where they were disaggregated by the Public Order Force. [30]

*20th January 1972*

“Three individuals provided with a “Molotov Cocktail” prepared by themselves threw it against the counselling of the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, breaking the glass of the door and producing a huge fire that scorched the walls with the consequent disruption of the proper order in the mentioned educational institution”. [31]

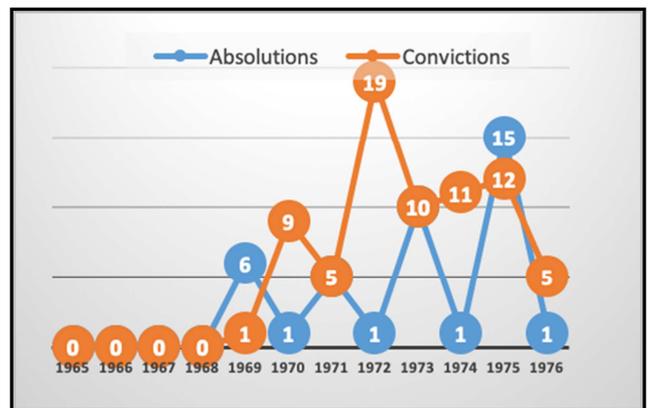
*26th April 1972*

“Following the guidelines given in a university assembly, a group of 50 people gathered, knowing that they missed an authorization, in José Antonio’s Square in the city of Zaragoza, wandering together as they cried “liberty” and “assassins”, disrupting the normality of the public road until they were separated by the police force”. [32]

*27th March 1973*

“A group of around 200 people met in Corona de Aragón Street at its confluence with Valencia’s Avenue, barging into the pavement where the traffic stopped for a certain period of time, strolling together along these streets screaming “Public university”, “Down with fascism” and “the police are assassins”, disturbing the peace and tranquillity of the street”. [33]

## 8. Temporal Evolution of Failures



**Figure 9.** Evolution of judicial decisions: sentences with student presence. 1965-1976.

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of data from Del Águila Torres, Juan José. “Sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order. TOPDAT: a database to exploit” (2007).

The events collected show a progressive process of radicalisation of the protest, both in actions and proclamations, according to the general lines of the student protest at the national level. Even if we attend to the temporal evolution of the judgement, it can be observed how claiming actions in the campus of Zaragoza emerged, since late 1968, the percentage of condemnatory sentences raised significantly. Either by the radicalisation of the events judged, or by the pattern of jurisdictional change that began with the

<sup>3</sup>In many sentences the illegal propaganda crime is included in the exposition of motives to judge together with crimes as illicit association or unauthorised demonstration but it is only sentenced against the facts considered more severe. So, illegal propaganda cannot be quantified as a crime that causes the privacy of freedom or a monetary fine. That is the reason why the percentage is higher than the one shown in the correspondent graphic.

successive states of emergency, or by the realisation on the part of the authorities of the “university problem” and their endeavour to solve it with repression

The same assessments can be drawn if taking into account the convictions sentenced. The imposed sanctions to the crimes prosecuted during the biennium 1969-1970, ranged from 2 to 9 months of major arrest, but if we move in time to 1971-1972, the sanctions go from 6 months to 3 years of minor prison, with many sentences with sanctions over 8 months of minor prison. With respect to the last years of the regime, a strong turning point can be appreciated from the beginning of 1975 with an outstanding reduction of the penalties, especially if we compare sentences of different years with the same crime to judge. From that moment onwards a strong increase of the absolutions can be contemplated.

## 9. Conclusion

The sentences of the Jurisdiction of Public Order constitute one of the most revealing primary sources I have analysed up to this moment. A lot of information can be dug out, from the own temporal evolution of the sentences to the average time of pre-trial detention of the defendants, etc. These and other aspects have been analysed with the attempt to develop a coherent and complete profile of the student protest that can be object of confirmation or nuance from other primary sources consulted.

As a recompilation, it is worth mentioning that there are three characteristics that are being drawn and confirmed:

1. *The importance of student mobilisation in the successive protests that took place in Zaragoza from 1969 onwards (from a quantitative point of view we can affirm that it is above the national average).*

The data outlined here not only reveals the high degree of participation of those unhappy students, but it is also an indicator of the close relationship between them and the working-class movement in Zaragoza. The own existence of sentences in which both sectors are included, and the mentioned facts, lead to affirm that the premise, extensively explained in many papers, of the confluence of the ways of acting and, at least part of the objectives followed in the working-class and student world, is also shown for the case of Zaragoza. In some cases, different students were judged for owning illegal propaganda signed by Working Commissions. In other cases, by being militants of the Working Union Opposition.

2. *Students' youth participation in the protests*

Since the end of the 50s there was a progressive arrival to the university of students that were just kids during the war, many of these new university students were even born in the conflict. They were young people that basically belonged to the middle-class. Whether they were children of the defeated or the winners, they left behind this dichotomy, and were totally outside political practice and distanced themselves from the official politics. It is a new generation of university students that is disenchanted with the regime in terms of their

position in it, not because of the actual meaning of the dictatorship. The starting point of the student movement can be found in the dissatisfaction of the students with the university reality they were living. [34] The extreme youth of the student collective is one of the most outstanding aspects. In the spirit of the comparison with the total data concerning the average ages explained, the fact that the majority of the participants in different protest actions were in their first years of university stands out. In this respect, there are many interpretations that are not the object analysed in this paper, including the influence of students above the legal age, their social stratum, their personal circumstances...

The generational rupture, even if being an element that seems to find dissenting voices that classify it as a well-known fact, as stated by Alberto Carrillo-Linares, must be stressed as decisive. [35] In the case of Zaragoza there is still a lot to investigate. Nevertheless, the first approaches tread the path of confirming the extraordinary importance of the rupture.

3. *The university protest in Zaragoza was led by the Communist Party of Spain*

The presence of other political groups in the process of structuring a dissenting student movement in the University of Zaragoza is another reality that should be studied in depth in further researches. Organisations such as the Student Trade Union, the FUDE, and other groups of action with socialist tendencies, were present in the campus. However, the PCE (Communist Party of Spain) had a greater level of organisational and mobilizational capacity that brought the possibility of becoming the visible leader of the university protest.

Even the authorities came to enumerate the organisations involved in the mobilisation, even highlighting those dissident students that mostly militated in communist groups, among which the Communist Party of Spain was representative. [36]

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