

THE SPANISH COMMUNIST EXILE AND *CONSENTFUL CONTENTION* IN STATE SOCIALIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA¹

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Abstract

This study focuses on the issue of the Spanish Communist exile in state socialist Czechoslovakia. It analyses the everyday resistance of the heterodox Spanish political emigrant José Valledor, which was carried out in the form of *consentful contention* – a tactic, through which a subordinate actor contests the government’s decisions whilst performing the role of a dutiful citizen. Valledor was able, with his petitions to the state organs while appealing to the regime’s own legitimating value system, to threaten the Czechoslovak authorities with the loss of the regime’s international prestige.

Keywords: Consentful contention; Resistance; Spain; Czechoslovakia; Exile.

Introduction

Václav Havel explains in his essay *The Power of the Powerless*, through the example of a manager of a fruit and vegetable shop who places in his window the slogan “Workers of the World, Unite!”, the difference between “living within the truth” and “living within a lie” in a post-totalitarian system.² The manager, who neither cares about nor believes in the global unification of the proletariat, accepts the prescribed ritual and declares loyalty to the regime in order not to lose his tranquillity and security – by “living within a lie”, he puts on the mask of an obedient citizen.³ Nonetheless, once he “breaks the rules of the game” and opposes the regime, this mask is taken away and the manager starts “living within the truth”⁴ – nevertheless, this truthful life and open revolt against the system was not the only possible form of resistance in state socialist countries. Recent research on this subject demonstrates

¹ This study forms a part of the dissertation defended at the Centre for Ibero-American Studies at Charles University in 2022, see Maroš TIMKO, *Czechoslovak-Spanish Relations (1918–1977)*, (PhD Thesis), Prague 2022. The case of Valledor, together with other examples of everyday resistance of Spanish exiles in Czechoslovakia, has already been mentioned in Maroš TIMKO, “‘Všude na španělské soudruhy dívaly se jako na příživníky.’ Španielsky komunistický exil v povojnovom Československu” [“Everywhere they looked at Spanish comrades as parasites.” The Spanish communist exile in post-war Czechoslovakia], in: Monika Kabešová – Kateřina Hrušková (eds.), *České, slovenské a československé dějiny 20. století XV*, Hradec Králové 2022, pp. 173–196.

² Václav HAVEL – John KEANE, *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central Eastern Europe*, New York 1985.

³ Ibidem, pp. 31, 36

⁴ Ibidem, p. 39.

that (everyday) resistance in the people's democratic Czechoslovakia took various forms and was not as rare as could be expected in a state with an authoritarian regime.⁵ Nevertheless, it was only seldom openly critical of the regime, as "in an effort to enforce one's worldview or pursue one's interests in work and everyday life, the resister does not a priori seek conflict with the regime."⁶

Therefore, an interesting and up till now under-researched way of resistance in state socialist countries – petitions or complaints directed towards Communist authorities – represented not only a rather frequent form of criticism but also one of the shifting borders of the dictatorship. On the one hand, these petitions opened a space for the negotiation of mutual positions between the petitioners and the recipients, as the Czechoslovak authorities made much account of these petitions, while on the other, in order to fulfil their aims, the petitioners managed in their criticism (which did not necessarily have to be anti-systemic) to utilize the official language of the regime ("speaking socialist").⁷ And, as Vilímek and Rameš add, "the border between the 'constructive criticism' and the 'anti-state incitement' was not only permeable but above all variable and largely dependent on the sanctionary mood in which the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia was currently"⁸ Furthermore, the practice of resistance through petitions, through which citizens in state socialism criticize specific decisions or policies of the state while evading the understanding of their resistance as anti-regime, could be interpreted as a *consentful contention*.⁹

Consentful contention is one of the forms of *everyday resistance* – covert resistance of subalterns, for whom an open confrontation with authority may be too risky and its consequences catastrophic, an insubordination characterized by its "pervasive use of disguise" and directed against various forms of domination, with the simple objective of persistence and survival.¹⁰ These patterns of oppositional acts could be defined as constant pressure against the authority, while looking for its weaknesses, as well as for the limits of resistance. They are also characterized by the concealment of the agent who carries out the resistance or the concealment of the act of resistance itself – both in order to ensure the safety of resisters.¹¹ The analytical model of *consentful contention* was first presented by the North American

⁵ See e.g., Michael GEHLER – David SCHRIFFL (eds.), *Violent Resistance: From the Baltics to Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe 1944–1956*, Paderborn 2020; Tomáš VILÍMEK – Oldřich TŮMA – Jaroslav CUHRA et al., *Projevy a podoby protirežimní rezistence v komunistickém Československu 1948–1989* [Expressions and Forms of anti-regime Resistance in communist Czechoslovakia 1948–1989], Praha 2018.

⁶ VILÍMEK – TŮMA – CUHRA et al., *Projevy*, p. 6.

⁷ Tomáš VILÍMEK – Václav RAMEŠ, "Pohyblivé hranice diktatury ve světle stížností občanů" [The shifting boundaries of dictatorship in the light of citizen complaints], *Soudobé dějiny* 1, 2022, pp. 19–37.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁹ Jeremy B. STRAUGHN, "Taking the State at Its Word": The Arts of Consentful Contention in the German Democratic Republic", *American Journal of Sociology* 6, 2005, p. 1601.

¹⁰ James C. SCOTT, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven 1985, pp. 33–36, 301; *Idem*, "Everyday forms of resistance", *Copenhagen Papers in East and Southeast Asian Studies* 4, 1989, p. 54.

¹¹ *Idem*, "Everyday", pp. 54–59.

sociologist Jeremy B. Straughn in the context of state socialism in the GDR in the 1960s and 1970s. Straughn claims that in state socialist countries, the state's official claim to govern in the name of the proletariat gives potential resisters many possible ways to contest the seriousness of this public promise by "taking the state at its word"; nevertheless, "the ruling party's rigid intolerance of political opposition substantially magnifies the risk that any citizen petition [...] will be construed as an act of defiance."¹² Hence, *consentful contention* is a tactic, through which, in order to fulfil their objectives, subordinate actors in state socialism use the regime's own logic and "contest a state of affairs or a government policy or decision by performing the role of a dutiful citizen [...]", therefore leaving their loyalty (consent) to the regime and its values unquestioned.¹³

The present article is based on materials until now unpublished proceeding mainly from Czech archives (National Archives Prague, Security Services Archive, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) complemented by the relatively narrow secondary literature dedicated to the Spanish Communist exile in the former Eastern Bloc.¹⁴ This microhistorical study attempts, through a diachronic approach and with a progressive research method, to shed light on the bitter experience of life in a state socialist country of a rather unknown Spanish exile and *Résistance* fighter, José A. Valledor. In the case of his everyday resistance, I examine the hypothesis that through *consentful contention* it was possible in state socialist Czechoslovakia to push authorities to make concessions in one's favour – by appealing to the regime's legitimating value system, a dutiful citizen could menace government officials with the loss of the regime's international prestige. Furthermore, I posit that it was Valledor's Ecuadorian contacts, as well as the complex relationship between the Communist Party of Spain (*Partido Comunista de España*, PCE) and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa*, KSČ) that influenced the outcome of his resistance – in this sense, the global network of the PCE, interconnected also outside of Europe, entangled such a peripheral country as Francoist Spain with Latin America and the Eastern Bloc.

¹² STRAUGHN, "Taking", pp. 1602–1603.

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 1601–1604.

¹⁴ However, in this aspect it should be noted that the research on the question of the Spanish Communist exile in the Eastern European countries has been broadened during the last two decades. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the most productive author dealing with this topic in a systematic and long-term manner is the Spanish historian Matilde Eiroa see: Matilde EIROA, *Espanoles tras el Telón de Acero. El exilio republicano y comunista en la Europa socialista*, Madrid 2018; Idem, "Republicanos en el Centro-Este de Europa: los intentos de normalización institucional", in: Ángeles Egido León – Matilde Eiroa (eds.), *Los grandes olvidados: los republicanos de izquierda en el exilio*, Madrid 2004, pp. 301–322; Idem, "Sobrevivir en el socialismo. Organización y medios de comunicación de los exiliados comunistas en las democracias populares", *Historia Social* 69, 2011, pp. 71–90. Significant contributions have been also made by the Hungarian scholar Szilvia Pethő and the Czech historian Vladimír Nálevka, see Szilvia PETHŐ, *El exilio de comunistas españoles en los países socialistas de Europa centro-oriental (1946–1955)*, (PhD Thesis), Szeged 2008; Vladimír NÁLEVKA, "Španělé v poválečném Československu" [Spaniards in post-war Czechoslovakia], *Dvacáté století*, Praha 2005, pp. 77–95.

Prague, “the Communist Geneva” and the “*plaque tournante*” of Spanish exiles

During the late 1940s, Czechoslovakia and more specifically Prague became a prominent Eastern European hub of international socialism. This was possible not only thanks to the growing Communist influence in the country after the parliamentary elections in May 1946, culminating in the Communist coup d'état in February of 1948, but also because of the country's geographical location – being part of the Eastern Bloc, but still functioning as a forward base of the USSR in contact with the West.¹⁵ Thus, with the outbreak of the Cold War and the subsequent division of Europe into two antagonistic blocs, Prague started to fulfil the function of a meeting point and refuge for various left-wing political exiles, workers, students and revolutionaries, usually members of fraternal communist parties. Apart from the Spanish exiles, there were also Greek, Yugoslav, Italian, Portuguese, French and English-speaking left-wing political emigrants, who found refuge in Czechoslovakia in the years after World War II.¹⁶

From Prague, contact was also ensured between various Communist parties of Eastern and Western Europe¹⁷ – one of these parties was the PCE. During the 1950s, this party managed to create from the Czechoslovak metropolis an anchor and a transit point for Spanish Communists. For this reason, the General Secretary of the PCE, Santiago Carrillo, eloquently designated Prague their “*plaque tournante*”¹⁸ (railway turntable – M. T.). Indeed, together with Moscow and Paris, the Czechoslovak capital – called “the Communist Geneva”¹⁹ due to the number of left-ist international organizations based in Prague²⁰ – from the turn of the 1940s and the 1950s played the role of the bureaucratic centre of the Spanish Communist exile. The number of Spaniards in Czechoslovakia rose to 193 in February 1952,²¹ while from Prague the PCE controlled the Spanish Communist collectives functioning

¹⁵ EIROA, “Republicanos”, p. 313.

¹⁶ Milan BÁRTA, “Právo azylu. Vznik politické emigrace v Československu po roce 1948” [The right to asylum. The emergence of political emigration in Czechoslovakia after 1948], *Paměť a dějiny* 1, 2011, pp. 16–17; Kathleen B. GEANEY, *English-Speaking Communists, Communist Sympathizers and Fellow-Travelers and Czechoslovakia in the Early Cold War*, (PhD Thesis), Prague 2017.

¹⁷ NÁLEVKKA, “Španělé”, pp. 81–82.

¹⁸ Gregorio MORÁN, *Miseria, grandeza y agonía del PCE: 1939–1985*, Madrid 2017, p. 552.

¹⁹ Karel BARTOŠEK, *Zpráva o putování v komunistických archivech. Praha – Paříž (1948–1968)* [Report on wanderings in the communist archives. Prague – Paris (1948–1968)], Praha 2000, p. 103.

²⁰ These included the International Union of Students, the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Organisation of Journalists, the World Federation of Democratic Youth or the International Radio and Television Organisation, in: Marta E. HOLEČKOVÁ, *Příběh zapomenuté univerzity. Univerzita 17. listopadu (1961–1974) a její místo v československém vzdělávacím systému a společnosti* [The Story of a Forgotten University. The University of 17th November (1961–1974) and its Position in Czechoslovakian Educational System and Society], Praha 2019, pp. 34–35; GEANEY, *English-Speaking*, p. 11.

²¹ Národní archiv Praha (National Archives Prague, hereinafter NA), fund (f.) Mezinárodní oddělení ÚV KSČ (International Department of the CC CPCz, hereinafter MOÚV KSČ), volume (svazek, hereinafter sv.) 187, archive unit number (archivní jednotka, hereinafter a. j.) 652, page (list, hereinafter l.) 96. Rozmístění španělských polit. emigrantů v ČSR [Location of Spanish political emigrants in Czechoslovakia], 1. 2. 1952.

not only in Czechoslovakia but also in Poland, Hungary, GDR, Austria, China and even Bulgaria.²²

Despite the fact that the members of the PCE started to migrate *en masse* to the countries of the Eastern Bloc only after World War II, the collaboration between the Spanish and the Eastern European Communists dates back to the Spanish Civil War and the formation of International Brigades.²³ In the case of Czechoslovakia, the first wave of PCE exiles, coming mostly from France where they operated during World War II in the French *Résistance*, settled in Prague between the years 1946–48.²⁴ This wave comprised in total 26 Spaniards, some of them leaders of the PCE; nevertheless, this group included also “regular” members of the party, who had been earning their living in Czechoslovakia by manual work.²⁵ The second wave of Spanish Communists, formed mainly by officers previously active in Tito’s Army and a result of the Soviet-Yugoslav split, amounted to approximately 20 militants and intellectuals (apart from their family members), who arrived in Czechoslovakia in September 1948.²⁶ Subsequently, the bulk of these exiles were allocated in Prague; some of them, however, were sent to Paris, which maintained the position of the main centre of the PCE, at least until 1950 and the outlawing of this party in France.²⁷ Lastly, the third wave of Spanish political émigrés in Czechoslovakia was the result of the police operation “Boléro-Paprika”, which took place in September 1950 in France, leading to the arrest or expulsion to North Africa and Corsica of almost 400 (mainly Spanish) Communists. This step was linked with the militarization of the Cold War and an intensifying anti-Communist campaign in Western Europe and considering the risk of the extradition of these arrested Spaniards to Francoist Spain, refuge was offered to them in 1951 by various Eastern European countries, including Czechoslovakia.²⁸

Considering the above-stated, the Spanish Communist exile and its Prague centre have the appearance of an example of the multi-directionality and

²² NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 188, a. j. 656, l. 5. Santiago Álvarez to the ÚV KSČ, 19. 2. 1960.

²³ For more on the Eastern European communist participation within the International Brigades see e.g. Manuel REQUENA GALLEGO – Matilde EIROA (eds.), *Al lado del gobierno republicano: los brigadistas de Europa del Este en la guerra de España*, Cuenca 2009; Zdenko MARŠÁLEK – Emil VORÁČEK et al., *Interbrigadisté, Československo a španělská občanská válka. Neznámé kapitoly z historie československé účasti v občanské válce ve Španělsku 1936–1939* [Members of the International Brigades, Czechoslovakia and the Spanish Civil War. The Unknown Chapters from the History of Czechoslovak Participation in the Spanish Civil War 1936–1939], Praha 2017; Jiří NEDVĚD, “‘Verbování’ československých dobrovolníků do mezinárodních brigád a jejich cesty do Španělska” [‘Recruitment’ of the Czechoslovak volunteers into the International Brigades and their journeys to Spain], *Historie a vojenství* 3, 2016, pp. 4–18.

²⁴ NÁLEVKA, “Španělé”, p. 91.

²⁵ NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 188, a. j. 657, l. 7–8. Španělská emigrace v ČSR [Spanish emigration in Czechoslovakia], 13. 9. 1949.

²⁶ NÁLEVKA, “Španělé”, pp. 88, 91; EIROA, *Espanoles*, p. 107.

²⁷ For example in 1947, the entire leadership of the PCE resided in France, in: PETHÓ, *El exilio*, pp. 39, 84–86.

²⁸ Michele D’ANGELO, “El Partido Comunista Español en Francia. ¿Partido de la protesta u organización para emigrados? 1950–1975”, *Aportes* 92, 2016, p. 180; EIROA, “Sobrevivir”, p. 75.

multi-dimensionality of the Cold War's crossings through the Iron Curtain.²⁹ The transnational network created by the PCE, which included exile groups in the countries of the Soviet Bloc, underground cells in Spain and party centres in Paris, Moscow and Prague, not only enabled the mobility of the Communists between the capitalist West and the Communist East but also resulted in them confronting the reality of state socialism. On the one hand, it must be underlined that the Eastern European countries, ruled by fraternal Communist parties, offered asylum and material support for PCE members who came to the Eastern Bloc equipped with their Communist convictions, values and utopian expectations of life in a people's democracy.³⁰ On the other, the Spanish Communist exile was formed not only by the leadership of the party, living in Prague, but also by exiles, who came into conflict with the direction of the PCE and its decisions and who formed another Spanish collective in the industrial city of Ústí nad Labem, while these feuds were often directly linked with the confrontation of their Communist idea(l)s with everyday life in socialist Czechoslovakia.

Thus it could be argued that the life experiences of the Spanish Communist exiles living in Czechoslovakia from the late 1940s were heterogeneous. The Czech historian Milan Bárta argues that the leaderships of the respective political emigrations in Czechoslovakia (such as the PCE) wanted to maintain strict control over their members.³¹ Therefore, the Spanish exiles, and especially those living in Ústí, were subjected to "the celebration of assemblies, where self-criticism functioned as a tool for the elimination of dissident militants", whereas resulting from these meetings were "expulsions and internal crises derived from accusations of opportunism, revanchism, disloyalty, liberalism or deviationism, only forgiven with continuous reiterations of submission to the all-powerful party".³² Nevertheless, the rigorous control over the party members, linked with the partisan disciplining, could lead not only to (auto)criticism, ostracism or even expulsion from the PCE,³³ but in the Spanish case also to an imperative move to Ústí nad Labem, where the politically heterodox exiles, as well as Spaniards with manual labour jobs, lived.³⁴ These

²⁹ For more on the Cold War mobilities see e.g., Sune BECHMANN PEDERSEN – Christian NOACK (eds.), *Tourism and Travel during the Cold War: Negotiating Tourist Experiences across the Iron Curtain*, London – New York 2019; Kathy BURRELL – Kathrin HÖRSCHMANN, (eds.), *Mobilities in Socialist and Post-Socialist States: Societies on the Move*, Houndmills – New York 2014; Eric BURTON – Anne DIETRICH – Immanuel R. HARISCH et al., *Navigating Socialist Encounters. Moorings and (Dis)Entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, Berlin – Boston 2021.

³⁰ In the Czechoslovak case, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia economically supported the Spanish exiles – the party leadership received a salary and their expenses were covered by the KSČ, which also financially contributed to the printing of PCE's newspaper and the organisation of their congresses in Czechoslovakia, in: NA, f. MOŮV KSČ, sv. 187, a. j. 652, l. 16–18. Souhrná zpráva o španělské politické emigraci [Overall report about the Spanish political emigration], n. d.; Idem, sv. 186, a. j. 638, l. 33. Přehled vydání v "Akci Š" [Overview of expenses in "Action Š"], 3. 2. 1955.

³¹ BÁRTA, "Právo", p. 20.

³² EIROA, "Republicanos", p. 315.

³³ Idem, *Españoles*, pp. 93–94.

³⁴ PETHÓ, *El exilio*, pp. 102–104.

“problematic” émigrés were sent to this North Bohemian city as a form of punishment with the aim of normalizing their conduct; however, as the archival materials prove, some of them decided to resist (more or less successfully) the decisions of the PCE and the Czechoslovak state bodies, while the forms of their resistance varied from case to case.³⁵ Due to the scarce archival materials and a limited scope, this study focuses exclusively on the case of the everyday resistance of José Valledor, which represents not only a specific and under-researched tactic of resistance by political emigrants in Czechoslovakia (through petitions) but also epitomizes internal conflicts within the PCE in exile. Moreover, the present research intends to offer a new insight into the subject of the everydayness and ingenuity of people living under state socialism, whose margins for manoeuvre within their resistance practice against the Communist Party and the state authorities remained relatively narrow.

“A concentration camp without barbed wire”

José Valledor, one of the members of the first wave of Spanish exiles in Czechoslovakia, in 1955 described his life experience in the North Bohemian city of Ústí nad Labem in these words.³⁶ Valledor (b. 1906, Oviedo) was one of the few Spanish Communist exiles with a university degree – in Spain he studied philosophy, worked as a teacher and joined the PCE as early as in 1925.³⁷ During the Civil War, he fought in the Republican Army and reached the rank of lieutenant colonel and commander of the 15th International Brigade.³⁸ In 1939, he crossed the Spanish-French border, only to be imprisoned in the French concentration camps of Saint-Cyprien, Argelès-sur-Mer and Septfonds. Once he escaped in September 1939, Valledor fought in the French *Résistance* with the rank of colonel, while being a part of the leadership of

³⁵ This is evidenced not only by José Valledor but also by the case of Pilar Gómez, a Spanish exile living in Czechoslovakia, expelled from the PCE due to her homosexual relationship. Gómez decided to resist the leadership of the PCE and its directives by collaborating with the Czechoslovak State Security and submitted critical agency reports on the members of the Spanish party. Another example of resistance against the decisions of the PCE and the Czechoslovak authorities through petitions while criticizing inadequate medical care and bad living conditions in the country, was the Spanish Communist exile Ramón Rubio Miranda. His case is also an example of disappointment with Czechoslovak socialism, due to his exaggerated expectations (he asked to be allowed to study at a Czech university, even though he had only completed primary education and had no knowledge of Czech), see Archiv bezpečnostních složek (Security Services Archive, hereinafter ABS), f. Objektové svazky – centrála a Praha (Subject Files Group – Headquarters and Prague, hereinafter OB/MV), a. č. OB – 1718 MV “Španělská emigrace” [“Spanish emigration”], sv. 1/3, l. 119–120. Issue: General Antonio Cordón – report, n. d. (December 1954); NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 188, a. j. 653, l. 57. Španělská polit. emigrace [Spanish political emigration], 7.2.1953; Idem, sv. 191, a. j. 666, l. 105–106. Ramón Rubio to the MOÚV KSČ, 27. 1. 1956. See also TIMKO, “Všude”, pp. 173–196.

³⁶ NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 198, a. j. 689, file: V. Resoluce skupiny č. I stranické organizace KSŠ Ústí nad Labem o vyloučení José Antonio Valledora z KSŠ [Resolution of the group no. I of the organisation of the PCE in Ústí nad Labem about the expulsion of José Antonio Valledor from the PCE], 8. 6. 1955.

³⁷ Idem, file: V. Cuestionario – Dotazník [Questionnaire]: José Antonio Valledor Alvarez, 4. 7. 1953.

³⁸ Ibidem; Idem, file: V – Valledor José Antonio (93). Biografía del camarada Valledor [Biography of comrade Valledor], 4. 7. 1953.

the PCE in Occitania.³⁹ Moreover, at the end of 1940, Valledor founded a lumber company in the French department of Aude, which two years later became a political-military centre of Spanish guerrillas (*maquis*) and from 1946 bore the name “Enterprise Forestier du Sud-Ouest”, also known as “Fernández, Valledor y Cía.”, with the objective of the liberation of Spain.⁴⁰ This notwithstanding, the company, which functioned as a cover for a Communist political and tactical training centre and a support establishment for the crossings of *maquis* from France into Spain, was the property of the PCE and Valledor was the owner only *de jure*. Nevertheless, the company found itself in difficulties even before the PCE was outlawed in France in 1950 and became more of an economic problem for the party.⁴¹ For this reason (as well as for the unreliability of Valledor, who allegedly acted as the real owner and not as a Communist), he was dismissed from this position and, due to a decision by the PCE, was sent to Czechoslovakia.⁴²

Valledor arrived in Czechoslovakia on January 17, 1949. As early as February, he was employed as a translator with Czechoslovak Radio and received monthly support from the KSČ for his accommodation in a hotel before finding himself an apartment.⁴³ However, at the beginning of 1950, Valledor was still staying at the Hotel Union in Prague and the first complaint in Czechoslovakia against him was a direct result of this fact. A record from the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Mezinárodní oddělení Ústředního výboru KSČ, MOÚV KSČ*) in February 1950 stated that in this hotel Valledor “ruins the reputation of the Spaniards [...] refuses to pay, prolongs and postpones payment as much as possible, reproaches other Spanish comrades for paying, saying that they are stupid [...]”.⁴⁴ His job search practices were also criticized as he was visiting companies with his own offers for translation, even though translations were already being done there by other Spaniards. Furthermore, he did not agree with the accommodation offered outside the hotel; however, frequent

³⁹ Ibidem; ABS, f. OB/MV, a. č. OB – 1718 MV “Spanish emigration”, sv. 1/3, l. 59–65. Seznam cizinců zaměstnaných v STZ v Ústí nad Labem [List of foreigners employed at the STZ in Ústí nad Labem], n. d. Moreover, after the end of WWII, Valledor was awarded the highest French order of merit, the Legion of Honour.

⁴⁰ Alfredo LÓPEZ CARRILLO, *Manuel López Castro: A modo de biografía*, San Sebastián de los Reyes 2011, p. 68.

⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 68–69; Fernando HERNÁNDEZ SÁNCHEZ, *Comerciendo con el diablo: las relaciones comerciales con el Telón de Acero y la financiación del PCE a comienzos de los años 60* [on-line], in: *VI Congreso de la Asociación de Historiadores del Presente: La apertura internacional de España. Entre el franquismo y la democracia, 1953–1986*, Madrid 2014, pp. 3–5. www.historiadelpresente.es, [accessed 17 February 2022]. Accessible from: <http://historiadelpresente.es/sites/default/files/congresos/pdf/43/fernandohernandezsanchez.pdf>.

⁴² ABS, f. OB/MV, a. č. OB – 1718 MV “Spanish emigration”, sv. 1/3, l. 122. Výpis z agenturní zprávy ze dne [Summary from the agency report from] 28. 12. 1954. Issue: Valledor José Antonio, španěl. polit. emigrant [Spanish polit. emigrant] – poznatky získané od agenta “KONČA” [information received from the agent “KONČA”], 28. 12. 1954.

⁴³ NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 198, a. j. 689, file V. Questionnaire: José Antonio Valledor Alvarez; 4. 7. 1953; Idem, sv. 188, a. j. 657, l. 7–8. Spanish emigration in Czechoslovakia, 13. 9. 1949.

⁴⁴ Idem, a. j. 653, l. 12–13. Španělští soudruzi v Praze [Spanish comrades in Prague], February 1950.

complaints about him were arriving from the Hotel Union.⁴⁵ Valledor was thus criticized at the reunion of the Prague Spanish collective at the beginning of 1950 for his “excessive selfishness”, but in the meantime, he acknowledged his mistakes, identified himself as the source of these errors, and underwent self-criticism.⁴⁶

Valledor was once again criticised by the Czechoslovak authorities in March 1950. In a report processed by the ÚV KSČ, it was claimed that he is “a man who wants to live easily, if possible, at the expense of the KSČ. He refused to accept an apartment from us and then asked for money to pay for the hotel.”⁴⁷ Until 1951, Valledor was living in Prague, where he was working as a translator for several companies and as a Spanish tutor. Nevertheless, in April of that year, he expressed his willingness to move with his future wife Heloisa Horcajo to Ústí nad Labem – the PCE did not have any problems with their transfer.⁴⁸ Valledor allegedly argued that he could also do translations in Ústí and was ready to work in a factory; however, his condition did not allow physical labour.⁴⁹ On the other hand, in 1953, Valledor stated in his CV that back in 1951 “he had been told he had to go to live to Ústí”⁵⁰ and was eventually transferred there on July 27, 1951. Three days later, he started working in the laboratory of the North Bohemian Fat Factories (*Severočeské tukové závody, STZ*) as a clerk, while his work morale was evaluated as “good”.⁵¹

In the summer of 1953, José Valledor was still living in a flat in Ústí with his wife Heloisa Horcajo (whom he married in July 1951), where their son José was born in February 1952.⁵² At that time, Valledor was still a member of the Ústí nad Labem’s collective of the Spanish political emigration and had been employed at the STZ, but his wife was not able to work, due to the poor health of their son – in his biography, Valledor described his son’s state of health as “bad from the sixth month of his life”, while his own throat was in poor condition due to his unsuccessful recovery from injuries.⁵³ Later, in a survey of Spanish families in Ústí nad Labem dating to March 1954, it was stated that Valledor was still living in this North Bohemian city and working in the laboratory of STZ, while his wife took care of the household,

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ Idem, l. 14–28. Informe al PC checoslovaco sobre la organización y trabajos del colectivo de camaradas, miembros del PC español, en Praga [Report for the KSČ about the organisation and the work of the collective of comrades, members of the PCE in Prague], 16. 2. 1950.

⁴⁷ Idem, a. j. 657, l. 22–27. Zpráva o činnosti španělských soudruhů v Praze [Report on the activities of Spanish comrades in Prague], 3. 3. 1950.

⁴⁸ Idem, sv. 187, a. j. 652, l. 89–90. Zpráva o španělských soudruzích, kteří jsou ochotni přestěhovat se do Ústí nad Labem [Report on the Spanish comrades who are willing to move to Ústí nad Labem], 19. 4. 1951.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ Idem, sv. 198, a. j. 689, file: V – Valledor José Antonio (93). Biography of comrade Valledor, 4. 7. 1953.

⁵¹ ABS, f. OB/MV, a. č. OB – 1718 MV “Spanish emigration”, sv. 1/3, l. 59–65. List of foreigners employed at the STZ in Ústí nad Labem, n. d.; NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 198, a. j. 689, file: V. José Valledor to Chaluš, 20. 6. 1955.

⁵² Idem, file: V. Questionnaire: José Antonio Valledor Alvarez, 4. 7. 1953.

⁵³ Idem, file: V – Valledor José Antonio (93). Biography of comrade Valledor, 4. 7. 1953.

the main problem of the family being their son, diagnosed with anaemia.⁵⁴ Moreover, Valledor and his wife complained that their apartment was too cold and that their son needed, at least during the summer, a change of ambience.⁵⁵ As a consequence, at the beginning of 1954 Valledor obtained medical certificates stating that the climate in Ústí was bad for his and his son's health and requested authorization from the organization of the PCE in Ústí to be allowed to move to Prague. Despite the rejection of this petition, in April 1955 the Valledor family, without the knowledge of the PCE or the KSČ, transferred to Prague and Valledor began working as a translator for the Ministry of Foreign Trade.⁵⁶

It was at this time that Valledor's conflict with the leadership of the PCE in Czechoslovakia became more severe. Enrique Líster (leader of the Spanish exile in Czechoslovakia) in his letter to the MOÚV KSČ argued that Valledor was criticized and punished by the Ústí nad Labem's collective for his indiscipline – he refused to continue living in this industrial North Bohemian city.⁵⁷ However, once being punished, Valledor addressed the leadership of the PCE with the ultimatum that if the criticism of him did not stop, he would ask for his expulsion from the party. He argued that the PCE wanted to sentence him and his son to death as they could no longer live in Ústí due to the health issues stated in the medical certificates presented.⁵⁸ At the end of this letter, Líster stated that the Spanish collective in Ústí nad Labem had decided that Valledor be examined at a clinic in Ústí; however, Valledor refused any treatment there, on the grounds that he was recommended by the Prague doctors to undergo his treatment in the Czechoslovak capital.⁵⁹

Taking into account his conflict with the leadership of the PCE in Czechoslovakia, Valledor decided, at the end of May 1955, to inform the Czechoslovak authorities about the “true reasons” for his transfer to Prague.⁶⁰ He declared that based on a medical recommendation to leave the factory in Ústí (due to chronic respiratory disease), he asked the organization of the PCE in Ústí for authorization to go to the capital to visit a specialist. After the approval of his request, Valledor came, at the beginning of 1955, to Prague, where he was prescribed a therapy – his return to Ústí would minimize the effect of this treatment.⁶¹ Nevertheless, Valledor was ordered by the party to return to Ústí nad Labem and thus could not undergo this therapy. At the end of his letter, he claimed that he had backed up his request to the PCE for his definitive departure from Ústí with various medical certificates regarding his health condition; however, the local organization of the PCE rejected his petition, claiming

⁵⁴ Idem, sv. 188, a. j. 654, l. 91–95. Sociálně-zdravotní průzkum španělských rodin žijících v Ústí n./L [Social and health examination of Spanish families living in Ústí n./L], 15. 3. 1954.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Idem, sv. 188, a. j. 656, l. 53. Záznam o španělském pol. emigrantu Valledorovi José [Report about the Spanish political emigrant José Valledor], n. d.

⁵⁷ Idem, sv. 198, a. j. 689, file: R – Rubio Ramon (88). E. Líster to the MOÚV KSČ (Baramová), 14. 4. 1955.

⁵⁸ Ibidem.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ Idem, file: V. José A. Valledor to the MOÚV KSČ, 31. 5. 1955.

⁶¹ Ibidem.

that the certificates presented were falsified and that, despite his health problems, Valledor should remain in Ústí.⁶²

With regard to his ongoing resistance to the decisions of the PCE leadership, on May 12, 1955, at the meeting of the collective of the PCE in Ústí nad Labem, an agreement about Valledor's expulsion from the party was pronounced.⁶³ Later, on June 8, 1955, a resolution confirming this expulsion was discussed and approved. Mentioned as the main reasons for this step was the fact that Valledor preferred his personal interests to those of the PCE and fought against party discipline and its leadership. Also, he had acted as an element alien to the party since his arrival in Czechoslovakia and by 1949 he had already been punished by the organization of the PCE in Prague for his conduct. Subsequently, he expressed constant political indiscipline, especially by refusing to fulfil the PCE's decision to move to Ústí and then trying to relocate back to Prague.⁶⁴ He was accused of provocation and of discrediting some comrades and exile groups while pointing out the imperfections of the people's democracy. Valledor was therefore officially reprimanded at the party meeting in March 1955 but was also given the opportunity to correct his behaviour. Although Valledor, for appearances' sake, agreed with the PCE's decisions, in reality, he carried on and resisted them, while taking advantage of his sickness, presenting himself as a victim of the Party and concealing the medical and economic help received from the PCE and the KSČ.⁶⁵ When asked to explain this conduct towards the PCE, Valledor requested to be removed from the Party. This partisan resolution ended with a statement that the group no. I. of the PCE organization in Ústí admits that in the case of Valledor, who "unmasked himself as an anti-Party element", the group did not maintain revolutionary vigilance and then unanimously adopted a decision to expel him from the PCE.⁶⁶

Nonetheless, on June 3, 1955, in the period between the partisan meeting regarding his expulsion and the adoption of a resolution approving this decision, Valledor visited the Social Department of the Czechoslovak Red Cross (*Československý červený kříž – Sociální odbor, ČSČK SO*), responsible for the material welfare of Spanish exiles living in Czechoslovakia. During this visit, Valledor claimed that the reason for his transfer to Prague were his health issues, more specifically, chronic catarrh of the upper respiratory tract.⁶⁷ The climate in Ústí was allegedly detrimental to his health and he supported this statement by medical reports. The health of his son, who was suspected of having whooping cough and was eventually hospitalized with chronic bronchitis, was another motive for their departure from Ústí, as he was advised by the doctors to change his ambience. During the interview at the ČSČK SO, Valledor stated that he was not willing to return to Ústí and that he did not know any reason why he could not work and live as a political emigrant in Prague, where

⁶² Ibidem.

⁶³ Idem, sv. 198, a. j. 689, file: V. Resolution of the group no. I of the organisation of the PCE in Ústí nad Labem about the expulsion of José Antonio Valledor from the PCE, 8. 6. 1955.

⁶⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

⁶⁶ Ibidem.

⁶⁷ Idem, Záznam [Memo] – J. Chaluš, 7. 6. 1955.

he had possibilities to solve his own as well as his son's health issues, and also adequate work conditions.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, he also claimed that if his stay in Prague was undesirable for the PCE, he was ready to live in another city; nevertheless, in case the health of his family would be jeopardized, he would then ask the Czechoslovak Prime Minister or President for help. Consequently, the ČSČK SO recommended that in Valledor's case, his return to Ústí should not be insisted upon, but rather decided in agreement with him and the ÚV KSČ that he be allowed to choose his place of residence (aside from Prague), where he could work and continue with his treatment.⁶⁹ Notwithstanding this recommendation, a new report was prepared at the MOÚV KSČ, in which it was stated that the PCE leadership was requesting from the KSČ the forced return of Valledor to Ústí with the help of the Czechoslovak National Security Corps (*Sbor národní bezpečnosti*, SNB).⁷⁰ The above-mentioned letter from Valledor to the MOÚV KSČ of May 1955, with a request for his situation to be solved, was also forwarded by the Czechoslovak authorities to Enrique Líster for his statement. Líster refused to allow Valledor to be banished, as he had arrived in Czechoslovakia as a member of the PCE, and he and his wife possessed internal partisan information.⁷¹ For this reason, the Czechoslovak side proposed that Valledor be handed over to the security organs and transferred to some Czech city (except Ústí or Prague), while Líster agreed with this proposal.⁷²

Valledor once again got in touch with the Social Department of the Czechoslovak Red Cross in the second half of June 1955. On this occasion, he presented his assumption that there was no reason for the deprivation of his right of asylum,⁷³ which had been granted to him by the Czechoslovak government.⁷⁴ Based on the decision about the urgency of his departure from Ústí, which was issued at the beginning of 1955 by the Health Commission of the Ústí nad Labem Region, he had returned to Prague, where he wanted to stay, despite directives to leave the capital for "petty reasons".⁷⁵ In his letter, Valledor added that should he not be allowed to live and work in Prague, he would demand a decree from the respective ministry about the deprivation of his right of political asylum.⁷⁶ His letter was forwarded by the Head of the ČSČK SO Jaroslav Chaluš to the MOÚV KSČ with a commentary that all attempts to convince Valledor to return to Ústí or to live in another city than Prague had failed.⁷⁷ Chaluš also claimed that during their interview, Valledor had

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

⁶⁹ Ibidem.

⁷⁰ Idem, Zpráva o býv. španělských polit. emigrantech Valledor a Rubio [Report about the former Spanish political emigrants Valledor and Rubio], 7. 6. 1955.

⁷¹ Ibidem.

⁷² Ibidem.

⁷³ However, the Czechoslovak legal system did not officially recognize the institution of political asylum until 1960 – prior to that, political emigrants were granted a temporary asylum based on a proposal drafted by the MOÚV KSČ, according to the size of the group of respective political emigration, in: HOLEČKOVÁ, *Příběh*, p. 36; BÁRTA, "Právo", pp. 16–19.

⁷⁴ NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 198, a. j. 689, file: V. José Valledor to J. Chaluš, 20. 6. 1955.

⁷⁵ Ibidem.

⁷⁶ Ibidem.

⁷⁷ Idem, ČSČK SO to the MOÚV KSČ, Issue: José Valledor – rozhodnutí [decision], 5. 7. 1955.

appealed to his right of asylum as a political emigrant in Czechoslovakia and as such, he expected his case to be solved by the ÚV KSČ, but at the same time, he was refusing financial help from the Czechoslovak Red Cross – all he asked for was an authorization to work for the Czechoslovak Chamber of Commerce.⁷⁸

In October 1955, Valledor contacted the MOÚV KSČ once again. He complained that at the beginning of this month, he had been deprived of his identity card (obtained after his arrival to Czechoslovakia) at a police station, due to his current status as a former political émigré. Moreover, he was given a “*carte d’apatride*” (ID card of stateless person – M. T.) and permanent residence in Prague was forbidden to him.⁷⁹ Valledor claimed that he refused to accept this new identity card and wanted to know the reason why he, a convinced Communist and a fighter against Francoism and fascism, was denied the status of Spanish political emigrant, as he came to Czechoslovakia at the government’s invitation. Allegedly, he knew the real reason behind his situation – it was his conflicts and breaking of relations with the organization of the PCE in Czechoslovakia, as he disagreed with some methods employed against him within the party, although he did not criticize every feature of the PCE policies.⁸⁰ In this letter, he stated that some Spaniards misused their authority within the Spanish collectives, as well as their influence over the Czechoslovak state authorities against him, with the aim of persecuting him – according to Valledor, these practices were not beneficial to the PCE, the KSČ or Czechoslovakia and he added that without regard to his position, he would always report truthfully and refer in the first place to the KSČ, considering the “Marxist-Leninist ideas, deeply rooted in me [...]”⁸¹ Valledor summarized his decisions at the end of his letter: he rejected every “*carte d’apatride*”, as he was a Spanish exile regardless of the country of his residence and, in case he would be prohibited from staying in Prague and would be stripped of his status of political emigrant, he would understand it as a restriction of his right of asylum. Moreover, he claimed to be forced to appeal to the Czechoslovak government officials in order to inform them about the measures and persecution against him, as well as to apply for a revision of his position as a political émigré in Czechoslovakia, so that it could be decided, whether his presence in the country was desired or not. Finally, Valledor stated that he did not wish to leave Czechoslovakia and that it would be unfortunate if his conflicts with some Spanish exiles would negatively affect the solving of his situation and also warned the MOÚV KSČ, that if his old identity card was not returned, he would contact the highest state authorities.⁸²

In response to his letter, another memo about his case was processed at the MOÚV KSČ. It mentioned that after Valledor’s refusal to return to Ústí, an interview took place with the doctor for Spanish exiles who claimed that Valledor was “a fraudster who is healthy and who tries to get out of physical labour in every possible way”.⁸³

⁷⁸ Ibidem.

⁷⁹ Idem, file: V – Valledor José Antonio (93). José Valledor to the MOÚV KSČ, 7. 10. 1955.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² Ibidem.

⁸³ Idem, Záznam k případu Valledor [Memo to the case Valledor] – MOÚV KSČ, 7. 10. 1955.

In this memo, it was also stated that Valledor had been able to find a job as a translator at the Ministry of Foreign Trade (despite his poor knowledge of Czech) and was refusing to return to Ústí. Based on a conversation with E. Líster, the MOÚV KSČ decided, in accordance with this ministry, that it would no longer offer translations to Valledor and advised that he should be found employment and accommodation outside Prague.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, these steps were not carried out and, in the autumn of 1955, Valledor was still working as a translator for the above-mentioned ministry. Eventually, and in reaction to Valledor's letter, the MOÚV KSČ recommended allowing Valledor to keep his old identity card, to find him employment in a less prominent position or outside Prague and to find out how Valledor was even able to get a job at the Ministry of Foreign Trade.⁸⁵

At the end of 1956, Valledor was still living in Prague, since further efforts to transfer him forcibly back to Ústí or at least outside the capital, had been unsuccessful. Moreover, thanks to his contacts abroad, he had managed to gain support from a renowned personality from an international organization. This was José V. Trujillo, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the UN, who during his visit to Czechoslovakia in August 1956 asked about Valledor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as he was allegedly (according to information from Trujillo's friends) imprisoned in Czechoslovakia or had been denied the possibility to leave the country.⁸⁶ In a communiqué for the MOÚV KSČ, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Trujillo was an influential personality within the UN and the ministry wanted to maintain his positive attitude towards Prague. For this reason, Trujillo was informed in September 1956 by the Czechoslovak side that Valledor lived in Prague, worked as a translator and was never imprisoned in the Czechoslovak Republic. Information about Valledor's problems regarding his relocation to Prague, his health condition, his expulsion from the PCE and his threats of leaving the country was not communicated to Trujillo.⁸⁷

The issue of Valledor's departure from Czechoslovakia culminated in the autumn of 1957. In September, he asked for authorization for his definitive departure for Tétouan.⁸⁸ He was to be employed as a professor in this Moroccan city; nonetheless, he did not receive his passport on time. In a letter addressed to the ÚV KSČ Valledor asked for help, the quick processing of his application and the issuing of his passport and that of his wife, as he was not able to apply for entry visas to Morocco without them.⁸⁹ However, if the ÚV KSČ would not intervene in his matter,

⁸⁴ Ibidem.

⁸⁵ Ibidem.

⁸⁶ Archiv MZV (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic), f. Teritoriální odbory – Tajné (Territorial Section – Secret) 1955–1959, Španělsko (Spain), carton (c.) 205/1, file: 057/115 (3). MFA, no. 015.583/56. Issue: Zjištění osudu španělského emigranta Valledora [Findings about the destiny of the Spanish emigrant Valledor. Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the MOÚV KSČ], 24. 9. 1956.

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

⁸⁸ NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 192, a. j. 681, l. 54–55. ČSČK SO to the MOÚV KSČ. Issue: Odjezdy Španělů [Departures of Spaniards], 25. 9. 1957.

⁸⁹ Idem, l. 44–45. José Valledor to the ÚV KSČ, 25. 11. 1957.

he planned to turn to Czechoslovak President Novotný for help. Valledor concluded with the statement:

[W]e do not forget what our duty as Communists is and we are determined as such to try all means to solve our problems within the party. In our current position towards the Spanish Party, we can only turn to your Party, which we can always rely on, as you have already proven on other occasions.⁹⁰

Another record at the ÚV KSČ from the end of November 1957 states that Valledor and his wife wanted to leave the country,⁹¹ but the leadership of the PCE was against it.⁹² Líster had informed the ÚV KSČ that even if they had both remained members of the party, their departure would not be allowed by the party leadership, as Horcajo had been working in the PCE directorate and possessed confidential information. Nevertheless, the main problem for the Czechoslovak organs was that Valledor had already in his letter to the ÚV KSČ of November 1957 threatened that if he was not be allowed to leave Czechoslovakia, he would turn to one of the embassies in Prague and apply for authorization to leave for the West – it was the risk of his provocation against the Czechoslovak state (by contacting a Western embassy) that menaced the Czechoslovak authorities. Therefore, the ÚV KSČ suggested that the PCE leadership re-evaluated the potential threat of deconspiration posed by Valledor and his wife, as Horcajo had worked at the party's headquarters a long time ago and their departure would eliminate the danger of their provocation against the state, whilst it would be difficult to keep them in Czechoslovakia by force.⁹³ In December 1957, Líster responded to this suggestion by saying that Valledor should be kept in the Czechoslovak Republic as long as possible and, if unavoidable, should be allowed to leave; but any kind of scandal had to be avoided.⁹⁴ Valledor eventually left Czechoslovakia for Morocco on February 14, 1958, after the departure of his wife and son.⁹⁵ Despite the scarcity of information about his subsequent life, it is known that as a commander of the 15th International Brigade, he was a frequent guest of honour of former *interbrigadistas* in Britain and France. José A. Valledor returned to Spain after the death of Francisco Franco and died in Alicante on December 7, 1995.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

⁹¹ In 1956, the PCE changed its anti-Francoist strategy, started pursuing the "Policy of National Reconciliation" and since 1957 supported voluntary returns of Spanish exiles from the Eastern Bloc countries to Spain, in: PETHŐ, *El exilio*, pp. 44, 67–68; MORÁN, *Miseria*, pp. 411–417.

⁹² NA, f. MOÚV KSČ, sv. 192, a. j. 681, l. 43. Záznam ze dne [Memo from] 28. 11. 1957 (3. 12. 1957).

⁹³ Ibidem.

⁹⁴ Ibidem.

⁹⁵ Idem, l. 56. Záznam ze dne [Memo from] 19. 2. 1958; Idem, sv. 191, a. j. 670, l. 132. Záznam ze dne [Memo from] 10. 2. 1958.

⁹⁶ Howard GODDARD, "José Antonio Valledor", *The Volunteer. Journal of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade* 1, 1996, p. 10.

To conclude: Being more left than the comrades

Valledor's everyday resistance after his move from Ústí to Prague in 1955 consisted of two resistance practices: one carried out against the leadership of the PCE and another against the Czechoslovak state authorities; however, they were interconnected and entangled (as is the relationship between power and resistance).⁹⁷ His insubordination against the leadership of the PCE took the form of rejecting their directive (pronounced in order to discipline and "normalize" a party member), leading to Valledor's visible exemplary punishment – his expulsion from the PCE (resulting in his social ostracism, the worsening of his economic situation and the loss of benefits provided to other Spanish exiles), as he refused to return to Ústí and insisted on living in Prague. Subsequently, Valledor attempted to seek, through his petitions, help from the Czechoslovak authorities – when they also insisted on his departure from Prague (in line with the PCE), Valledor then reoriented his resistance towards the Czechoslovak state organs. He threatened them that he would inform government officials about his issues and that he would contact a Western embassy, and, thanks to his connections abroad, he successfully obtained support from the Ecuadorian representative to the UN. Valledor's objectives and the motivations behind them were personal (medical treatment) and professional (employment in Prague); nevertheless, they also changed with time, due to problems with their fulfillment. Eventually, his main aim became departure from the country (motivated by his bitter experience with state socialism, and better opportunities abroad) while he was trying to use the complex relationship between the PCE and the KSČ to his advantage – by underlining his trust in the Czechoslovak Party and thus winning the Czechoslovak authorities to his side. The primary objective of the Czechoslovak state bodies in their relation to Valledor was the same as that of the PCE and was mainly safety-related – at first, to control a heterodox exile and later, to prevent an international scandal and the deconspiracy of the Spanish Communist exile.

With this in mind, Valledor's everyday resistance coincides with the model of *consentful contention*. When resisting the Czechoslovak authorities, he was not opposing the regime; instead, through his petitions, he contested (only) specific decisions made by the state apparatus. By presenting himself as a dutiful citizen consenting to the people's democratic regime (a convinced antifascist and a Communist), he tried to redeem the commitments of the state.⁹⁸ Also, Valledor's resistance against the Czechoslovak authorities, carried out through letters and petitions with the threat of contacting Western embassies and informing the highest state authorities (and even a representative to the UN) about his situation, was in a sense productive. With his petitions, which can be understood as a discourse repetition/reversal, he was parasitizing on and misusing the regime's legitimating discourse of an anti-fascist people's republic for his own benefit, since overpassing the boundary

⁹⁷ Anna JOHANSSON – Stellan VINTHAGEN, "Dimensions of everyday resistance: the Palestinian Sumūd", *Journal of Political Power* 1, 2015, pp. 111–112.

⁹⁸ STRAUGHN, "Taking", pp. 1603–1604.

of Czechoslovak political norms would be too risky for him.⁹⁹ To put it another way, Valledor intended with his resistance against the Czechoslovak authorities to repeat and reverse the dominant discourse existing in state socialist Czechoslovakia: he was underlining the people's democratic character of the state, its antifascist and Marxist-Leninist ideology, as well as its commitment to secure basic material welfare for its citizens and guests – therefore, in his petitions, he tried to “speak socialist”.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, as he was obstructed in solving his health issues and was not allowed to leave the country, he criticized the Czechoslovak state bodies for not fulfilling these commitments, by “taking the state at its word”.¹⁰¹ At this point, an interesting question arises: What other possibilities did Valledor have to achieve his objectives? Unfortunately, due to the limited archival materials and the scope of this study, in this respect, I cannot offer a tangible answer. Be that as it may, as an ostracized and expelled Communist exile with poor knowledge of the Czech language, living with a seriously ill son in a foreign country, his possibilities were undeniably quite limited.

Therefore, in conclusion, I argue that Valledor was, with his petitions, trying to “beat the authorities at their own game: by appealing to their own legitimating value system, by being ‘more left’ than the comrades”.¹⁰² With his “discursive attack from the left”, he was trying to push the state bodies to grant concessions in his favour by confronting the Czechoslovak state with the danger of “losing face” – his tactic was in this case based on his threats of an international scandal due to the fact that it was impossible for him (a Communist and an antifascist) to solve his health issues and to leave a socialist country; Czechoslovakia would thus risk the loss of its international credibility.¹⁰³ Valledor's resistance against the Czechoslovak authorities was thus “accompanied by a public discursive affirmation of the very arrangements being resisted”¹⁰⁴ – although he contested specific decisions of the Communist authorities carried out against him, he was not fighting against the regime, and to ensure his safety, he was underlining his Communist and revolutionary conviction and past.¹⁰⁵ Hence, taking into account Straughn's model, it was the *petitioner's* (Valledor's) *capacity* – the ability to demonstrate worthiness and commitment, together with the *issue profile* (“the extent to which a controversy has become public”) and his connections abroad, that enabled him to contest the Czechoslovak authorities successfully.¹⁰⁶ To preserve its international prestige, the Czechoslovak state agreed to give way to Valledor's requests, thus confirming Straughn's hypothesis that “a ‘*consentful*’ *petition*, which presents the petitioner as a dutiful citizen pressing claims

⁹⁹ Catherine OWEN, “‘Consentful contention’ in a corporate state: human rights activists and public monitoring commissions in Russia”, *East European Politics* 3, 2015, p. 284.

¹⁰⁰ VILÍMEK – RAMEŠ, “Pohyblivé”, pp. 26–28.

¹⁰¹ STRAUGHN, “Taking”, p. 1602.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 1626.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, pp. 1630, 1639–1641.

¹⁰⁴ SCOTT, “Everyday”, p. 56.

¹⁰⁵ STRAUGHN, “Taking”, pp. 1603–1605.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 1639–1640.

consistent with socialist principles, should stand a better chance of success [...] than one articulating an oppositional political platform”.¹⁰⁷

Not only could Valledor’s everyday resistance be considered in the end successful (as his objectives were achieved), but his insubordination also proves that the life experiences of Western European Communists in people’s democracies were not always positive and in the case of politically heterodox exiles, one could even label them as Kafkaesque. Moreover, these complex interconnections between Czechoslovak state bodies, a heterodox Spanish exile, and the leadership of the PCE in Czechoslovakia are not only an example of Cold War mobility through the Iron Curtain, seeing that many Spanish Communist exiles were able to travel between the Eastern Bloc and the capitalist West, they also illustrate how the political emigrants living in state socialism were able to threaten the state authorities by informing international organizations about their problems in people’s democracies and thus challenge the reputation of the regime. Altogether, the story of José Valledor is an interesting insight into the “Czechoslovak branch” of the global network of the PCE, as well as into the ingenuity of citizens (and even Communists) living under state socialism.

(Written in English by the author)

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¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 1641.

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