

Julio Anguita, historic leader of Spanish United Left, dies at 78



Madrid, May 16 (RHC)-- The historic leader of the Spanish United Left Party (IU), Julio Anguita, died Saturday at the age of 78 in the southern city of Cordoba, one week after suffering a cardiac arrest at home.

Anguita was admitted on May 9th to the intensive care unit of the Reina Sofia Hospital in that city, located in the region of Andalusia, after being hospitalized in a critical state due to a cardiac arrest.

It was not the first time that the politician and reference of the left suffered heart problems: in the middle of the 1993 electoral campaign he suffered a heart attack in Barcelona and another one in Cordoba five years later, as well as an angina pectoris in 2009.

Born in 1941 in Fuengirola (Malaga), in 1972 he joined the then clandestine Spanish Communist Party (PCE), still during the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco (1939-1975).

Once in democracy, he was mayor of Cordoba in 1979, re-elected in 1983, and several times regional deputy of Andalusia and of the Spanish Congress of Deputies. In February 1988, he was appointed Secretary General (top leader) of the PCE and the following year he took over the leadership of IU, in both cases replacing Gerardo Iglesias.

As leader of the left-wing coalition, he won his seat in the Congress of Deputies during the 1989 elections and maintained his seat in the Lower House until 2000. At the helm of Izquierda Unida, he achieved the best election results of the formation in 1996, when he won 10 percent of the vote and 21 representatives in Parliament.

He remained secretary general of the PCE until 1998 and was several times federal coordinator of IU, a coalition of parties with which he was a candidate for the presidency of the Spanish government.

With a degree in Modern and Contemporary History, Anguita left active politics in 2000. With the economic crisis of 2008, which he prophesied in one way or another in numerous writings and interviews, his figure was once again vindicated by journalists and political scientists, some even from the ideological antipodes.

A convinced Republican, Anguita became during those years a spiritual advisor and the mirror in which the new left that emerged after the 15-M Movement, or the Indignant, in 2011.

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