

# The Last Stalinist: The Life of Santiago Carrillo

Santiago Carrillo was one of the most influential political figures of the 20th century. Throughout his long and controversial career, Carrillo championed the ideals of communism and played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of Spain. His commitment to the Stalinist ideology made him a polarizing figure, loved by some and reviled by others. In this article, we delve into the life of this enigmatic man, exploring his beginnings, his rise to power, and his lasting impact on Spanish politics.

## Early Life and Political Awakening

Born on January 18, 1915, in Gijón, Spain, Santiago Carrillo was raised in a working-class family. His parents were active members of the Socialist Youth, exposing him to left-wing ideologies from an early age. Growing up in a politically charged environment, Carrillo developed a keen interest in politics and social justice.

As a teenager, Carrillo became involved in left-wing student movements and joined the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) at the tender age of fifteen. He showed exceptional dedication and intelligence, quickly rising through the ranks of the party.

## The Last Stalinist: The Life of Santiago Carrillo

by Paul Preston (Kindle Edition)

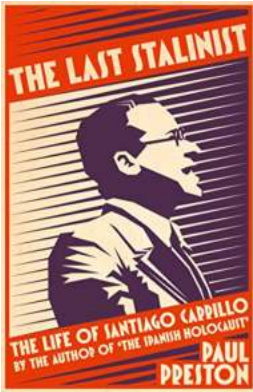
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## The Spanish Civil War and Exile

The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, and Carrillo played a crucial role in defending the Republican cause against Franco's Nationalist forces. As a member of the PCE's Central Committee, Carrillo organized militias and led communist fighters in various battles throughout the war.

However, as the war reached its end and Franco's Nationalist forces emerged victorious, Carrillo was forced into exile. He spent over three decades living in the Soviet Union, where he continued his political activism and further embraced Stalinism.

## Return to Spain and Political Resurgence

Following Franco's death in 1975, Spain transitioned towards democracy, opening doors for exiled political figures to return to the country. Santiago Carrillo, known as "The Last Stalinist," came back to Spain and re-entered the political scene.

In 1976, Carrillo played a key role in establishing the famous Pacts of Moncloa, a series of negotiations aimed at guiding Spain's transition to democracy. This

event marked Carrillo as a pragmatic and influential leader, willing to compromise for the greater good.

However, Carrillo's commitment to Stalinism and his role in suppressing dissidents in the past haunted him. Many considered him a controversial figure, and his association with the Soviet Union raised suspicions among his adversaries.

## **Carrillo's Legacy and Political Evolution**

Throughout his life, Santiago Carrillo evolved politically, distancing himself from his Stalinist roots. He played a crucial role in transforming the PCE into a more moderate party, encouraging greater openness and cooperation with other leftist groups.

Despite his efforts to modernize the PCE, the party struggled to gain significant electoral support. Carrillo retired from politics in 1985 but continued to advocate for workers' rights until his death in 2012.

Santiago Carrillo remains a controversial figure to this day, with supporters calling him a champion of the working class and defenders of human rights. Critics, however, condemn his affiliation with Stalinism and his willingness to suppress dissent. Regardless of personal opinions, there is no denying that Santiago Carrillo left an indelible mark on Spanish politics.

Santiago Carrillo's life and political journey offer a fascinating insight into the ideology and struggles of the 20th-century communist movement. As one of the last Stalinists, his legacy and contributions continue to be debated, shaping the understanding of Spain's complicated political history. Carrillo's commitment to his beliefs, his role in the Spanish Civil War, and his later political evolution make him a complex and captivating figure worth studying further.



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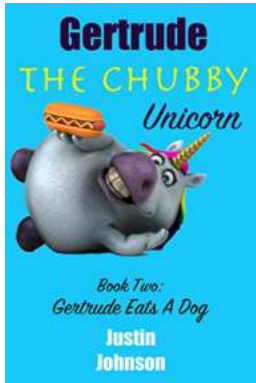
The life of the complex, ruthless adversary of General Franco, whose life spanned much of Spain's turbulence in the 20th century.

From 1939 to 1975, the Spanish Communist Party, effectively lead for two decades by Santiago Carrillo, was the most determined opponent of General Franco's Nationalist regime. Admired by many on the left as a revolutionary and a pillar of the anti-Franco struggle and hated by others as a Stalinist gravedigger of the revolution, Santiago Carrillo was arguably the dictator's most consistent left-wing enemy.

For many on the right, Carrillo was a monster to be vilified as a mass murderer for his activities during the Civil War. But his survival owed to certain qualities that he had in abundance – a capacity for hard work, stamina and endurance, writing and oratorical skills, intelligence and cunning – though honesty and loyalty were not among them.

One by one he turned on those who helped him in his desire for advancement, revealing the ruthless streak that he shared with Franco, and a zeal for rewriting his past. Drawing on the numerous, continuously revised accounts Carrillo created

of his life, and contrasting them with those produced by his friends and enemies, Spain's greatest modern historian Paul Preston unravels the legend of a devastating and controversial figure at the heart of 20th century Spanish politics.



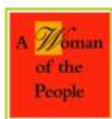
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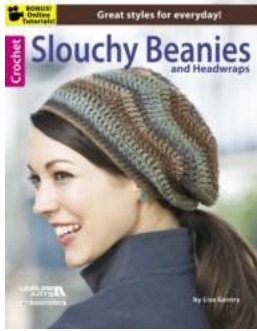
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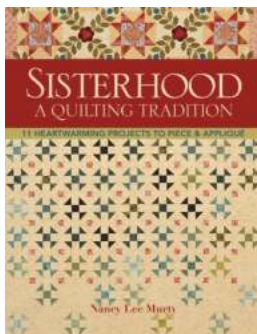
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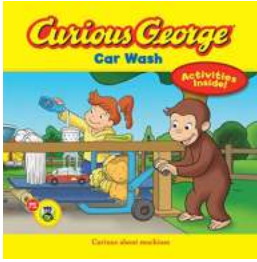
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