

**A ‘gigantic struggle between believers and those without God’?  
Catholics in the Republic during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-9**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

2015

## **Declaration of Authorship**

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

Date:

## Abstract

This thesis focuses directly upon the lived experiences of priests and lay Catholics who, driven by their faith, remained loyal to the Republic or otherwise refused to identify with the rebel cause during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9). It shows that their ability to make sense of the war outside of the Church-backed, rebel narrative of ‘crusade’ hinged centrally on their own understandings of their Catholic faith and its translation into experience. Not least was their recognition of the religious violence at the start of the war as the violent accumulation of larger political, social, and cultural clashes in which the Church had been a central protagonist. From there, it examines their participation in the wartime Republic, arguing that these individuals were agents of their own survival, not simply ‘un-murdered victims’ of revolutionary violence saved by divine intervention, as the epistemological categories of Francoist mythologies would have it. Rather, they were active participants in the Republic, even amidst the pressures of an increasingly fraught war effort, as the Republic fought not only to reconstruct its image as a modernising liberal democracy, and to translate that image into reality for its entire citizenry, but for its very survival. But amidst the Republic’s collapse and the consolidation across Spain of Francoist violence based on the ideologically-charged language of the ‘crusade’, these Catholics were not spared by their faith, their future-oriented aspirations for a more egalitarian society are shown to have cost them dearly. Historiographical silences surrounding this subject indicate that even today, ‘crusade’ mythologies embedded within the Francoist dictatorship continue to reverberate with destructive force. This thesis seeks to work beyond the accumulation of such myths and distorted narratives and thus to recover for the historical record those Catholic individuals who once worked for the incorporation of Catholicism into Spain’s democratic Republic.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis has benefited from an AHRC doctoral award, which funded the bulk of this research, in addition to funding granted by the Friendly Hand Society.

My thanks are due in the first instance to Helen Graham, who supervised this thesis and who has throughout provided encouragement, intellectual support, guidance and friendship. Beyond an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Spanish Civil War, Helen has taught me to think about the writing of history and our own places in the world in new ways. For that I am immensely grateful.

I am grateful too for the advice and assistance of many others, who have answered questions in more detail than I could have ever hoped, and discussed themes across an entire range of subjects: Daniel Beer, Rudolf Muhs, Paul Preston, Dan Stone, Sandra Souto and Maria Thomas. Thanks too must go to Mary Vincent, who first encouraged me as an undergraduate student to pursue many of the broad themes spread throughout this thesis. Additionally, I am thankful for the willingness of a number of historians to share ideas and information. Amongst many others, I would particularly like to thank Peter Anderson, Richard Baxell and Francisco Espinosa Maestre. Thanks must also go to the staff of various archives in Spain, who patiently provided much needed assistance. I must also thank Carl Bjerstrom and Becky Jinks, who have consistently offered friendship and coffee, along with insightful analysis and advice on various drafts of chapters within this thesis. Their assistance has also often extended to advice about university teaching. I am grateful to everyone at Royal Holloway, University of London who has facilitated that teaching.

Various friends have offered more encouragement, company and laughter than I will ever be able to repay. There are too many to name, but special thanks must go to Alex and Mike, not least for encouraging me to take a break once in a while. The final thanks are for my parents and my brother. They have provided constant love, support and encouragement throughout, perhaps dealing with more conversations about the Spanish Civil War than they could have ever imagined.

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## List of Abbreviations

ACCAM	Archivo Central de Curia de la Archidiócesis de Madrid
AHCB	Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Barcelona
AGA	Archivo General de la Administración, Alcalá de Henares
AGMJ	Archivo General del Ministerio de Justicia
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid
ANFD	Alianza Nacional de Fuerzas Democráticas
ATTP	Archivo del Tribunal Territorial Primero
CCUC	Catàleg Collectiu de les Universitats de Catalunya
CDMH	Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica
CEDA	Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas
CNT	Confederación Nacional de Trabajo
FAI	Federación Anarquista Ibérica
FFLC	Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero
FJCC	Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya
FNTT	Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra
FSA	Fundación Sabino Arana
IR	Izquierda Republicana
JSU	Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas
LSE	LSE Archive, London School of Economics and Political Science
MML	Marx Memorial Library, IB Association Archive
PCE	Partido Comunista de España
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
SHD	Service Historique de la Défense, Paris
TERMC	Tribunal Especial para la Represión de la Masonería y el Comunismo
UDC	Unió Democràtica de Catalunya
UTCC	Unió de Treballadors Cristians de Catalunya
UKHJP	University of Kent Archives, Hewlett Johnson Papers

## Introduction

In late September 1936, just a few months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the Bishop of Salamanca, Enrique Plá y Deniel, issued a pastoral letter entitled *The Two Cities*. In it, the bishop justified the military rising that had collapsed and initiated the civil war as necessary; ‘not a civil war but a crusade for religion and for the fatherland and for civilisation.’ The battle lines were drawn and the message to the Catholic faithful was clear: it was, he said, an apocalyptic battle of ‘heroism and martyrdom’ against those ‘without God and against God.’<sup>1</sup> Just two weeks earlier in Madrid, in the beating heart of the Republic portrayed by Plá y Deniel as ‘without God and against God’, the daily newspaper *La Libertad* had carried a prominent advertisement for an ‘exceptional pamphlet’ entitled ‘¡Tres discursos del presbítero García Morales!’ The pamphlet contained speeches broadcast on Madrid radio by the fifty-three year old priest Juan García Morales during August and early September. In those speeches, García Morales had referred not to a crusade, but a war led by ‘fat cats and aristocrats’ against the people of Spain. The pocket-sized book, on sale for the price of 0,25 centimes, promised renewed availability to a mass market in the capital that had already proven its appetite for the priest’s speeches: the first two editions had sold out so quickly that Socorro Rojo Internacional, the Comintern-organised international aid agency, had quickly ordered the printing of 50,000 additional copies.<sup>2</sup>

The juxtaposition of the two priests illustrates the striking complexities of civil wartime Spain. Far from the confrontation between ‘good versus evil’ portrayed by the Bishop of Salamanca, the Republic – in peacetime and now at war – was an arena of social change in which debates around religion and the place of the institutional Church became the lens through which larger political, social, and cultural clashes played out. Although priests and devout lay Catholics could therefore be found across

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<sup>1</sup> Enrique Plá y Deniel, *Las dos ciudades: carta pastoral*, (Salamanca: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Calatrava, 1936)

<sup>2</sup> *La Libertad*, 19 September 1936. The advertisement was for the pamphlet *Texto íntegro de los tres discursos pronunciados ante los micrófonos del Ministerio de la Guerra, el día 21 de agosto; del Cuartel de los Regimientos de Ferrocarriles de Leganés, el día 6 de septiembre y del Partido Comunista el día 13 de septiembre de 1936, por el sacerdote don Juan García Morales*, (Madrid: Socorro Rojo Internacional, 1936)

the political spectrum, the historiographical silences around the subject inevitably reflect the victory of the Church-backed rebel forces over the Republic in the civil war. Allied to a dictatorship that lasted for forty years, those imposed narratives of a ‘crusade’, ‘for God and for Spain’, were allowed to survive across the transition to democracy in the late 1970s, an afterlife of violence that was the product of a political brokerage driven by reformist Francoism in return for an amnesty law and a ‘pact of forgetting’.<sup>3</sup> The result is that in Spain today, the toxic mythologies of the Francoist dictatorship that emerged victorious from the civil war continue to reverberate with vitriolic force.

The contemporary political right in Spain – spurred on by the rise of populist conservative nationalism across Europe – has continued to propagate these myths, ensuring that the rhetoric of Francoism has never really left Spanish society.<sup>4</sup> Obscuring the complex history of the Republic and what it stood for as part of a long-term process of political and social change, the work of apologists for the Francoist regime continues in towns and villages across Spain.<sup>5</sup> Not the least of the problems is the Catholic Church hierarchy’s continued propagation of a Manichean wartime narrative strikingly reminiscent of Plá y Deniel’s *The Two Cities*. That narrative reinforces a picture of the Church as a passive and helpless victim, targeted for outright persecution by the Republic and its supporters, which in consequence encouraged Catholics to mobilise politically in defence of their faith in peacetime and, from 1936, at war. The Catholic hierarchy’s vociferous support of the memory of these ‘fallen’ victims of Republican persecution reflects not only the highly integrist nature of the current Spanish Episcopate, but also a process instigated by Pope John Paul II in 1985 to beatify those ‘helpless victims.’<sup>6</sup>

Despite the continued existence of a formidable sociological Francoism that has made visible its ferocious assault on those who seek to challenge that narrative of

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<sup>3</sup> Helen Graham, *The War and its Shadow; Spain’s Civil War in Europe’s Long Twentieth Century*, (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), pp. 123-4, 129-30

<sup>4</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 127, 150

<sup>5</sup> Francisco Espinosa Maestre particularly illuminates this phenomenon, not least his *Shoot the Messenger? Spanish Democracy and the Crimes of Francoism: From the Pact of Silence to the Trial of Baltasar Garzón*, trans. Richard Barker, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press/Cañada Blanch, 2013)

<sup>6</sup> Amongst other events, see *BBC Mundo*, 30 October 2007 for coverage of the beatification of 498 ‘martyrs’ under Benedict XVI and *El País*, 14 October 2013 for 522 more under Pope Francis I



the ‘fallen’, during the last few decades a significant number of Spanish historians, aided by a continued focus from historians across Europe and the USA, have begun making innovative efforts to contextualise and historicise the place of religion in the Spanish Civil War, opening up events that have long been occluded by Francoism.<sup>7</sup> This thesis addresses many of the themes discussed by these historians, seeking to explore a history that has been subject to acute marginalization – if not methodical elimination – as a result of the efforts of the Francoist dictatorship and the Spanish Catholic Church over decades to construct their own ideologically charged history of the civil war.

That recent work on the place of religion in the 1930s has stressed the central role that Catholicism played in the politics of the increasingly authoritarian and radicalising right across Europe. Historians have correctly argued that across interwar Europe – including Spain – Catholicism came to perform an ever more vital function as the ideological glue of the political right, additionally deployed as a tool of indoctrination and social mobilisation.<sup>8</sup> Emphasising the values of structure, order and discipline that were possible within Catholicism – rather than its theological principles – those perspectives encourage us to understand in a more historically and contextually accurate framework the politico-religious nexus that was central to right-wing politics in Europe during the 1930s.

However, this focus on the relationship between Catholicism and the political right has, in some instances, worked inadvertently to further occlude explorations of the relationship between Catholicism and progressive political options in Spain. The European historiographical mainstream remains fixed to the suggestion that to be Catholic meant to be anti-Republican with few exceptions.<sup>9</sup> Although one form of Catholicism took precedence because it chimed with the social fears of rural,

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<sup>7</sup> Julián Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2001); José Luis Ledesma, *Los días de llamas de la revolución: Violencia y política en la retaguardia republicana durante la guerra civil*, (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2003); Maria Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury: Popular Anticlerical Violence and Iconoclasm in Spain, 1931-1936*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013)

<sup>8</sup> Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.), *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); Matthew Feldman, Marius Turda, Tudor Georgescu (eds.), *Clerical Fascism in Interwar Europe; Totalitarianism Movements and Political Religions*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2008)

<sup>9</sup> Feldman et al. *Clerical Fascism in Interwar Europe*, pp. xii-xviii and Part Three, ‘Catholic Christianity and Fascism’; James Chappell, ‘The Catholic Origins of Totalitarianism Theory in Interwar Europe’, *Modern Intellectual History*, 8(3), 2011, pp. 561-90

conservative, popular sectors – and not least the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Spain – there were many forms of Catholicism and a multitude of political options open to Catholics in Spain during the 1930s – and indeed multiform ways of ‘being a Catholic.’<sup>10</sup>

This thesis focuses directly upon the lived experiences of priests and lay Catholics who, driven by their faith, remained loyal to the Republic or otherwise refused to identify with the rebel cause during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9). Examining their participation in the wartime Republic, it explores their hopes, dreams, nightmares and despairs during the searing experience of civil war. It shows that their ability to make sense of the war outside of the Church-backed, rebel narrative of ‘crusade’ hinged centrally on their own understandings of their Catholic faith and its translation into experience; not least their recognition of the religious violence at the start of the war as the violent accumulation of larger political, social, and cultural clashes in which the Church had been a central protagonist. From there, it examines how some devoutly Catholic individuals took on active roles within the Republic. It argues that these individuals were agents of their own survival, not simply ‘un-murdered victims’ of revolutionary violence saved by divine intervention, as the epistemological categories of Francoist mythologies would have it. Rather, whilst nevertheless forming a minority constituency within the wartime Republic, they were active participants in the post-coup Republic as it made concerted and continuous attempts to reconstruct and maintain its image as a modernising liberal democracy, and to translate that image into reality for its entire citizenry. As the ideologically charged language of the Catholic crusade formed the foundations of Francoist violence, these Catholics were not spared by their faith; their future-oriented aspirations for a more egalitarian society shown to be bought at too high a price. Throughout, this thesis seeks to work beyond the accumulation of post-war mythologies and the acute marginalisation from the historical narrative of those that had worked for the incorporation of Catholicism in Spain’s democratic Republic.

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<sup>10</sup> Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy; The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1975*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 119

## Understanding Catholicism in Spain before 1936

Between 1875 and 1931, the restored Bourbon monarchy in Spain perpetuated and consolidated an exclusive, excluding, static political system. Resembling the older order of European politics, it was dominated by a landowning aristocracy, Catholic Church and Army that sought political stability through a tightly-controlled network of patronages.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the Restoration system proved unable to accommodate the social classes emerging from industrialisation and urbanisation – not least the aspirational middle class intellectuals and urban working classes in Barcelona, Madrid, and other urban centres, particularly on Spain's north east seaboard.<sup>12</sup> The final loss of empire in 1898 – *El desastre* [the disaster] – focused the attentions of the Spanish military further inward, transforming them into a powerful internal political lobby, determined to protect their own deeply conservative idea of 'Spain' at all costs.<sup>13</sup> That ultra-conservative ideal was reinforced by the Catholic Church, its religious personnel anchored in counter-Reformation absolutism and, vehemently opposed to ideas that threatened its monopoly on truth and sin, the Castilian-dominated ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Spanish Church led an offensive against growing liberalism and socialism shared by Church hierarchies across Europe.<sup>14</sup> Although the peripheral Church leaderships in the Basque Provinces and in Catalonia were less integrist, Church initiatives almost everywhere reflected an intense fear that Spain's poorest social constituencies, particularly in urban areas, would transfer their allegiances to emerging secular and socialist political movements.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mary Vincent, *Spain 1833-2002: People and State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 52-5; Joan Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week: A Study of Anticlericalism in Spain, 1875-1912* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 10-14, pp. 39-41. See also the Church's 'blessing' of rebel violence in attempts to restore this 'order' in 1936, Casanova, 'Rebelión y Revolución' in Santos Juliá (ed.), *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil*, (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999), pp. 112-6

<sup>12</sup> Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 10-11; for Barcelona see also Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898-1937*, (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 2-4, 50

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn P. Boyd, *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 10-11. This had much longer term antecedents too, Vincent, *Spain*, pp. 33-5

<sup>14</sup> Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 122; Julio de la Cueva, 'The assault on the city of Levites: Spain', in Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 181-201; see also Christopher Clark, 'The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars' in this volume, particularly pp. 42-6

<sup>15</sup> Josefina Cuesta, 'Estudios sobre el catolicismo social español (1915-1930): un estado de la cuestión', *Studia histórica: Historia contemporánea*, 2, 1984, p. 207

Those initiatives were often based on Leo XII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which laid out the Catholic Church's response to the social conflicts that had emerged in the wake of industrialisation and that had led to the rise of socialism across Europe. The encyclical sought to encourage the promotion of social justice through the protection of security and property rights, urging ecclesiastical personnel to engage with the 'misery and wretchedness' of the working classes, offering solutions that would both teach social principles and ensure class harmony.<sup>16</sup> As the Spanish historians Josefina Cuesta and Feliciano Montero both illustrate, studies of those social initiatives that emerged in Spain in response to the papal directive remain uneven. Focusing extensively on the methodological construction of these efforts – union formations, organisational structures and policy ideas – the analytical contextualisation of the social and cultural environments in which these efforts occurred is underdeveloped.<sup>17</sup> Of particular concern for Cuesta is the lack of focus on aspects of 'religiosity' within these initiatives – how these organisations sought, for instance, to (re)introduce Catholic teaching into the everyday lives of workers – and the need for a comparative framework that explores non-formation and rejection alongside the acceptance of such initiatives.<sup>18</sup> As Feliciano Montero indicates further, the history of those social efforts is written mainly through the efforts of the Spanish Church as an institution, paradoxically creating a history more political than any exploration of the social dimensions of the relationships between the working classes and the efforts of Catholic individuals, organisations and associations, many of whom worked far beyond the acquiescence of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>19</sup> The picture remains confined to an 'analysis of failure' – the contextualisation of social Catholic efforts facing insurmountable obstacles generated by the concretising anticlerical mentalities of the workers these efforts sought to aid.

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<sup>16</sup> *Rerum Novarum*, available at [http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html) [last accessed 31 May 2015]

<sup>17</sup> Cuesta, 'Estudios sobre el catolicismo', pp. 193-244. Though the initiatives established by the Church at all levels did much to increase its prominence in contemporary society, exploring this activity under the umbrella of 'social Catholicism' does little to highlight the diverse range of unions, workers circles, savings banks and insurance schemes with equally varying levels of coverage and ultimately, success.

<sup>18</sup> Cuesta, 'Estudios sobre el catolicismo', pp. 242-3

<sup>19</sup> Feliciano Montero, 'El catolicismo social en España, Balance historiográfico', in Benoît Pellistrandi (ed.) *L'histoire religieuse en France et en Espagne*, (Madrid: Collection de la Casa de Velázquez, 2005), pp. 392-3

But with the message of *Rerum Novarum* being one of calming and consoling the poor, encouraging them to accept their position in society without conflict, the trajectory of the Church's efforts was somewhat predictable. With the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy already tied intrinsically to the exclusivist and repressive Restoration Monarchy that was similarly concerned with preserving 'harmony' in society, it was little wonder that across Spain, the urban poor perceived the Church as their enemy – it offered no material assistance and was increasingly abandoning the country's expanding cities as alien territory.<sup>20</sup> Across Spain, the Catholic labour movement's attempts to break strikes and undermine socialist labour unions through yellow unionism – which would re-emerge with some ferocity in the 1930s – further painted a picture of the Church as a dangerous enemy.<sup>21</sup> In Spain's south too, many of the desperately poor agricultural labourers who worked on the vast *latifundia* estates saw the Church 'as the ally of their exploitative employers and of the violent state security forces'.<sup>22</sup>

Anticlericalism was thus grounded above all in the collective daily experience, believed by many of these groups to be unresolvable through gradual reform, of a Church which they identified as part of a 'vast repressive coalition that structured everyday life against them'.<sup>23</sup> This was true not only of Spain's urban and rural poor but also those middle class intellectuals who dreamed of a new, progressive and accessible political system free of obscurantist Catholicism. Those increasing social tensions prompted those behind the Restoration system to turn towards authoritarianism and the intervention of the military in the form of a dictatorship led by General Miguel Primo de Rivera. The Primo dictatorship saw the closing down of any attempt at political change from embryonic organisations like the People's Social Party (PSP), Oscar Alzaga's study of which reveals the extent to which the new party offered the opportunity during the 1920s for progressive Christian democrats to work together in a party that professed to be democratic, non-confessional and popular, in contrast to the Church hierarchy's continued uncritical support for the Restoration

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<sup>20</sup> Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 100; Graham charts this process for the rural poor, *Spanish Republic*, p. 5

<sup>21</sup> Maria Thomas, 'Disputing the Public Sphere: Anticlerical Violence, Conflict and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, April 1931-July 1936', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 33, 2011, p. 65

<sup>22</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 23

<sup>23</sup> Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict*, p. 39

system.<sup>24</sup> Emerging during a period of political instability and social confrontation in which labour protest and peripheral nationalisms in the Basque Country and Catalonia were challenging the enforced hegemony of the Restoration system, the PSP, which included figures such as the reforming priests Maximiliano Arboleya and José Gafo alongside the Catholic politicians Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo and Manuel Giménez Fernández, was born as a product of Spain's crisis-ridden process of modernisation. Based on the efforts of the 'clerical socialist' Luigi Sturzo in Italy, the rapid expansion of popular support for the PSP in Spain illustrated that there were Catholic constituencies in Spain that could be brought together politically by concerns with the relationship between Catholicism and its lack of positive engagement with the modernising changes that were accelerating rapidly across Europe in the aftermath of WWI.<sup>25</sup> Curtailed by the Primo dictatorship, the PSP was unable to survive for long enough to establish a foothold in politics, though its short existence proved that there were different visions of a future, Catholic Spain from that offered by the conservative Catholic hierarchy and the reactionary political order of the *ancien régime*. What would also become apparent in the aftermath of the July 1936 coup was that many of those grouped around the PSP were still in contact, their working relationships and personal friendships forged and reforged in wartime.<sup>26</sup>

In many ways, the Primo dictatorship of 1923-30 was a regional variant of the authoritarian response to the turbulence of post-war revolutionary Europe – most notably Mussolini's Italy. And by the time of its collapse in 1930, Primo was backed unequivocally only by the institutional Catholic Church. The Church itself remained on the counter-offensive against the secular labour unions of the political left (as

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<sup>24</sup> Oscar Alzaga, *La Primera Democracia Cristiana en España*, (Barcelona: Ariel, 1973), p. 14. Though Giménez Fernández would later join the CEDA, Alzaga's depiction of him, along with other leading members of the PSP, fits comfortably with other biographical studies completed of Lerroux's later Minister of Agriculture that argue persuasively of Giménez Fernández's convinced republicanism; see Javier Tussell and José Calvo, *Manuel Giménez Fernández: precursor de la democracia española* (Barcelona: Mondadori, 1990); For Arboleya during this period see particularly Domingo Benavides Gómez, *El fracaso social del catolicismo español; Arboleya-Martínez, 1870-1951*, (Barcelona: Editorial Nova Terra, 1973), pp. 181-276

<sup>25</sup> For Sturzo and the PPI, upon which the PSP was based, see John N. Molony, *The emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy; Partito Popolare, 1919-1926*, (London: Croom Helm, 1977)

<sup>26</sup> In 1935 Ossorio y Gallardo received a copy of Juan García Morales' new work *El Cristo Rojo* from the priest, and whilst García Morales had never joined the PSP, the two men had long shared an interest in Christian democratic politics. Sturzo continued to exchange correspondences with many of the PSP members, now grouped around various political organisations, and also remained prolific in his public focus on developments in Spain; Ferran Camps i Vallejo and Clotilde Parellada i Rosell (eds.), *Luigi Sturzo: articles a El Matí: 1929-1936*, (Barcelona, Partit Popular Europeu, 1992)

elsewhere in Europe), gaining some success in setting up alternative Catholic associations in the rural centre of Spain in Old Castile and Leon.<sup>27</sup> In these areas, devoutly Catholic and often politically conservative peasant smallholders perceived in the Church the opportunity for spiritual (and sometimes financial) protection from the frightening changes of modernity, many of which came to be perceived as intrinsic to the mass democracy inaugurated by the emergence of a Republic in 1931.<sup>28</sup>

The arrival of the Second Republic in April 1931, by way of a massive anti-monarchist, urban vote, brought with it hopes of modernising social, cultural and economic change. A progressive governing coalition sought to create a modern state through democratic change – not only by improving the conditions in which Spain's poorest social constituencies lived but also by destroying the vast influence of the Church and reforming the Army, which offered their own problematic views of what was wrong with Spanish society.<sup>29</sup> Hopes were inevitably raised amongst the Republic's supporters, not least its urban and rural workers, but in order to consolidate itself as a democratic system, the Republic needed to establish superiority over the Army and the Church, the two nationwide institutions that exercised tight control over Spanish society.

Popular action across Spain regarding the 'religious question' actually ran far ahead of governmental plans: across Spain local political organisations and groups of citizens took it upon themselves to enact 'reforms' months before the secularising constitution was approved by parliament.<sup>30</sup> Although in some localities this took the form of republican flags hanging from Church buildings, there was also a more violent element: a wave of Church burning which began in Madrid on 10 May 1931 quickly spread and there were incidences of violent attacks against individuals.<sup>31</sup> Innovative and empirically rich scholarship over the last two decades from a new generation of historians has placed this violence in its historical context, making clear that this was

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<sup>27</sup> Julio de la Cueva and Feliciano Montero (eds.), *La secularización conflictiva: España 1898 – 1931*, (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007) charts this process through the first decades of the twentieth century

<sup>28</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 4-5

<sup>29</sup> Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 8-9

<sup>30</sup> Thomas, 'Disputing the Public Sphere', pp. 56-8

<sup>31</sup> William Christian, *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 14-8; Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 181

the consequence of a long tradition of popular anticlericalism that emerged in response to the Church's role at the centre of the repressive Restoration Monarchy.<sup>32</sup> Church burnings were thus at once both a product of Restoration political culture and, at the same time, a logical, rational – and hugely violent – expression of a huge and jubilant outpouring of popular and public enthusiasm for the Republic by large numbers of those excluded and repressed by that Restoration system.

The birth of this Republic, backed by outwardly anticlerical constituencies and whose leading politicians sought to construct a non-confessional, 'European' state, provoked the suspicion, fear and hostility of the institutional Church, landowners, industrialists and the armed forces.<sup>33</sup> As Maria Thomas notes, 'there could be little greater contrast in that sense of collective foreboding than the rapturous ecclesiastical reactions that had greeted the 1923 coup establishing the Primo de Rivera dictatorship'.<sup>34</sup> Although the separation of Church and State would always cause ecclesiastical hostility, measures to restrict religious processions and interfere with traditions and communal piety also struck a raw nerve among lay Catholics, encouraging them to believe that the new Republic targeted them unfairly.<sup>35</sup> And so, from the spring and summer of 1931, the ecclesiastical hierarchy 'began to construct a discourse which portrayed the Church as a helpless victim of this Republican 'persecution', impelling lay Catholics to mobilise politically in defence of their religion'.<sup>36</sup> As early as May 1931 Cardinal Pedro Segura, then Archbishop of Toledo, acknowledged publicly that 'when the rights of religion are threatened, it is an indispensable duty of all to unite to defend them and save them.'<sup>37</sup> That 'threat' to religion, in the form of the plurality of conscience, civil marriage and burial, and the

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<sup>32</sup> The best introductions here include Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*; Julio de la Cueva, 'Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33(3), 1998, pp. 355-69; José Álvarez Junco, *The Emergence of Mass Politics in Spain*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002) and 'El anticlericalismo en el movimiento obrero', in Gabriel Jackson, *Octubre 1934. Cincuenta años para la reflexión* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1985)

<sup>33</sup> Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain*, (St. Ives: HarperPress, 2011), p. 7

<sup>34</sup> Maria Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury: Popular Anticlerical Violence and Iconoclasm in Spain, 1931-1936*, Ph.D Thesis, (Royal Holloway, 2012), p. 14; Frances Lannon notes too that 'while thousands ecstatically greeted [the Republic]' such foreboding 'was justifiably a more usual spontaneous response amongst Catholics', Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 179

<sup>35</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 28-9

<sup>36</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 14

<sup>37</sup> *Boletín Eclesiástico del Arzobispado de Toledo*, May 2, 1931



breakdown of the Church's hegemony over education, joined the gendered and sexual freedoms newly permitted, permeating the mind-set of those opposed to the Republic. Segura's pastoral praised the now-absent Alfonso XIII, an act that Frances Lannon indicates was 'inopportune and provocative' and which ensured that Republican authorities expelled the Cardinal from Spain – but nevertheless, his words struck a chord with huge numbers of Catholics from diverse backgrounds.<sup>38</sup>

Through mass, popular mobilisation behind the vexed question of Catholicism, orchestrated – but not necessarily invented by – the Catholic Church itself, huge numbers of people rapidly came to see in the Republic and its reforms a deadly threat to their very idea of Spain. Comprised of ordinary lay people, not only in Spain's poor and remote rural centre, but also in the growing mass organisations of the political right in the cities, that mobilisation occurred behind the idea of a 'crusade.'<sup>39</sup> Borrowing the language of the faith, the 'crusade' was not just about Segura's called-for defence of religion, but was underwritten by a host of social fears, always intrinsic to which was the Republic's intention to redistribute social and economic wealth – and the political power it came with – and its acceptance of cultural difference. Only in this growing interconnectedness between religion and the politics of the right can we understand how disparate right-wing groups, including the fascist Falange, could access that mobilising potential.<sup>40</sup>

Chief amongst these for the first two years of the Republic was Acción Popular (AP), led by José María Gil Robles, a young lawyer from Salamanca. Catholics were urged by their bishops and local priests to vote for AP and across Spain, 'the leaders of AP and other right-wing political parties were often the same people who directed Catholic agrarian, women's and youth groups'.<sup>41</sup> These local networks played a crucial role in the subsequent organisation of the Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (CEDA), a confederation of right-wing parties established in February 1933 and led by Gil Robles. Those pre-existing national

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<sup>38</sup> Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 180

<sup>39</sup> Sid Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism; The Juventud de Acción Popular in Spain, 1931-1939*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), pp. 33-5

<sup>40</sup> Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp. 190-3; Mary Vincent, 'The Martyrs and the Saints: Masculinity and the Construction of the Francoist Crusade', *History Workshop Journal*, 47, 1999, pp. 68-98

<sup>41</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 51

networks of Catholic organisations would also give the CEDA its advantage over its political opponents in the Republic.

Funded by Spain's wealthy agrarian landowners, the CEDA successfully mobilised large numbers of middle class Catholics on a platform that warned of the threat to religion, tradition and family values.<sup>42</sup> Born in a European landscape marked increasingly by defeats for the left against authoritarian and fascist regimes, it was perhaps ironic that mass Catholic forces hostile to the very notion of mass democracy were far better equipped to use the Republic's political system than were the organisations and parties of the reformist centre-left. Guilty of bringing the legislative life of the Republic to a standstill at key moments through its policy of filibustering reformist legislation, the CEDA was much more than a conservative-republican opposition party.<sup>43</sup> Deploying paramilitary and fascist imagery – with Gil Robles a self-styled *Jefe*, a Spanish equivalent of *Duce* or *Führer* – only encouraged a very real and immediate contemporary conviction amongst workers who believed that this was a regional variant of Hitler's and Mussolini's parties.<sup>44</sup> As Maria Thomas makes clear, the Church's backing of the CEDA also 'forged an enduring mental linkage between Catholicism and what many workers on the left understood as fascism'.<sup>45</sup>

But despite the rhetoric of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the mobilisation of large numbers of Catholics behind the CEDA, there were many ways in which one could be a Catholic in 1930s Spain. Their range of reactions, and how they made sense of their places within the Republic, were likewise multiform and plural. Much more can therefore be done by historians to challenge the monolithic vision of Catholics as socially and culturally immobile and politically intransigent. In his recent study of the Catholic clergy in Madrid, the historian José Luis González Gullón has

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<sup>42</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 66; Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. xv

<sup>43</sup> Paul Preston, *The Politics of Revenge: Fascism and the Military in twentieth-century Spain*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 23

<sup>44</sup> Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform Reaction and Revolution in the Second Spanish Republic, 1931-1936*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 130; Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp. 230-5. For the perception of the CEDA as 'legalistic' and 'semi-moderate', see Stanley G. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936: Origins of the Civil War*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 308-9

<sup>45</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, thesis, p. 14. Sid Lowe remarks further that 'religion was a fundamental component of the ideological and self-identifying make-up already shared by the right' by July 1936 – the Church offering 'the official consecration of what the right had proclaimed...throughout the five previous years...', Lowe, *Catholicism*, p. 191

challenged that static image in a number of ways, exploring the everyday lives and experiences of the capital city's priests amid the confrontations of the 1930s.<sup>46</sup> As González Gullón indicates of the capital, in a pattern replicated in other parts of Spain, clerical responses to the Republican regime could be diverse and fluid.<sup>47</sup> The historian Marisa Tezanos also emphasises the need to explore this aspect of the religious life of the Second Republic in more detail.<sup>48</sup> The most visible groups of Catholics in support of the Republic were gathered around the regional nationalist movements in the Basque Country and Catalonia. The Basque national Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) and the Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (UDC), the progressive political party led by a number of Catalan Catholics, both had political ambitions that were coherent with their particular readings of Catholicism.<sup>49</sup> Chiming with currents of progressive European politics and concerned with ideas of social justice delivered through Catholic teaching, even the political conservatism of Basque nationalism could find common ground with working class political organisations in the desire to better the lives of Basque workers.<sup>50</sup> There were also Catholic politicians across the political spectrum in all of Spain, and likewise there were priests and ordinary lay Catholics who over the course of the Republic supported political options including – albeit in rarer cases – socialism and communism. Many of those who supported more radical options appear in this thesis. Some were more evangelical than others, some more socially conservative, and though individuals fit awkwardly within taxonomical boxes, Tezanos illustrates that there were Catholic priests who stood for political office during the Republic across the political spectrum.<sup>51</sup> Some were later suspended by the Church for collaborating with parties deemed to be anticlerical.

Those political choices had cultural echoes too, in magazines and other print media that allowed progressive-thinking Catholic artists, writers, academics and

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<sup>46</sup> José Luis González Gullón, *El clero en la Segunda República. Madrid, 1931-1936*, (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2011), see in particular sections 3 and 4.

<sup>47</sup> González Gullón, *El clero*, pp. 73-4. For this variation across other areas of Spain, see for instance Antón M. Pazos, *El clero navarro (1900-1936): origen social, procedencia geográfica y formación sacerdotal*, (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1990)

<sup>48</sup> Marisa Tezanos Gandarillas, 'El clero ante la República: los clérigos candidatos en las elecciones constituyentes de 1931' in Julio de la Cueva and Feliciano García Montero (eds.), *Laicismo y catolicismo. El conflicto político-religioso en la Segunda República*, (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2009), pp. 276-9

<sup>49</sup> Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 194

<sup>50</sup> Javier Tusell, *Historia de la democracia cristiana en España*, II, (Madrid: Editorial Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1974), pp. 18-23

<sup>51</sup> Tezanos Gandarillas, 'El clero ante la República', pp. 279-84

thinkers to communicate their ideas to a mass audience. With many of these new forms of Catholic thought taking their inspiration from developments in Christian democracy and strands of forward-thinking, modernising Catholicism from across Europe, they recognised that regenerating the country socially, economically, and culturally required more than replacing the political leadership.<sup>52</sup> Some identified the need for an expansion and improvement of popular education to facilitate progress and provide a new set of cultural values that would usefully serve in the construction of a new Republican nation.

It was against this backdrop that publications like *Cruz y Raya* appeared, its founders intending to offer a publication culturally open and at the same time distinctly Catholic.<sup>53</sup> Although religion was central to the lexicon of *Cruz y Raya*, its founders and contributors made great efforts to point out that Catholicism was just one ‘medium’ through which a whole host of social and cultural issues and themes could be explored.<sup>54</sup> Perceived by many at the time as the left-wing Catholic journal of the Republic, *Cruz y Raya*’s first-class print quality and size made it a publication more at home on the coffee tables of the middle-class Catholics and intellectuals than amongst the huge number of Spain’s population who were illiterate.<sup>55</sup>

But as the work of *Cruz y Raya* visibly articulated, religion meant different things for different people, problematising the assumption that Catholic ‘social identities’ could be easily transferred into the political arena, and mapped onto political choices without problems. *Cruz y Raya* identified a middle class Catholic constituency that bought into democratic ideals and that could be vehemently critical of the Church: indeed, José Bergamín, one of the magazine’s founders and leading contributors, suggested that the Spanish Church could benefit from following the French example in particular, attacking the clergy’s intransigence and interference in

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<sup>52</sup> Helen Wing, *The Dialectics of Faith in the Poetry of José Bergamín*, (London: W.S. Maney, 1995), p. 33

<sup>53</sup> Manuel José Alonso García, *Estudio sobre la revista ‘Cruz y Raya’*, (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1977), p. 20. The first edition of the publication was released in 1933, and whilst many of its leaders and contributors were practising, staunchly Catholic individuals, this was not a requirement of its contributors.

<sup>54</sup> Wing, *The Dialectics of Faith*, p. 61

<sup>55</sup> Exact figures of Spain’s illiteracy rates are difficult to ascertain; Casanova suggests a figure of close to fifty percent of those aged 10 and above, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 42

politics.<sup>56</sup> Upon the assertion that the members of *Cruz y Raya* did ‘not count at all in either Catholic or political life,’ one of its members responded that ‘we are only too proud of having no connection with politics and as little as possible with what in this moment is called ‘Catholic life’ in our country.’<sup>57</sup> Likewise in Galicia, a small group of priests gathered around the publication *Logos*, a similar journalistic enterprise embracing similar strands of reformist Catholic theology in its attempts to engage with modernising change in Spain and its impact on religious practice and experience.<sup>58</sup>

Other Catholic individuals participated in a variety of magazines and print publications, many of which found common ground in social democratic political options. Others still – including several of the priests featured in this thesis – produced their own pamphlets and books, and wrote countless newspaper articles. As this growing cultural production showed, there were priests and devout lay Catholics who saw liberalism and socialism (and anticlericalism) as artefacts of this new political modernity to be engaged with rather than rejected. At the same time, they did so through the lenses of new forms of Catholic thought, believing that the construction of democracy should be inspired by the universal values of the gospel. Of central importance to their work, and a focus repeated throughout this thesis, is the idea of Jesus as the ‘first socialist’, an egalitarian hero-figure seeking progressive, utopian change – far removed from the intransigent absolutism of the contemporary Church. In that image, Jesus stood side by side ‘with the people’ and, echoing Republican voices that called for the formation of a new, reforming and modernising nation comprised ‘of the people’, the resonances were obvious. Those who utilised such discursive themes during the 1930s included Juan García Morales, a priest from Huelma (Jaén) and author of the radical 1935 book *El Cristo Rojo*, and the Madrid priest Leocadio Lobo, whose pastoral experience with families in need, and contact with liberal Catholics in the city had shaped his strong perspective on Spain’s social ills.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Cruz y Raya*, 25, April 1935

<sup>57</sup> ‘Controversy on Spain’ between H.A Gwynne CH, editor of the *Morning Post*, and A. Ramos Oliviera, a Spanish writer, (London: United Editorial, 1937), p. 29

<sup>58</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 336

<sup>59</sup> José Luis González Gullón, ‘Leocadio Lobo, un sacerdote republicano’, *Hispania Sacra*, 125, 2010, pp. 272-7; Leocadio Lobo, *Primate and Priest*, (London: Press Department of the Spanish Embassy, 1937)

Lobo, from a small village south-west of Madrid and from 1918 the intensely energetic priest of three of the capital's parishes, formed part of a growing community of priests and religious personnel committed to providing greater pastoral care, many of whom did so through newly-formed community centres, recreational activities and educational programmes. These initiatives were conceptualised, organised and run by the individuals themselves, often with no assistance – if not opposition – from their ecclesiastical superiors. Individual clergymen like Juan García Morales were greatly influenced by strands of liberal European Catholicism that emphasised the need to engage actively within new industrialising, modernising environments.<sup>60</sup> Inspired by the progress made elsewhere in Europe (France and Belgium in particular), small embryonic organisations appeared in many areas of Spain, most often in urban, populous towns and cities, and provided the only real links in Spain between clergymen and forms of organised unionisation. They were most successful in Catalonia, where a progressive democratic atmosphere aided their development, and where they sought to develop pastoral strategies based in and around working lives, with community centres that offered recreational camps and educational seminars, whilst some even had football teams.<sup>61</sup> In their desire to engender productive links between Catholicism and evolving forms of working class politics, these Catalan groups forged strong links with the Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (UDC).<sup>62</sup> Likewise in the Basque Country, the leaders of the PNV's Catholic labour union, the Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos (STV), were open to exchanging views with communists despite their own conservative politics. A more nuanced picture indicates that Catholic priests became involved in labour organisations of their own accord. Amongst others, Leocadio Lobo had been a member of an agricultural labour union for six years before it was closed down under the Primo regime, whilst the priest Luis

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<sup>60</sup> Juan García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*, (Madrid: Editorial Castro, 1935)

<sup>61</sup> Ramon Arasa, *La Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya (contribució a la seva història)*, (Barcelona: Editorial Nova Terra, 1972), pp. 68-71. For a comparative context to these efforts, see amongst others Susan B. Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France*, (London: Duke University Press, 2009)

<sup>62</sup> For the emergence of the Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya and its links to European Catholic movements, see Arasa, *La Federació de Joves Cristians* and Pere Codinachs i Verdaguier, *La Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya (FJCC, 1931-1936). La seva mentalitat moral, la seva influència social*, (Barcelona: Claret, 1990); Hilari Raguier, *La Unió Democràtica de Catalunya i el seu temps (1931-1939)*, (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadía de Montserrat, 1976), p. 246. The similar organisation UTCC was founded by another priest, Josep Maria Tarragó i Ballús who would, during the civil war, come to be targeted by Francoist authorities for his progressive politics; see José Andrés-Gallego and Antón M. Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá: Documentos de la Guerra Civil, VIII*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005)

López-Dóriga, who was elected to the Cortes in 1931, had similarly worked to create a Catholic agrarian union in Granada.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, as the geographical spread of reforming Catholic initiatives like those in Catalonia and – although of a different tenor – those in the Basque Country confirmed, these were to remain minority initiatives for a variety of structural and deeply rooted attitudinal reasons. In much of the rest of Spain, the Catholic labour movement remained conservative, hostile to socialism and wedded to longstanding structures of repression, its involvement in strikebreaking and yellow unionism well recognised.<sup>64</sup>

Those spaces for alternative forms of Catholicism – small from the outset – were shrinking further as the landscape of Republican politics became more conflictive. In the historiographical mainstream, the breakdown of the Republic towards civil war is portrayed as a process of polarisation, clearer and accelerating dramatically from 1934 through to 1936. But this might be usefully perceived not in terms of polarisation around left and right, but rather in terms of two symbiotic and simultaneous processes: on the one hand, the increasing fragmentation of the political left and the powerlessness of those behind the democratic reform to realise their project, and on the other, increasing political and social mass mobilisation by the political right and conservative forces against those reformist ambitions.

Ever present, but lost amidst those processes, were Catholics opposed to that right-wing mobilisation. As political options narrowed and polarised, so too did the space in which they could interpret their place in the Republic – tied, as they often were, to smaller local and regional initiatives increasingly subsumed within the collapsing centre-ground of Republican politics. Those dynamics reveal not only the existence of ideological, intellectual, social and cultural forms of Catholic thought that chimed with the Republican project, but why those currents of progressive Catholic thought did not lead necessarily to an organised political force. Those nuances were further shattered in the aftermath of the civil war and compounded by a Manichean cold-war split that severed the intricacies of those political options.

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<sup>63</sup> For López-Dóriga, see Marisa Tezanos Gandarillas, 'Luis López-Dóriga: un deán radical-socialista en las Cortes constituyentes de la II República española', *Spagna contemporanea*, 17, 2000, pp. 41-58

<sup>64</sup> Adrian Shubert, 'El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias', in Jackson, *Octubre 1934*, pp. 246-8

As this thesis makes clear, these strands of progressive, pro-Republic and later anti-Francoist Catholicism must be analysed in the broadest possible historical context, and with regard to political and ideological meanings as much as to their varied political, social, cultural (and indeed theological) dimensions. It stresses that there were many forms of Catholicism and political options open to Catholics in Spain, but one took precedent because it chimed with both elite and popular fears – those of mass rural conservatism and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. As those fears rapidly escalated, that resonant interpretation of Catholicism also became the dominant linguistic motif of the political right as it went to the polls in November 1933.<sup>65</sup> This politicised Catholicism underlined a united coalition driven by the CEDA, facing a fractured political left, disunited and disillusioned by the limited achievements of 1931-3. The mass mobilisation of the CEDA, supported too by large numbers of priests and the religious press, was realised in the victory of that conservative and counter-reforming coalition. During the ensuing ‘two black years’ [*bienio negro*], the CEDA-backed government adapted, altered and sometimes simply ignored much of the legislation of 1931-3, running down many of the projects, including land reforms and secular education initiatives, that had promised to ‘modernise’ and ‘Europeanise’ Spain, in turn allowing the Church to begin to reclaim its public dominance.<sup>66</sup> Arrests and trials on offences ‘against religion’ were also increasingly common in a hostile climate fostered by the right and by the Church, and which once again reminded workers of the daily experience of the Restoration Monarchy.<sup>67</sup>

After the experience of two brutal years of CEDA-backed government, the Popular Front election victory of February 1936 (made possible by a reunited left coalition), saw ‘the return to power of a progressive government with a reformist programme’ generating ‘an “explosion” of popular expectation’.<sup>68</sup> But it also generated a violent urgency amongst politically mobilised groups on all sides. During the spring of 1936, paramilitary street violence increased dramatically, along with a number of assassination attempts against leaders of political parties from across the

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<sup>65</sup> Casanova, *Iglesia*, pp. 31-2

<sup>66</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 57-9; Rafael Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo; República, rebelión y guerra en la España de 1936*, (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2006), p. 60

<sup>67</sup> Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 60-1

<sup>68</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 69



spectrum. With the CEDA portraying the elections as the final confrontation between revolution and order, a further spate of Church burnings only seemed to confirm their worst fears.<sup>69</sup> Those assaults allowed the political right to interpret escalating political violence as yet more ‘evidence’ of revolutionary terror and a ‘Republic out of control’, behind which a coup against the Popular Front was already being prepared.<sup>70</sup>

### **Civil War, 1936-1939**

In July 1936 a group of right-wing army officers led a rebellion against the elected government of the Republic. Although the escalating violence and the narrative of the ‘Republic out of control’ – urged on in parliament by the CEDA – provided the perfect justification for the military to ‘restore order’, the aims of the rebels ran much deeper.<sup>71</sup> As indicated by General Mola’s secret orders from April 1936, the coup intended the violent destruction of the progressive social and political change wrought by the democratic Republic.<sup>72</sup> But the initial failure of this rebellion, defeated in most urban areas by a combination of loyal security forces and armed workers, dramatically fractured the country’s polity and initiated a violent reorganisation of physical and cultural space.<sup>73</sup> In many towns and cities, this took the form of libertarian revolutionary options. As the failed military coup escalated first into civil war and within days into an international conflict as Hitler and Mussolini came to the aid of the rebels, mass political mobilisation on all sides transformed the rebellion into a war fought by and against Spanish civilians.<sup>74</sup>

Huge numbers of Spanish Catholics, and the institutional Catholic Church itself, joined social constituencies from across the political right in support of the military coup, and from the first days of the war, members of the clergy publicly proclaimed the war effort against the Republic as a religious crusade to save the nation

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<sup>69</sup> Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp. 84-6

<sup>70</sup> Lowe, *Catholicism*, p. 134

<sup>71</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 122-3

<sup>72</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 119, pp. 132-3 for later orders that included more detailed instructions for the coming repression

<sup>73</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 79-90

<sup>74</sup> Helen Graham, Jo Labanyi, Jorge Marco, Paul Preston and Michael Richards, ‘Paul Preston, The Spanish holocaust: inquisition and extermination in twentieth-century Spain (London: Harper Collins, 2012)’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16(1), 2014, p. 153

and the Church.<sup>75</sup> Though it would not be until late September 1936 that Plá y Deniel, Bishop of Salamanca, declared the war to be a ‘crusade against communism to save religion, the fatherland and the family,’ his sentiments had already been pre-empted at local level.<sup>76</sup> As the historian Mary Vincent makes clear of Salamanca, local Capuchin monks and Dominican fathers made donations to local military support funds, whilst the Jesuit priests of the city were among ‘the first volunteers to present themselves to the military authorities.’<sup>77</sup> In many areas of the country, volunteers mobilised behind the rebellion believing its cause to be Catholicism – in Segovia, one newspaper wrote that ‘the army called the crusade and...all good Spaniards joined.’<sup>78</sup> This was a pattern replicated broadly and, as those sentiments indicate, social, economic and political conflicts were being played out through the lens of religion and a ‘crusade’. For many in the insurgency this Catholic eschatological formula provided the explanation for everything in what was, as Mary Vincent articulates, a genuine belief in holy war. For Vincent, this was crucially ‘a claim to legitimacy rather than a strategy of legitimisation, in that it justified both the fact and the violence of civil war to those who were fighting it.’<sup>79</sup> As the military rebel leadership pursued the ‘crusade’ as a narrative strategy that would justify their failing military coup as a popular cause, the euphoric mobilisation of conservative, Catholic militia volunteers in Navarre and elsewhere showed, the pre-existing belief in a crusade ‘for God and for Spain’ was already being transformed in wartime with what Cardinal Gomá, the primate of Spain, called an ‘enthusiasm bordering on frenzy.’<sup>80</sup>

The theological claim to a holy war, and its intertwined claims to legitimacy, were aided immeasurably by multiform popular and political revolts against those perceived as being implicated in the coup. This included an outpouring of spontaneous

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<sup>75</sup> Mary Vincent, ‘Martyrs and the Saints’, p. 72; Rafael Cruz, ‘Old Symbols, new meanings: mobilising the rebellion in the summer of 1936’ in Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (eds), *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939*, (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 171-5

<sup>76</sup> Vincent, ‘Martyrs and the Saints’, p. 72; Plá y Deniel’s comments are from his pastoral *Las dos ciudades*

<sup>77</sup> Vincent, *Catholicism*, p. 248

<sup>78</sup> *La Ciudad y los Campos*, 19 September 1936 in Lowe, *Catholicism*, p. 159

<sup>79</sup> Mary Vincent, ‘The Spanish Civil War as a War of Religion’, in Martin Baumeister and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *If You Tolerate This’, The Spanish Civil War in the Age of Total War*, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008), p. 82

<sup>80</sup> At the beginning of September, José Álvarez Miranda, the Bishop of León, called the Catholic faithful to join the war against ‘Soviet Jewish–Masonic laicism’, see Alfonso Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra, para ganar la paz: Iglesia y guerra civil 1936–1939*, (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 1995), p. 52

extrajudicial violence against representatives of the Church in territory that remained under – at least nominal – Republican control from July 1936.<sup>81</sup> Churches were entirely stripped of religious imagery and burned, the corpses of priests, nuns and saints were dug up by militiamen and publicly displayed, and thousands of priests were psychologically abused, mocked and beaten before they were executed.<sup>82</sup> The deaths of 6,832 religious personnel, among them 4,184 priests and seminarians, 2,365 monks and 283 nuns, was a real and unprecedented outpouring of violence against representatives of the Church.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, that reality also provided the discursive victims in a highly constructed narrative of the war which, as Plá y Deniel expressed it, portrayed an apocalyptic battle of ‘heroism and martyrdom’ against those ‘without God’.<sup>84</sup> This supposed eternal struggle was replicated too in the thoughts of thousands of others, not least the missionary priest Ramón Sarabia: ‘in the end the gigantic struggle broke out between believers and those without God...The sword triumphed which God placed in the hands of our Caudillo, Franco. And there arose from his hands and from the blood of millions of heroes and martyrs, the New Spain, Catholic Spain.’<sup>85</sup>

The narrative of martyrdom espoused by the Church, and by the victims of anticlericalism, and then consolidated in the aftermath of the war by the Franco regime, has portrayed the violence in terms of ‘good and evil’, a persecution of the Church by ‘godless fanatics’. But in paralysing the Republic’s control over law and order, the military coup itself had opened up radically expanded opportunities for a

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<sup>81</sup> Vincent, ‘War of Religion’, pp. 78-9; José Luis Ledesma, ‘La “santa ira popular” del 36: La violencia en guerra civil y revolución, entre cultura y política’, in Javier Muñoz, José Luis Ledesma and Javier Rodrigo (eds.), *Culturas y políticas de la violencia España Siglo XX*, (Madrid: Siete Mares, 2005), pp. 179-80

<sup>82</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, pp. 121-30. For contemporary accounts, see for example Franz Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit. An Eye-Witness Account of the Political and Social Conflicts of the Spanish Civil War*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1937) and Juan Estelrich, *La persecución religieuse en Espagne*, (Paris: Plon, 1937)

<sup>83</sup> For the figures, see Montero Moreno, pp. 758-68. More recent research has suggested slightly differing figures: Ángel David Martín Rubio has suggested a lower figure of 6,788 in his *Los mitos de la represión en la guerra civil*, (Baracaldo: Grafite, 2005), p. 234. See also his ‘La persecución religiosa en España (1931-1939); una aportación sobre las cifras’, *Hispania Sacra*, 53, 2001, pp. 63-90, whilst Gregorio Rodríguez Sánchez discusses duplications in Montero’s work, and has raised the number of nuns killed to 296 in his *El hábito y la cruz: religiosas asesinadas en la guerra civil Española*, (Madrid: Edibesa, 2006), pp. 551-60, 577-90

<sup>84</sup> Glicerio Sánchez Recio, *De las dos ciudades a la resurrección de España. Magisterio pastoral y pensamiento político de Enrique Plá y Deniel*, (Valladolid: Ámbito, 1994), p. 76

<sup>85</sup> Ramón Sarabia, *¿España...es católica?: charlas de un misionero*, (Madrid: El Perpetuo Socorro, 1939), pp. 288-9

grassroots challenge to previously existing power structures, including the Republic's own. In this revolutionary environment, ordinary people across Spain focused their attentions on rolling back the huge and long-standing influence the Catholic Church had exerted over their everyday lives.<sup>86</sup> This longstanding anticlericalism, reinforced by existing hatreds of the repressive social system espoused by the right and justified by the Church, now became a rational means of mobilisation in the post-coup landscape of the Republic.<sup>87</sup> Committing anticlerical acts thus provided a means of advancement within the new political and social structures being forged – as well as a way of ensuring the changes made were irrevocable.<sup>88</sup> So while violent, these anticlerical actions were not necessarily illogical, still less irrational – even if ethically repugnant and strategically ill-advised.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, violence was embedded in the structures of the long-lived Restoration political system, so if popular wisdom employed it as a means of consolidating a particular vision of society, then they had learned the method from Spain's elites and their governing class.<sup>90</sup> Despite what Plá y Deniel and Sarabia (and countless thousands of others) believed, what transformed the clergy into especially pursued targets principally did not, ultimately, refer to an eternal, apocalyptic battle. In this new socially revolutionary atmosphere, anticlericalism was – precisely because these popular sectors had for decades felt the grip with which the institutional Church had held over their everyday lives, and long before the Second Republic – confirmed in the popular imagination as a central instrument of a new, egalitarian society.<sup>91</sup>

But although the Church was undoubtedly targeted as an institution in 1936, the violence directed against religious personnel was not necessarily indiscriminate. Despite the efforts of Francoism and the institutional hierarchy of the Church to transform its meanings, this anticlericalism was always in some way a selective phenomenon.<sup>92</sup> And, as the experience of the Madrid priest Leocadio Lobo showed,

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<sup>86</sup> Manuel Pérez Ledesma, 'Studies on Anticlericalism in Contemporary Spain', *International Review of Social History*, 46, 2001, pp. 238-9, 243

<sup>87</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, pp. 88-9

<sup>88</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 44

<sup>89</sup> For the rationality of these actions, see Bruce Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations in Spain, July 1936', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 27(2), 1985, pp. 241-60; de la Cueva, 'Atrocities against the Clergy', p. 366

<sup>90</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, pp. 37-8; see also Connelly Ullman, *Tragic Week*, pp. 324-5

<sup>91</sup> de la Cueva, 'Atrocities against the Clergy', pp. 364-5

<sup>92</sup> For the Francoist transformation of anticlericalism, see España Ministerio de Justicia, *Causa General: la dominación roja en España: avance de la información instruída por el Ministerio Público*

individual priests who had no history of conservative political militancy or who had not come into conflict with members of the local community could sometimes be protected in the aftermath of the coup. This was sometimes organised by local townspeople, newly created militia groups, village and neighbourhood committees, previously existing unions and political organisations, and still existent yet fragmented government authorities, each of whom had different understandings of the post-coup environment.<sup>93</sup> In isolated cases, priests were saved because they were old or sick, but as the first chapter of this thesis explores, most crucially many of those that survived had displayed a dedication to intensive pastoral activity and to caring for Spain's working classes across an entire array of socially reforming initiatives.

The first chapter of this thesis explores these dynamics in detail, focusing on a number of Catholics who remained loyal to the Republic during this tumultuous period of anticlerical violence. Unravelling their experiences, motives and evolving collective identities, it demonstrates their deployment of various strategies for coming to terms with change, underscoring their actions from July 1936. In this, they were agents too of their own survival – active participants in the post-coup Republic, with lives far removed from the Francoist epistemological categories beneath which their experiences would be subsumed. Of crucial importance here is the recognition that, at the level of lived experience, religion, is, for many people, made up of everyday practices and experiences rather than theology alone. As the advocates of various strands of liberal Catholicism explored here made clear throughout the 1930s, their faith came through and was intrinsically linked to their lived experiences.<sup>94</sup> This

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*en 1943*, (Astorga: Akrón, 2008) and Isidro Sánchez, Manuel Ortiz, David Ruiz (eds.) *España franquista: Causa general y actitudes sociales ante la dictadura*, (Ciudad Real: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1993)

<sup>93</sup> For accounts of that assistance, see *Spanish Catholics Speak for Spain* (New York: North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, 1937), p. 12, 16; Lobo *Primate and Priest*; Ángel Garralda García, *La persecución religiosa del clero en Asturias 1934, 1936 y 1937: Martirios y odiseas*, (Asturias: Ediciones Nievas, 2009), pp. 809-16; for the efforts of political figures see amongst others Queralt Solé and Gemma Caballer, 'Aproximació a la biografia política de Josep Maria Triax Peitx', *Cercles. Revista d'Història Cultural*, 2012, pp. 165-81

<sup>94</sup> Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Barcelona (AHCB), Fondos Orales (FO), Colecció Ronald Fraser, Régulo Martínez Sánchez, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173). The idea of faith as 'lived' permeated the work of Josep Cardijn, an inspirational figure for many working within various liberal democratic strands in Spain, not only in the 1930s but also later in the 'worker priest' role emergent from the late 1940s across Europe; see Daniel Francisco Álvarez Espinosa, *Cristianos y Marxistas contra Franco*, (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 2003), pp. 34-5, 294-5

shaping of faith through social and political experience is fundamental to understanding the wartime lives explored in the rest of this thesis.

The ability of many ordinary Catholics to participate in the Republican war effort, and to make personal sense of the war outside of the rebel narrative of crusade, hinged centrally on their understanding of the religious violence at the start of the war as a violent representation of those culture wars of 1931-6 and earlier. Many individual priests working with and for the Republic would also seek to articulate publicly the nature of the war in these terms as the war continued, but if we are to understand the historical process in wartime Republican Spain we must not conflate the latter with the former. How members of the priesthood and ordinary Catholics understood, responded to, and took part in the conflict depended ultimately upon the complex dynamics of their own lived experiences, now irrevocably altered by the outbreak of civil war.

While the spectre of anticlerical violence remained ever present during the first year of the war, the first chapter (and the thesis as a whole) excavates what was a more variegated and less 'fearful' picture of the real lives led by many Catholics in the Republic, and illustrates how some priests and other lay Catholics resolved actively to participate in the struggle against the military coup – the wrenching experience of anticlericalism in the midst of an assault on pluralist society from the old order suggesting forcefully to them that there was much work to be done. The second chapter of this thesis seeks to explore these dynamics through presence of the small number of priests and lay Catholics who worked within the Republican media during the Spanish Civil War. Locating these individuals within the religious fabric of the conflict's 'war of words,' the chapter indicates that, in participating and responding to a 'call to arms' in their own ways, the war was about more than surviving an outpouring of anticlerical violence. The subsequent close association of these individuals with official Republican propaganda produced by state entities constituted a major form of engagement in the war, contributing to the rhetorical and argumentative arsenal intended to legitimise the Republican war effort. From the very beginning of the war, the work of a small number of priests and lay Catholics within the media contributed to a new 'bottom-up' conceptualisation of Republican citizenship intrinsically linked to Catholic religiosity. Their efforts sought to

disseminate a unified and inclusive narrative of the war from a position which portrayed Catholic faith and loyalty to the Republic as naturally linked. Although these discourses of Catholic citizenship were disseminated by a small number of individuals, they were representative of the aims and goals of significantly larger social constituencies within the Republic which had rejected the right-wing politics of insurgency and remained, for this reason, by default, loyal to the Republic, albeit also frightened by the radical changes opened up by the coup-triggered social revolution.

By 1937 the Catalan priest Joan Vilar i Costa would anonymously write and publish a precise and damning condemnation of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in a three-hundred-page book, which in rebuking the ‘supposed pious side’ in the conflict for not only ‘killing thousands of workers,’ but for ‘shoot[ing] the priests who do not surrender to fascism’ pointed up the constructed nature of ‘the Crusade.’<sup>95</sup> Demanding that Catholicism not be used for ‘dictatorial’ and ‘reactionary’ politics, the book dismantled the rebels’ justification of the conflict whilst at the same time putting forward clear and reasoned arguments for Catholic loyalty to the Republic.<sup>96</sup> As the works of Vilar and others showed, the Republic’s propagandists, not least those Catholic voices beginning to speak more loudly, were well aware of the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s particular reading of Christian teaching to justify and consecrate the rebel war effort. Their own challenges to the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s message reached a mass citizen audience, whether they were already committed Republican supporters, political activists or those with scant earlier political motivations or none, or Catholics in hiding who were sheltering from violence, or others able to move about more freely.<sup>97</sup> At the same time as these social constituencies were all beginning to recognise an end to anticlerical violence in Republican territory, they were also becoming more and more aware that Francoist atrocities committed in the other zone

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<sup>95</sup> Joan Vilar i Costa, *Montserrat; glosas a la Carta colectiva de los obispos españoles*, (Barcelona: Instituto Católica de Estudios Religiosos, 1938), p. 68

<sup>96</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 71

<sup>97</sup> See in particular the publications and radio broadcasts of Vilar i Costa, a comprehensive list of which is reproduced in Vilar, *Montserrat*, pp. 328-74 and the public speeches in Madrid of Régulo Martínez Sánchez, variously in press and pamphlet form, such as *Conferencia pronunciada por D. Régulo Martínez en el grupo femenino de Izquierda Republicana el día 7 de mayo de 1938*, (Madrid, Tipografía Comercial, 1938)

‘in the name of the crusade’ included as its targets both priests and practising Catholics.

But individual voices like Vilar were drowned out not only by the continued dislocations of the Republican zone, which would remain a fraught and dangerous environment for priests throughout the war, but also by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, now explicitly and vociferously allied with Francoism, in the shape of its ‘Collective Letter’, published in July 1937. Signed by almost all of Spain’s bishops, the letter argued that the rebels had taken up arms to ‘save religious principles’ from those set on the ‘elimination of Catholicism in Spain’ and the ‘extermination of the Catholic clergy.’<sup>98</sup> As explained by the priest and historian Hilari Ragner, one of the, (if not the), most authoritative voices on the role of the Catholic Church in the civil war, the letter was an explicit weapon of war, aimed at the international battlefields where the war would be won and lost, ‘undertaken on Franco’s initiative, intended for foreign bishops and directed, through them, at international Catholic opinion.’<sup>99</sup>

The ‘Collective Letter’ proved at once to be a key armament in rebel efforts to mobilise international support and, at the same time, a necessary cloak behind which Francoist authorities were able to hide the executions of devout Catholics in the name of their ‘crusade’. As the third chapter of the thesis indicates, this was a war in which, far from the vision expounded by the rebels, many observers saw ‘Catholic fighting Catholic,’ their ‘lips approaching the same crucifix at the moment of death.’<sup>100</sup> As soldiers fought and died, many sought comfort in their faith and, for those in Republican uniforms, to reconcile that faith with their commitment to a cause being described by the Church as a sin.<sup>101</sup> They were helped in this by a Republican government keen to mobilise them *en masse*. The wartime environment in which ordinary Catholics responded to these official efforts was fraught and complicated and

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<sup>98</sup> Isidro Gomá y Tomás, *Por Dios y Por España. Pastorales – instrucciones pastorales y artículos – discursos – mensajes – apéndice, 1936–1939*, (Barcelona: Rafael Casulleras, 1940), pp. 564-9

<sup>99</sup> Hilari Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense: The Catholic Church and the Spanish Civil War*, (London: Routledge/Canada Blanch, 2007), p. 109

<sup>100</sup> *La Croix*, 1 January 1937

<sup>101</sup> In a series of dispatches to the French *Ministre de la Défense nationale et de la Guerre*, the military attaché lieutenant-colonel Henri Morel spoke of the morality and attitude of Catholics who were fighting for the Republic, driven by their ‘fidelity’ and ‘legalistic commitment’ even in spite of the ‘continuous suspicions’ of many of their comrades; Service Historique de la Défense (SHD)/Département de l’armée de terre (DAT), Série N 1920-1940, 7 N 2755 EMA/2 Espagne, 15 March 1937 and 22 March 1937



there is still relatively little recent historiography on this for Republican Spain. Nevertheless an incipient historical literature has now begun to analyse and deconstruct these Republican mobilisation narratives and also to explore their transmission and reception. Offering fruitful comparative possibilities, the focus has so far been on nationalism as an enabling narrative deployed by the Republic as well as by the Francoists in the battle for legitimacy.<sup>102</sup>

For the Francoists, that discursive framework of legitimacy seamlessly merged nationalism with religious fervour in the construction of the ‘crusade’ for ‘God and for Spain’. This was a process that for many contemporary observers – and indeed historians – was in stark contrast to the Republic.<sup>103</sup> However, although religious faith was not the key discursive pivot in the Republic’s mobilising strategy, far removed from the overarching narrative of ‘crusade’ employed by the insurgency, the Republic was never silent on the religious issue. Across the war, the Republic increasingly sought to influence the lives and actions of the soldiers serving its cause, and portrayed them as representatives of a nation of citizens recreated from the fragments of a Republic shattered by war.<sup>104</sup> This process is charted throughout the thesis, as Republican political leaders increasingly fought to regain centralised control over the war effort and in doing so, channelled ever increasing numbers of soldiers onto the battlefields across the country. With the Popular Army (in name and concept) serving as an ideal paradigm of a ‘Republic for all’ – the military safeguard of a reconstituted nation of Republican citizens – the experiences of its Catholic soldiers indicates that investing in religious faith emerged as a fundamental aspect of the evolving relationship between state and citizen-soldier at the heart of the war effort.

Underlying this war effort and throughout three bitter years of civil war, the Republic made concerted and continuous attempts to reconstruct and indeed refine the fabric of its democracy.<sup>105</sup> The fourth chapter of the thesis explores those efforts in the

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<sup>102</sup> See for instance Alberto Reig Tapia, *La cruzada de 1936. Mito y memoria*, (Madrid: Alianza, 2006) and Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el invasor!*, (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006). For a more general overview of the historical context to this nationalist appeal, see Vincent, *Spain*, passim

<sup>103</sup> James Matthews, *Reluctant Warriors; Republican Popular Army and Nationalist Army Conscripts in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 86-9

<sup>104</sup> Sandie Holguín, *Creating Spaniards; Culture and National Identity in Republican Spain*, pp. 170-94

<sup>105</sup> For the reconstruction of that liberal-democratic fabric and its underlying ethic (and wartime limitations, imposed not least by the weight of the European democracies’ commitment to the Non-Intervention policy that significantly impacted the Republic’s ability to fight the war), see Graham,

wartime Republic from late 1937 until the winter of 1938 through two different (and increasingly interlinked) processes – first, of top-down government policy, and second, a set of bottom-up and more organic developments inside the Republican zone. Here then was an evolving government policy from May 1937, driven by the Negrín premiership but with much earlier antecedents, which had both international and domestic dimensions. Within the pressures of an increasingly fraught wartime experience, different parts of the evolving Republican political coalition deliberately built upon experiences of the first year of the war to utilise Catholics and the place of Catholicism within the Republic as a unifying, mobilising tool. Though this would have an important role to play in the international arena ever more crucial to the Republic's survival, it was also intended for domestic use, as a genuine appeal to Catholics, including to convince waverers or the timorous, of their place within a reconstructed liberal-democratic polity.

Beyond this government policy, there were also more subtle and gradual developments inside the Republican zone, intensified in part by this policy (and its more attenuated antecedents pre-May 1937), but also emanating independently from the grassroots and which comprised a consolidating support for the Republic based on Catholics' personal experience, their interactions with reconstructed Republican authorities and their knowledge and understanding of what was occurring in the Francoist zone. These grassroots currents meshed with and strengthened an earlier ideal of the Republic itself, reciprocated by Catholic politicians, lay people and priests – many of whom had, already rejecting the pre-war alliance of Church and the political right, worked to secure an alternative vision for the future long before the outbreak of the war.

The actions of prominent Catholic individuals whose personal trajectories evolved in the course of the war also underscore these two processes, providing visible examples of processes which were occurring widely. As Catholics across the Republic recognised and responded to government efforts, many engaged and took

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*Spanish Republic*, pp. 338-57; excellent contemporary analysis can be found in Manuel Irujo, *Un vasco en el ministerio de Justicia, Memorias*, II, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Vasca Ekin, 1976-9). For rejections of the Collective Letter, see amongst others Jacques Maritain, 'De la guerra sainte', *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 1 July 1937, also published as an introduction to Alfred Mendizábal, *The Martyrdom of Spain: Origins of a Civil War*, (New York: Vilalba, 1938)

part in their own initiatives and continued to forge their own place in the Republican polity, playing an active – and often welcome – role in the Republic’s fight for survival. Some priests and lay Catholics would not only support those efforts, but take on an even more active role within the Republic as it sought to reconstruct and maintain its image as a modernising liberal-democracy and to translate that image into reality for its entire citizenry.<sup>106</sup> Crucially that meant the restoration of religious normality and of open, free, public worship, with Churches having remained closed since the aftermath of the summer of 1936.

This was not simply an opportunistic strategy to appeal to international powers with a view to shifting the balance of international opinion away from the rebels, but a genuine commitment to real change within the very real constraints of the war. Assumptions that Republican decision-making was politically opportunist – or even outright anticlerical in intent – are simplistic. Moreover they also ignore the complicated domestic arena – for the restoration of public worship also hinged increasingly on growing fears of fifth columnism in an already fearful environment, and one in which even limited efforts at religious normalisation were blocked by an intransigent ecclesiastical hierarchy, determined to delegitimise any such efforts in order to protect their ‘crusade’. By the time the Republic was ready to celebrate a first wartime public mass in the city of Tarragona in early 1939, Franco’s forces were already at the city gates, which meant that even the attentions of those who had worked hard to achieve that longed for public mass inevitably turned to more pressing issues of escape and survival.<sup>107</sup> The next mass to be celebrated in Tarragona, from which thousands of refugees had fled, would be to the glory of the Francoist ‘crusade.’

### **‘History beneath history’ and the war after the war**

The battlefield victory of the Church-backed rebels did not mean the end of their war against the Republic. In a process that had begun in the first days after the military rebellion of July 1936 in rebel-controlled zones, and extended to the entirety of the

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<sup>106</sup> See for instance the work of José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey; Testimonio religioso sobre la guerra de España*, (Barcelona: Peninsula, 2007)

<sup>107</sup> For the work of some of those involved in efforts to restore religious freedoms, see Raguer, *Gunpowder*, passim; Raguer, *La Unió*, especially chapter 12 for the role of the UDC; Irujo, *Un vasco*, II, passim

national territory on 1 April 1939, hundreds of thousands of Republicans, ordinary civilians, provincial and mid-level political activists, and soldiers were subjected to a wave of violence unleashed by Francoism and its supporters.<sup>108</sup> This was a process that echoed – and rivalled – the efforts of totalitarian states elsewhere in Europe.<sup>109</sup> It was a way of ‘killing change’ in particular by ‘undoing the language of rights...intended to teach those who had believed in the Republic as a vehicle of change that their aspirations would always be bought at too high a price.’<sup>110</sup> And even though during and after the war Basque priests remained the most *visible* constituency of priests targeted by Francoist authorities, they were far from being the only priests targeted. While motivations for rejecting the Francoist ‘crusade’ might have differed among priests across Spain, with regional nationalism playing an important role in the Basque Country and Catalonia, there were many more priests imprisoned than can be accounted for by Franco’s repression of regional nationalism. As chapter five of the thesis makes clear, through a number of representative case studies, what the Francoist authorities were launching was a thoroughgoing ‘purification’ which meant reasserting control over *all* Catholics who, for whatever reasons, and wherever they were located in Spain, had been actively, or even passively, loyal to the Republic. The objective was to ‘rebuild’ a rigidly hierarchised society based on authoritarian Catholic principles, by targeting what the Francoist coalition and support base already deemed *la anti-España*: principally those who represented the social and cultural changes symbolised by the Republic.<sup>111</sup> Thus priests from all over Spain were amongst those targeted for arrest, interrogation, internment and often execution too.

Driving the repression was the hatred and ideologically-charged language of the Catholic crusade born of the war, including the one against the institutional Church. It was urged on in a reciprocal relationship between the Francoist leadership and its grassroots supporters.<sup>112</sup> Spain’s ‘alliance of throne and altar’ was restored, but this time as the discursive axis of a distinctly modern, mass mobilising dictatorship: in the official narrative of National Catholicism, religion could only be Catholic and

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<sup>108</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, pp. 103-4

<sup>109</sup> Peter Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials: Terror and Complicity, 1939–1945*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 3

<sup>110</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 50

<sup>111</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, *passim*

<sup>112</sup> Francisco Moreno, ‘La repression en la posguerra’, in Santos Juliá (ed.), *Víctimas de la guerra civil*, (Madrid: Temas de hoy, 1999), pp. 351-9

Catholicism could only be traditionalist and socially conservative, the bedrock of the New State. That narrative construction is illustrated superbly by the historian Peter Anderson, whose work charts the reciprocal dynamics between the dictatorship and ordinary individuals across southern Spain, as pre-war fears became post-war myths, legitimising both the Francoist repression and the regime itself through the narrative of the ‘crusade’.<sup>113</sup>

One key aspect of the Francoist dictatorship’s construction and consolidation of its Manichean war narrative was the *Causa General*. Established by decree in 1940, the *Causa General* was a compiled investigation into Republican ‘crimes’ across all of Spain, its central message and the version of the civil war it represented indicating that atrocities had been suffered only by the supporters of the Francoist regime, and that these atrocities had been committed only by the Republic and its supporters.<sup>114</sup> The hermeneutically sealed borders of the Francoist state in which this version of the past was enforced only produced fear and the silencing of different perspectives on the war. Such a narrative held no place for those Catholics who are the subject of this thesis; those who had opted for more peaceful dialogues with the Republic and with the new languages of political and social rights wrought by its reformist ambitions. Instead the efforts of many Catholics (and indeed non-Catholics) to integrate religion and modernising change during the Republic were buried by the invention and consolidation of the bloody confrontation between ‘religion’ and ‘anti-religion.’

To understand what happened, and why, requires us, even today, to excavate these processes from beneath the accumulation of powerful political narratives built up over decades of dictatorship and after. Their abiding power derives most crucially from the way in which these myths have provided individual and collective narratives of the war that have served to underline *post-war* – and indeed present-day – political goals. First, and imposed most violently in these wars of representation, is the reductionist and homogenising ‘crusade’ myth concretised by Francoism and the Spanish Church hierarchy that places Catholicism on one side of the war only. Within this narrative, the Francoist targeting of Basque Catholics was because of their

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<sup>113</sup> Peter Anderson, ‘In the Name of the Martyrs, Memory and Retribution in Francoist Southern Spain, 1936-1945’, *Cultural and Social History*, 8(3), pp. 355–70

<sup>114</sup> Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 133

separatist-nationalism rather than their alternative, often collectivist, left-leaning, forms of Catholicism. The Franco regime could thus continue to blame everything else on *los rojos* or on ‘anti-Spanish’ separatism, and the Catholic Church hierarchy could continue to deny the existence of pluralist forms of Catholicism that existed within Spain.<sup>115</sup>

Such a narrative focus has been propped up further by the realities of post-1945 Europe, with the western European powers preoccupied centrally with cold war divisions and prepared to turn a blind eye to the realities of Francoism.<sup>116</sup> This was demonstrated not least in the 1953 *Commission Internationale contre le régime concentrationnaire* report on European concentration camps, whose focus in Spain was pointedly on non-communist prisoners, as a result of which Basque prisoners were statistically overrepresented in the report.<sup>117</sup> In so doing, the realities of mass killing and repression across Franco’s Spain were occluded in the interests of western cold-war stability, and in recognition of Franco’s virulent anti-communism.

This framework of meaning was adopted not only by Francoism during the civil war and cold war, but also later by post-Francoist mainstream Basque nationalism, whose advocates have sought to stress the uniqueness of their own cause and its allegedly more extreme repression by the Franco dictatorship.<sup>118</sup> Basque clergy were targeted by Francoist persecution throughout the 1950s and 1960s as they vigorously protested the silences surrounding the execution of Basque priests during the civil war.<sup>119</sup> At the same time, ETA’s effective challenging of Franco’s narrative of the civil war celebrated those same Basque clerical victims as revolutionary heroes,

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<sup>115</sup> Manuel Pérez Ledesma, ‘Una dictadura “Por la Gracia de Dios”’, *Historia Social*, 20 (1994), pp. 187-8. Though Pérez Ledesma does not pick up on the idea of ‘dissident’ Catholics specifically, there are significant parallels with his discussion of Francoism as based on essentialist ideas that exclude heterodox thought.

<sup>116</sup> For an overview of Spanish Civil War historiography during the Cold War, see George Esenwein, ‘The Persistence of Politics: The Impact of the Cold War on Anglo-American Writings on the Spanish Civil War’, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 2014, 91(1-2), pp. 115-35, although Esenwein fails to address the continuing impact of Cold War divisions into the ‘post-Cold War’ present.

<sup>117</sup> Commission Internationale contre le régime concentrationnaire, *Livre blanc sur le système pénitentiaire espagnol*, (Paris: Le Pavois, 1953), passim, although particularly annexe III, pp. 133-95

<sup>118</sup> Francisco Espinosa Maestre, ‘Sobre la represión franquista en el País Vasco’, *Historia social*, 63, 2009, pp. 58-76

<sup>119</sup> For a reasoned defence of the role of the Basque clergy and lay Catholics during the war in contrast to the violence of the Francoist authorities, see El Clero Vasco, *El clero vasco frente a la cruzada franquista*, (Toulouse: Editorial Egi-Indarra, 1966), pp. 103-95 and El Clero Vasco, *El pueblo vasco frente a la cruzada franquista*, (Toulouse: Editorial Egi-Indarra, 1966), pp. 366-451

echoing a widespread sentiment in the Basque Country.<sup>120</sup> This focus on ‘el caso de los sacerdotes vascos’ has thus found its own prominent place in today’s bitter confrontations over the Vatican’s continued beatification of clerical victims of violence in Republican territory during the war, a number which now surpasses one thousand, with several thousand more under Vatican review. The continued polemic over the memory of the civil war well into the twenty-first century thus carries with it a politicisation of religious victimhood, embedded in the conceptual application of martyrdom to wartime violence.

Such developments have further consolidated (in one way or another) a particular backward gaze, prevalent not only in much of the historical literature but still live too in Spain’s civil society today. The result has been to reinforce existing Manichean interpretations of the civil war, consolidating the acute marginalisation (if not the systematic elimination) of various Catholic projects, which had, from different positions, worked for the incorporation of Catholicism to Spain’s democracy.<sup>121</sup>

### **Methodology and sources**

As this thesis makes clear throughout, in Spain today the place of the Catholic Church and the role of the Catholic faith during the civil war remain among the most bitterly contested aspects in recent history and memory. Despite the visible public focus on the place of Catholicism in the civil war, and the wide range of conceptual and empirical avenues provided by exciting new areas of the existing historiographical literature, to date there is still no full-length study which addresses the place of Catholics who remained loyal to the Republic or who otherwise refused to identify with the insurgent cause.

In terms of accurate and analytical contextualisation, the still-uneven historiography of the subject has largely concentrated on the role of the institutional

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<sup>120</sup> Espinosa Maestre, ‘Sobre la represión’, pp. 58-76 and Inés Dunstan, ‘The Martyr Wars: Past and Present Polemics Between Basque and Spanish Nationalists Over Christian Victimhood During the Spanish Civil War’, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 14(1), 2008, pp. 77-106

<sup>121</sup> For the inculcation of a particular reading of integrist Catholicism in the Francoist war effort, see Vincent, ‘Martyrs and the Saints’, pp. 68-98; Michael Richards, “‘Presenting Arms to the Blessed Sacrament’: Civil War and Semana Santa in the City of Málaga, 1936–1939”, in Ealham and Richards (eds), *The Splintering of Spain*, pp. 196-222

Church and the study of right-wing political cultures that absorbed Catholicism as a mobilising tool before and especially during the civil war. Consequently, there has been little place for individuals in much of that historiography. At the same time, with a particular reading of the place of Catholicism in the civil war kept in sharp focus by the Catholic hierarchy's vociferous efforts to beatify those 'helpless Catholic victims' of the Republic, martyrological literature in Spain is now more abundant than ever.<sup>122</sup> The existence of that genre poses multiple obstacles to professional historiography's attempts to provide analytical balance on the subject. There are, as explained above, a growing number of biographies and short articles which seek to redress this balance, by shedding light on the lives and experiences of Catholics who do not conform to the Francoist reading of the civil war still permeating the martyrological genre even today. However, it is a peculiarity of this emerging group of studies – perhaps in part because of the small number of individuals upon which they focus – that many suffer from the same narrative structure as the martyrologies they implicitly reject. Whilst contributing important empirical detail about the lives of individual Catholic priests and politicians who remained loyal to the Republic, the focus of these works is often on their 'good lives', stressing the Christian fortitude with which they met the privations and difficulties of the war.<sup>123</sup> But there is little if any proper historical contextualisation.

This thesis intends therefore to go some way towards addressing this gap, by shedding new light on the subject and properly historicising the place of Spanish Catholicism within the civil war. Offering new empirical evidence and intertwining lived experiences in the macro-history of the war, the thesis also seeks to open up new avenues for conceptual and empirical exploration. Writing individual lives into a wider narrative must, of course, avoid over-personalising the complexities of historical processes, but at the same time such a structure provides an invaluable optic through which to perceive the tumultuous upheavals of 1930s Spain – and how those convulsions were lived and experienced remains the crucial medium through which we must understand the civil war. There is perhaps an added complexity here generated by the difficulties inherent in the very 'naming' of this thesis's topic,

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<sup>122</sup> Amongst the most prolific of these authors is Vicente Cárcel Ortí, author of, amongst others, *Caidos, víctimas y mártires: la Iglesia y la hecatombe de 1936*, (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2008) and *Persecuciones religiosas y mártires del siglo XX*, (Madrid: Ediciones Palabra, 2001)

<sup>123</sup> See for instance Daniel Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, (Barcelona: Styria, 2009)



encompassing as it does a broad spectrum of Catholic individuals, not all of whom started, or even became, active supporters of the Republic in all respects – although for all of them the war was a transformative experience in a multitude of ways.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, all were Catholic citizens of the Republican zone who stood fundamentally at odds to the emergent Francoist dictatorship and its ‘crusade’.

In order to discuss these experiences on a national level, the study draws its evidence and examples from the lived experiences of a range of individuals who lived in different areas of Republican Spain during the years of the civil war, utilising an array of personal testimonies, diaries, newspaper articles, public and private correspondence. Those documents remain fundamental to understanding how the Spanish civil war – and historical change more widely – dramatically shaped and reshaped the lives of those who experienced it. Besides the sheer complexity of the war’s events – further complicated by the asymmetry at the heart of how the war has been (and still is) remembered – historians’ work is made additionally challenging by the acute scarcity of empirical material for many key questions. Not least amongst the issues here is the difficulty of tabulating and quantifying such lived experiences – such lives often appear, individual by individual, from continuing work both within the academic community and outside, through local historians and civic memory associations. Their ongoing efforts promise to provide an increasing amount of material in this regard.<sup>125</sup> Ideally, a complement to the existing, above-cited sources would be additional testimonies from a larger sample of priests and lay Catholics. Unfortunately, oral histories and accounts written by the protagonists, where they exist, are at best scattered. Experiences of repressive violence during and after the three years of battlefield war, the imposed civic silences and the forced secrets of ‘post-war’ Francoist society, and, for many, the dislocating and disorientating experiences of exile in war-torn Europe and elsewhere, illustrate further why material is so relatively sparse and certainly fragmented.

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<sup>124</sup> The Catalan writer and Catholic Joan Sales’ autobiographical novel *Uncertain Glory* offers an excellent window into understanding the experiences of many Catalan Catholics, who could find much to criticise about the Republic but who nevertheless fought – and died – in the fight against the rebel ‘crusade’; Joan Sales, *Uncertain Glory*, trans. Peter Bush, (London: Maclehorse Press, 2014)

<sup>125</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, pp. 140-1 discusses such work and the challenges faced. Important here too is the ongoing tabulation work which continues to provide quantitative data, not least in terms of the Francoist repression conducted from July 1936

Nevertheless, the collection of real lives, whose histories have been researched as an integral empirical component of the thesis, represent important additions to our analytical understanding of a war that was waged predominantly against civilians. Opening up new avenues for conceptual exploration, the process of writing individual lives into a wider narrative provides a vital lens through which to view the particular crises of the 1930s; how ordinary men and women experienced, understood, gave meaning to and reacted to the war in Spain (which was of course not only a civil war) and the brutal destruction of the Republic and with it the futures that they had long dreamed. The process of contextualising those life stories, something lacking in the potted biographies that do exist of a few of those who feature here, remains fundamental.

Consequently, the nucleus of primary source material for this thesis is complemented by Spanish archival documentation from the Republic in peacetime and at war: this is taken in large part from the *Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica* in Salamanca, which contains a wealth of material on the activities of republican political organisations of the centre and left, during both the civil war and the peacetime years of the Republic. This documentation provides vital information about the initiatives, associations, parties and organisations which these individuals came into contact with, worked for and from which they received information that shaped their view of the war. The increasing digitisation of archival material, not least newspaper and press sources, has also opened up new opportunities for historians in recent years. Furthermore, given that significant numbers of the lives in this thesis were priests and lay Catholics who actively took part in the Republican war effort, Francoist sources have also yielded much relevant data. The *Causa General*, and also judicial documents, including prison records, all provide further empirical details about the lives of those inhabiting the Francoist prison universe – as many non-crusade identified Catholics came to do both during and after the battlefield war. Even the Church's vast martyrological literature, if approached by historians with a critical awareness of the purposes for which it was created, can be utilised effectively because of its sheer volume of empirical detail.

Whilst the construction of an exhaustive study of the Republic at war lies beyond the logistical possibilities of one doctoral thesis, by using a wide array of

documentation it has still been possible in the thesis to address the broad themes explained above, thus constructing a ‘history beneath history’ and laying the foundations for further empirical and conceptual work. All of the sources deployed – fragmented, limited and politically partial as they often are – have been used to construct what seeks to be a theoretically aware yet empirically detailed thesis, central to which is the narration of multiple life stories, situated within a broader contextual historical narrative of the Republic at war. Many of the individuals who feature exchanged thoughts and ideas, and even for those who never passed each other by in the streets of the Republic’s towns and cities, they still shared the same hopes and dreams, and experienced much of the same trauma of the war. They also witnessed the Republic’s efforts over time to rebuild its contract with them as citizens. These lives were thus intrinsically bound to the evolving and *cumulative* experience of a Republic at war. Consequently, the five chapters of this thesis are structured broadly chronologically, with a strong thematic thread linking that analytical narrative. The complexities and conflicts inherent within the many and various cultural milieux of Republican Spain encourage us to rethink and reframe old ideas about the place of Catholicism in the Spanish Civil War, in addition to posing new questions about the conflict and its representations. In actively seeking to investigate heterogeneity and hybridity, the challenge to the toxic Manichean binaries that have survived long after Francoism is clear.

## Chapter One: A Pandora's Box of violence and Catholic 'martyrs' on all sides

*"How I envy you people who don't believe or think you don't believe! You, for example, are the luckiest of the lucky. When faith might be a nuisance and get in the way, you lose sight of it; when you need it, it comes back. Don't deny that's your technique. A technique that couldn't be bettered! On the other hand, I work the opposite way: faith blocks my path when I'd prefer to forget it and doesn't come when I call on it."*<sup>1</sup>

Joan Sales, *Uncertain Glory*

Over the night of 17-18 July 1936, after months of planning, a group of right wing army officers backed by large sectors of Spain's Catholic, agrarian and conservative society, led a rebellion against the elected government of the Second Republic. Beginning in colonial Morocco before spreading to mainland Spain through a series of garrison revolts, the aims of the rebellion were quite simply to destroy the entire progressive culture of the Republic.<sup>2</sup> As chillingly elucidated by General Emilio Mola, the director of the coup, the rebels intended to purge 'without scruple or hesitation those who do not think as we do.'<sup>3</sup> Mola's succinct declaration revealed the nature of the insurgency and its central goal: the violent destruction of progressive social and political change wrought by the democratic Republic and the restoration of a static, hierarchised society built on authoritarian Catholicism.<sup>4</sup>

The rebellion initially failed, defeated in most urban areas by a combination of loyal security forces and armed workers, succeeding only to fracture dramatically the country's polity and initiate a violent reorganisation of physical and cultural space.<sup>5</sup> As the failed military coup escalated first into civil war and within days into an

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<sup>1</sup> Sales, *Uncertain Glory*, p. 63

<sup>2</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. xiii, p. 180

<sup>3</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. xiii; Juan de Iturralde, *La guerra de Franco, los vascos y la Iglesia*, I, (San Sebastián: Usúrbil, Gráf. Izarra, 1978), p. 433

<sup>4</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, pp. 66-7

<sup>5</sup> Ledesma, 'La "santa ira popular" del 36', pp. 179-80

international conflict, mass political mobilisation on all sides transformed the conflict into a war fought by and against Spanish civilians.<sup>6</sup> Huge numbers of Spanish Catholics, and the institutional Catholic Church itself, joined social constituencies from across the political right in support of the military coup, perceiving their war effort as fought for a shared understanding of a future Spain in which ‘order’ would be restored and underpinned by ultra-conservative Catholicism.<sup>7</sup> Although there were hugely variegated understandings of what it meant to be Catholic in Republican Spain – not least in regions where the divide between believers and non-believers was dwarfed by that between urban and rural cultures – from the first days of the war an abundant literature written by the clergy exalted the war effort against the Republic in unflinching terms, declaring the war to be a religious crusade to save the nation and the Church.<sup>8</sup> And though it would not be until late September 1936 that Enrique Plá y Deniel, Bishop of Salamanca, declared the war to be a ‘crusade against communism to save religion, the fatherland and the family,’ his sentiments had already been pre-empted at local level.<sup>9</sup> With an ‘enthusiasm bordering on frenzy’, volunteers flocked to the rebel cause, taking communion and pinning crucifixes to their shirts, transforming the pre-existing language of a crusade ‘for God and for Spain’ into the central narrative of an illegal military coup.<sup>10</sup>

Rebel claims to the legitimacy of their ‘crusade’ against an ‘anticlerical’ Republic rapidly came to appear justified in the eyes of international observers as a result of the popular and political responses to the coup that had spontaneously erupted in many areas of Republican held territory. These new actions, made realisable only by the coup itself, often included episodes of dramatic violence targeted at those perceived as being implicated in, or supporting, the rebellion.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Graham et al., ‘Paul Preston, The Spanish holocaust’, p. 153

<sup>7</sup> Frances Lannon, *Privilege*, pp. 199-201; Juan de Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco*, I, (Vienna-Toulouse: Editorial Egi-Indarra, 1960), pp. 56-7

<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of September, José Álvarez Miranda, the Bishop of León, called the Catholic faithful to join the war against ‘Soviet Jewish–Masonic laicism’, see Alfonso Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra, para ganar la paz: Iglesia y guerra civil 1936–1939*, (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 1995) p. 52

<sup>9</sup> Plá y Deniel, *Las dos ciudades*, n.p.

<sup>10</sup> José Andrés-Gallego and Antón M. Pazos, *La Iglesia en la España contemporánea*, II, (Madrid: Eds. Encuentro, 1999), p. 128. For many in the insurgency this Catholic eschatological formula provided the explanation for everything in what was a genuine belief in holy war. See Vincent, ‘The Spanish Civil War’, p. 82

<sup>11</sup> *El Socialista*, 12 August 1936. Whilst the Church and its representatives were targeted as a symbolic aspect of this revolution, the first weeks of the war also saw widespread rumours that shots had been

Amongst these responses were consciously politically revolutionary options which also carried with them an outpouring of spontaneous extrajudicial violence against representatives of the Church in territory that remained under Republican control from July 1936.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the Republican zone, in a process that had a long, popular tradition, churches were set alight, their religious imagery stripped and destroyed, whilst the remains of priests, nuns and saints were dug up from church crypts and displayed publicly.<sup>13</sup> In towns and villages all over Spain, there were murders in which the clerical victims were obliged to perform sexual acts, crucified, doused with petrol and set alight, whilst others were shot following brief trials.<sup>14</sup> Many more priests suffered psychological and physical abuse before their execution. Over the course of the war, 6,832 priests, monks and nuns were the victims of extrajudicial killing.<sup>15</sup>

For the perpetrators, most of whom now had access to weapons, anticlerical violence and assaults on the Catholic Church, its personnel and its vast symbolic universe constituted a Rubicon to be crossed in the revolutionary reconstruction of society. These revolutionary actors were also joined by broader social constituencies, many of whom had not previously been mobilised in politics but whose longstanding anticlericalism, reinforced by existing hatreds of an oppressive social system legitimised and supported for decades by the Church, now became the vehicle for mobilisation in the summer of 1936.<sup>16</sup> With pre-civil war Spain already a highly mobilised society riven by numerous complicated wars of social and economic change, the revolution was made by the politically ‘illiterate’ as much as by the politically conscious – a diverse group of actors whose motivations and goals

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fired upon workers from churches and belfries during the battle to defeat the military rebels

<sup>12</sup> Ledesma, ‘La “santa ira popular” del 36’, pp. 179-82; de la Cueva, ‘Atrocities against the Clergy’, p. 361; Vincent, ‘War of Religion’ discusses other interpretations of the meanings of this violence, particularly p. 79

<sup>13</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, pp. 121-30; Vincent, ‘War of Religion’, pp. 79-80

<sup>14</sup> See for instance Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), FC-Causa General, 1066, Pieza 1, Exp. 11, p. 5, p. 40 (Murcia); AHN, FC-Causa General, 1415, Pieza 10, Exp. 4, pp. 21-22, (Huesca); AHN FC-Causa General, 1441, Pieza 10, Exp. 1, pp. 19-28 (Girona); *ABC* (Madrid), 1 August 1936, for the exhumation of nuns, beers ordered in bars for skulls to drink and other spectacles. See also Cárcel Ortí, *Caidos*, pp. 312-20, p. 324

<sup>15</sup> This included 4,184 priests and seminarians, 2,365 monks and 283 nuns. Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España, 1936-1939*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1961), pp. 763-4; Casanova, ‘Rebelión y revolución’, p. 155

<sup>16</sup> José Luis Ledesma, *Los días de llamas de la revolución: Violencia y política en la retaguardia republicana durante la guerra civil*, (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2003), pp. 235-44

overlapped in many shades. This ensured that there was, in effect, a spectrum of anticlerical violence that could be qualitatively diverse, the multitude complexities of which would be subsequently hidden by the Manichean myths of Francoism.<sup>17</sup>

This chapter focuses directly upon the lives and experiences of a number of priests and lay Catholics who remained at odds with the emergent ‘crusade’ during this period of polarisation, mobilisation and extrajudicial violence. Many of them did not identify with the rebel war effort, nor with its emerging values, and whilst they came to represent only a minority constituency within the Republic, they were nevertheless faced with the frightening and traumatic prospect of living in Republican territory beset by anticlerical violence. This chapter explores the conditions in which such individuals were able to survive the first and most destructive months of this violence and, from there, how they were able find – or make – a place in the complex broader political and cultural milieus of a world in crisis. Though many of them never met, theirs were intertwined life stories, transformed by the struggle to make sense of change in civil wartime Spain. How these individuals came to understand, interpret and respond to the landscape of killing is a fundamental part of their own stories, and also representative of crucial dynamics within the first six months of the war.

In the new revolutionary battle for the future made possible only by the military rebellion, priests were not ordinary flesh and blood victims but symbolic representatives of an old, oppressive order. In Madrid, 334 of the capital’s 1118 secular Catholic priests were assassinated, of whom fully 95 percent were killed between July and December 1936.<sup>18</sup> In Barcelona, the figure killed was upwards of 279 from a total of over one thousand.<sup>19</sup> In Toledo, 315 of the province’s nearly 700 clergy were killed, and in Cuenca where thirty six priests were killed, this percentage

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<sup>17</sup> Julio de la Cueva, “‘Si los curas y frailes supieran...’ La violencia anticlerical”, in Santos Juliá (ed.), *Violencia política en la España del siglo XX*, (Madrid: Santillana, 2000), pp. 226-7; Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, pp. 88-9

<sup>18</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, p. 764. Montero’s calculations remain the most widely accepted, although for instance José Luis Alfaya suggests a higher figure of 435, corresponding to 38.8% of the population (Montero calculates 29.8%); Alfaya, *Como un río de fuego: Madrid, 1936*, (Madrid, 1998), p. 103. Where religious orders of monks and nuns are concerned, the figures are often proportionally higher, given that individuals living within an enclosed monastic environment were often killed together. In Barbastro (Aragon), 123 of 140 clerics were killed, almost all of whom were from the enclosed Claretian order.

<sup>19</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, p. 763

was nearly one quarter.<sup>20</sup> In this environment, Catholic priests and religious personnel who rejected the politics of the radical political right, and had worked to improve the lives of workers were not necessarily guaranteed safety. Even some of those priests who had actively taken part in more radical political options – living and experiencing the same conditions as their working class parishioners – struggled amidst this dangerously fraught world. Many anticlerical actors perceived the Church's role in society in homogenous terms, making it incredibly difficult for Catholic priests who did not support the rebellion – or indeed the worldview of the ecclesiastical hierarchy – to distinguish themselves.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the anarchist magazine *Solidaridad Obrera* made no distinctions, declaring of the violence in July 1936 that 'what has happened to the exploiting bourgeoisie, to the obscurantist clergy and to the greedy shopkeepers is that they have had to reap the consequences of the seeds they themselves sowed.'<sup>22</sup>

For decades, even the Catholic labour movement had often been used in practice as an ideological weapon to buttress the status quo in working class communities.<sup>23</sup> One priest observed astutely, amidst the conservatism and confessionality of Church initiatives, that even here 'the Church is at the service of the rich', 'undertaking as a primary task the defence of the property of the rich.'<sup>24</sup> The result was that even priests whose involvement was genuinely pro-worker had long been viewed with extreme suspicion by those workers. Such was the manner in which the activities of the Asturian priest Maximiliano Arboleya had been understood by many of those constituencies now involved in the violence. With his earliest attempts coming in 1912, Arboleya was perhaps the most prominent priest involved in forming Catholic unions which were independent of the ecclesiastical hierarchy's agenda, but he nevertheless defended social Catholicism as a way of combating the radical left.<sup>25</sup> Although Arboleya gave some talks in the *ateneos* (cultural centres), of which there were many in the mining towns and villages, he had been offered no real support from local mining companies in Asturias or from the Church, which continued to keep a

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<sup>20</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. xviii; Montero Moreno provides a figure of 286 (of 600) secular clergy in the diocese of Toledo, *Historia de la persecución*, p. 763-4.

<sup>21</sup> Arturo Barea, *The Forging of a Rebel*, (London: Granta, 2001), p. 559

<sup>22</sup> *Solidaridad Obrera*, 29 July 1936, see also 27 July 1936, 15 August 1936, 18 August 1936

<sup>23</sup> Callahan, *Catholic Church*, pp. 128-9; Lannon, *Privilege*, pp. 153-61

<sup>24</sup> Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 157

<sup>25</sup> Shubert, 'El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias', pp. 246-8; for Arboleya's correspondence with Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo during the 1920s, CDMH, PS-Madrid, legajo. 734-3



close eye on the priest's public comments and writings. It was this written material that ensured Arboleya, and others like him, remained the most publicly visible 'social reformers' in the Church, despite their lack of involvement in radical political or social work or, indeed, in successful, practical initiatives.<sup>26</sup>

The brunt of the social work, charitable institutions and union organisation fell instead upon those priests involved in the daily experience of the Republic's urban and rural communities (just as they would later take the brunt of the anticlerical violence of summer 1936, as the most community-facing clergy). In many cases, individual priests went to great efforts to offer pastoral care through community centres, recreational activities and educational programmes, many of which had been established immediately in 1931 with the birth of the Republic. Where these often small initiatives most often took root, particularly in urban, populous towns and cities, they were conceptualised, organised and run by the individuals themselves, often with little or no support – if not active opposition – from their ecclesiastical superiors. In the face of such a restrictive atmosphere, many looked to Europe where, from the early 1920s, proponents of certain strands of liberal Catholicism had encouraged active participation in workers' lives.<sup>27</sup> They sought to foster positive, productive relationships within new industrialising, modernising environments. With Belgian and French Catholics leading the way, Juan García Morales, a parish priest from Huelma (Jaén) asserted that the true role of Catholicism was to stand 'side by side with the poor' rather than to 'celebrate the rich' and, emphasising a social conceptualisation of Catholicism that he saw lacking in the efforts of the Church, he regularly spoke of 'lagging behind' Europe and the 'social advance.'<sup>28</sup>

With many workers seeing the ecclesiastical hierarchy's yellow unions as repressive mechanisms intended to keep industrial peace, more genuinely worker-oriented organisations such as the Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya (FJCC) from 1931 and the Unió de Treballadors Cristians de Catalunya (UTCC) from 1934 provided the most successful links in Spain between clergymen and forms of

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<sup>26</sup> Shubert, 'El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias', and Benavides, 'Arboleya y su interpretación de la Revolución de Octubre', pp. 246-51

<sup>27</sup> García Morales, *El Cristo Rojo*, p. 18 and his columns in the *Heraldo de Madrid*, 14 April 1931, 3 June 1932, 24 January 1934

<sup>28</sup> García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*, p. 20; *Heraldo de Madrid*, 22 October 1931

organised unionisation that were based in the lived experiences of the working classes. These emergent organisations expanded more rapidly in Catalonia than elsewhere, taking advantage of variegated social structures based in the region's advanced economic and urban development, which in turn had created the potential for progressive, often non-confrontational, political and social options.<sup>29</sup> Though able to develop more rapidly in Catalonia, both the FJCC and UTCC took root from the same intellectual currents that existed across Spain and had led to similar, although significantly more limited, initiatives in Madrid, Valencia and elsewhere from 1931. Those limitations were clear – both Juan García Morales and his contemporary Régulo Martínez Sánchez, another socially aware priest from Toledo, had moved to Madrid in 1927 and 1931 respectively. In search of opportunity and receptivity to their ideas, the ecclesiastical hierarchy in their native provinces had long kept a tight rein on Catholic labour syndicates.<sup>30</sup> They were inspired by the progress made elsewhere in Europe (France and Belgium in particular) by Joseph Cardijn, who had founded the Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne (JOC) in 1924 and who sought to develop a pastoral strategy based in and around existing working lives, providing opportunities for local workers and young people to engage in a variety of social activities.<sup>31</sup> Both the FJCC and UTCC were able to rapidly establish large numbers of social and community centres all over Catalonia, which offered recreational activities, camps, educational seminars and some even had football teams.<sup>32</sup> With the aim of offering support in existing social situations, by altering 'their operations through the infusion of Christian values,' a small group of Catholic priests and lay people influenced by Cardijn had played an exciting role in the development of new Catholic social initiatives in the peacetime years of the Republic.<sup>33</sup>

These included individuals such as the Catalan priest Josep Maria Tarragó i Ballús. Born in the small town of Vilanova del Camí in 1906, Tarragó was ordained as

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<sup>29</sup> Arasa, *La Federació*, pp. 74-9

<sup>30</sup> Callahan, *Catholic Church*, p. 166

<sup>31</sup> Cardijn had formed the JOC in Belgium and the organization had, by 1926, spread into France and rapidly expanded. The JOC's efforts to transform traditional pastoral strategies to recover what they perceived as the lost flocks of working class society were based on the social and labour encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI (receiving approval from the latter in 1925).

<sup>32</sup> Arasa, *La Federació*, pp. 68-71. The first congress of the Federation in 1934 was attended by 165 groups of *fejecistes* and 200 groups of *avantguardistes* with a combined total of 4000 members; by 1936 this has risen to a combined 576 groups with nearly 18,000 members.

<sup>33</sup> The construction of similar relationships in France is explored in Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth*, p. 81

a priest during the last year of Primo de Rivera's rule, at the age of twenty three.<sup>34</sup> Before this, he had spent several of his formative years in France, and had studied social sciences, politics and economics at the Institut Catholique de Paris. Under the tutelage of Gustave Desbuquois, the director of the Jesuit-run Action Populaire, Tarragó developed an interest in the practical application of Action Populaire's social Catholicism, amplified by an inspiring meeting in Paris with Cardijn.<sup>35</sup> The JOC's efforts to transform traditional pastoral strategies to recover the 'lost flocks' of working class society resonated loudly. And, like many Catholics with an interest in these newly developing initiatives, Tarragó had seen the advent of the Spanish Republic in 1931 as an opportunity to put Cardijn's ideas into practice and engage meaningfully within a religious life radically reshaped by the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation.<sup>36</sup>

Tarragó saw in the Republic's proposed educational, agricultural and political reforms an opportunity to embrace this modernity through Catholicism and engage with its challenges. Shortly after the proclamation of the Republic, the young priest had been heavily involved in the formation of the FJCC alongside the Catalan reformer Albert Bonet i Marrugat. Bonet too was heavily influenced by strands of transnational liberal Catholicism, ensuring from its humble beginnings the FJCC – condemned in some quarters for its modern methods – enjoyed strong links with the progressive the Catalanist Christian Democrat party Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (UDC).<sup>37</sup> That desire to engender productive links between Catholic social initiatives and progressive working class politics was further realised in 1934 as Tarragó founded the UTCC with help from the UDC, which opened drop in centres reaching out from urban Barcelona, with offices in Berga (Berguedà) and in several of the towns and pueblos along the Llobregat river.<sup>38</sup> As the geographical spread of reforming Catholic initiatives like Tarragó's in the rest of Catalonia and – although of a different tenor –

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<sup>34</sup> Albert Manent, Joan Galtés i Pujol and Ramon Corts i Blay (eds.), *Diccionari d'història eclesiàstica de Catalunya*, III, (Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya-Editorial Claret, 2001), p. 501

<sup>35</sup> Manent et al. (eds.), *Diccionari d'història eclesiàstica*, p. 501

<sup>36</sup> *Time*, 26 September 1938

<sup>37</sup> For the emergence of the FJCC and its links to European Catholic movements, see Arasa, *La Federació de Joves Cristians*, passim; for its links to the UDC, see also Ragner, *La Unió*, pp. 244-7, 422. For criticisms, see Feliciano Montero, 'Juventud y política: los movimientos juveniles de inspiración católica en España: 1920-1970', *Studia historica*, 5, 1987, pp. 114-5 and Francisco Martínez Hoyos, 'La Acción Católica en Cataluña' in Montero (ed.), *La Acción Católica en la II República*, (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2008), pp. 153-4

<sup>38</sup> Manent et al. (eds.), *Diccionari d'història eclesiàstica*, p. 501

those in the Basque Country confirmed, these were to remain minority initiatives for a variety of structural and deeply rooted attitudinal reasons. Able to flourish particularly in urban, populous areas with variegated political cultures, elsewhere in Spain – where traditional elites remained dominant – the Catholic labour movement remained largely wedded to longstanding structures of repression, its involvement in yellow unionism well recognised.<sup>39</sup>

It was little wonder that popular understandings of Catholic labour initiatives remained fixed in feelings of frustration and memories of strikebreaking rather than the small-scale, minority successes of genuinely worker-oriented initiatives. From July 1936, many anticlerical protagonists made little distinction between the latter and the former. There appeared to be little place for worker-oriented Catholic initiatives or the priests and lay Catholics who had organised them – even in Catalonia, where such efforts were more deeply embedded. The FJCC alone saw hundreds of their members killed in the anticlerical violence and street fighting of the first months of the war.<sup>40</sup> Tarragó's pre-war world collapsed: no longer safe among the workers he had lived beside for years, the priest quickly found himself living in fear of being 'taken for a ride' – the macabre turn of phrase for summary execution – as one of the representatives of the 'old world'.

For those of its victims who survived it, the revolutionary violence seared and traumatised them, creating immense fear and an overwhelming sense of precariousness, as well as, of course, a desperate desire to stay alive. This dangerous new world shaped Tarragó's early experiences of the war almost entirely: he would later write of the 'situation in Barcelona, where gangs of women' patrolled the city streets 'hunting priests' in newspaper articles permeated with well-rehearsed fears of 'women out of control'.<sup>41</sup> The priest warned that these women disguised themselves as 'believers', using 'tales of deception' in the hope of tricking priests and religious into revealing themselves.<sup>42</sup> Tarragó explained that most commonly these women

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<sup>39</sup> Shubert, 'El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias', pp. 246-51

<sup>40</sup> Arasa, *La Federació*, pp. 195-9

<sup>41</sup> *La Croix*, 7 January 1937

<sup>42</sup> It appears here that Tarragó was reflecting upon a fear of women already well-rehearsed in European political discourse; Mark S. Micale, 'Hysteria Male/Hysteria Female: Reflections on Comparative Gender Construction in Nineteenth-Century France and Britain', in Marina Benjamin (ed.), *Science and Sensibility: Gender and Scientific Enquiry, 1780-1945*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 200-39.

spoke of a patient – often a family member – critically injured or sick and in desperate need of the last rites. Any priest that found himself, ‘pushed by his apostolic zeal’ to agree to the women’s requests was soon the ‘prisoner of the reds.’<sup>43</sup>

Tarragó was lucky, able to escape with the assistance of the Generalitat in Catalonia aboard a passenger ferry chartered to the French Riviera, whilst Albert Bonet and a number of others found passage on a ship bound for the Italian coast in August 1936.<sup>44</sup> Fèlix Millet i Maristany, another leading figure of the FJCC, was provided with false papers and assistance by Jaume Miravittles, who would later lead the Catalan Generalitat’s wartime efforts to produce pro-Catholic propaganda.<sup>45</sup> Other reformist leaders of the FJCC who were unable to flee, like the devoutly Catholic physician Pere Tarrés i Claret, were forced into hiding or else taken into protective custody by Republican authorities.<sup>46</sup> Whilst studying to become a doctor, Tarrés had spoken zealously about Catholicism to young people who visited FJCC centres in Manresa and was well known, often stopping to chat with local youths and workers on the streets of the city.<sup>47</sup> After July, this made him a clearly identifiable target, and though he survived and later joined the Republican Army as a field doctor (and then the priesthood under Franco), many of his reformer colleagues were not so lucky: his young colleague in Manresa – the twenty year old Pedro Roca – was killed close to one of the social centres that they had established in the city’s working class districts.<sup>48</sup>

That the social work undertaken by these priests did not always save them from this revolutionary violence encouraged many contemporary observers to exaggerate the picture, suggesting the ‘indiscriminate’, random nature of these acts,

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See also Michael Richards, ‘Morality and Biology in the Spanish Civil War: Psychiatrists, Revolution and Women Prisoners in Málaga’, *Contemporary European History*, 10, 2001, pp. 395-42

<sup>43</sup> *La Croix*, 7 January 1937

<sup>44</sup> Arasa, *La Federació*, pp. 198-9; Rager, *La Unió*, p. 357

<sup>45</sup> Ramon Batalla i Galimany, *Jaume Miravittles i Navarra; Intellectual, revolucionari i home de govern. Els anys joves, 1906-1939*, unpublished thesis, (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2010) pp. 427-8

<sup>46</sup> Arasa, *La Federació*, pp. 201-5; already a leading light in the FJCC and with a personal commendation from Vidal i Barraquer, Tarres founded a medical clinic in Barcelona aimed at aiding the poorest in society. After the war, Tarres would also speak of the need for a ‘doctor of souls’, prompting his entry into the seminary in September 1939. Tarres was ordained as a priest in May 1942.

<sup>47</sup> Arasa, *La Federació*, pp. 196-9

<sup>48</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, p. 860. Roca i Toscas was killed on 4 March 1937, which was relatively late in comparison to much of the anticlerical violence in Republican territory, notwithstanding isolated incidents throughout the war.

noting that large numbers of clergy were executed simply because they belonged to a politically aggressive Church.<sup>49</sup> Although the ecclesiastical hierarchy and its supporters were not slow in framing anticlericalism within a narrative of martyrdom and barbarism, understandings of the forms, meanings and impacts of anticlericalism during the peacetime Republican years and the civil war could often be simplistic.<sup>50</sup> However, despite its ferocious intensity, the anticlerical violence was neither homogeneous in time nor space.<sup>51</sup>

Intrinsically linked to the local social and political environment, the centrifugal explosion of power detonated by the military coup and the intensity of violence were intimately related. In some areas where Republican authorities had been able to retain a semblance of control, the clergy remained relatively unharmed. The most obvious example in the eyes of contemporary observers was in the urban nuclei of the Basque Provinces: elsewhere in the rural majority of the Basque Country, violence against the clergy was restricted by a vastly different set of social structures into which religious practice was embedded and which bred unambiguous respect for the clergy. The later emergence of an autonomous Basque government also functioned from October 1936 to restore central political authority.<sup>52</sup> Consequently in the Basque Provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, the lowest percentage losses of clergy occurred – with sixty-

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<sup>49</sup> For examples and varied reactions, see Cárcel Ortí, *Caidos*, p. 18, p. 191; de la Cueva, quoting the Italian historian Gabriele Ranzato, suggests that ‘belonging to the Church was sufficient reason for [victims] to be the target of the persecution’ in ‘Religious Persecution’, p. 362, whilst Arturo Barea notes of one anticlerical protagonist who remarked ‘don’t worry...there are too many of those black beetles anyhow’, *The Forging of a Rebel*, p. 525. The ‘indiscriminate’ nature of such violence is also discussed as a justification for the Church’s position in its ‘Carta colectiva de los obispos españoles a los de todo el mundo con motivo de la guerra de España, 1.VII.1937’, reprinted in Isidro Gomá y Tomás, *Por Dios y Por España. Pastorales – instrucciones pastorales y artículos – discursos – mensajes – apéndice, 1936–1939*, (Barcelona: Rafael Casulleras, 1940), pp. 560-90

<sup>50</sup> Barea remarked of his own horror that ‘I was convinced the Church of Spain was an evil which had to be eradicated. But I revolted against this stupid destruction,’ whilst he writes of various explanations of the violence from onlookers, *The Forging of a Rebel*, pp. 525-8. See fn. 49 (above) for the clergy as ‘black beetles’, whilst Barea also refers to violence as a response to ‘rifles stored in churches [and] conspiratorial meetings held by Christian Knights at two in the morning’, p. 536

<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, although historians have now largely discredited the conceptualisation of these (or of any) events as irrational, the notion of ‘indiscriminate’ violence is still present as the lens through which extrajudicial violence across 1936-1939 is viewed. As Frances Lannon suggests, ‘perhaps their work was irrelevant to their persecutors and they died simply because they were religious, over-conspicuous representatives of a Church identified as an enemy...’, Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 77; Mélanges de la Casa de Velazquez, *La tolerancia religiosa en la España contemporánea*, Tome 44(1), (Madrid: Casa de Velazquez, 2014)

<sup>52</sup> Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 241-53; Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, pp. 138-41; Francisco Espinosa Maestre, ‘Sobre la represión franquista en el País Vasco’, *Historia social*, 63, 2009, pp. 59-62

nine priests dying at the hands of anticlerical protagonists. The majority of these were in industrial Vizcaya, whilst in Guipúzcoa only four members of the clergy were killed.<sup>53</sup> But elsewhere in Spain, the numbers of lay clergy who were able to survive in part demonstrates the existence of operative ‘discriminatory’ violence. In Valencia, 873 of the city’s priests survived from a pre-war population of 1200; in Huesca, 164 of 198 priests survived; and in Ciudad Real, where the violence was more extensive than in both Valencia and Huesca, 146 of the city’s 243 priests survived.<sup>54</sup> Even in revolutionary Barcelona, 972 lay clergy lived through the anticlerical violence from a peacetime population of 1251.<sup>55</sup> Without detailed analysis of all of the incidences in which priests were able to survive the first months of the war, we cannot tabulate exhaustively the circumstances of each case. However, as this chapter demonstrates, there are numerous examples from across Spain in which survival can directly be linked to a ‘selectivity of violence’, often also tied specifically to the position held by priests or lay Catholics within their communities.

Government officials, including many Catholic politicians, went to great lengths across Spain to limit the violence: among others who worked to limit the repression was the Madrid delegation of the Basque PNV. One of its most energetic members was Jesús de Galíndez, who wrote later that ‘only by condemning one’s own excesses can one condemn those of the enemy; only by exposing the crude reality does one have the right to accuse’.<sup>56</sup> With considerable official help, PNV members in the capital were successful in saving the lives of significant numbers of clergy. In Barcelona, government officials and politicians of the UDC – not least its general secretary Josep María Trias Peitx – worked tirelessly with colleagues in Spain and abroad to construct and consolidate a network of support for Catalan priests imprisoned, in hiding, or in exile.<sup>57</sup> Several of those Catholic politicians grouped around the UDC were able to secure a place for Josep Mariá Tarragó on the boat leaving for the French Riviera and, upon its arrival, again played a vital role in re-establishing exile community links in France after the war.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 429

<sup>54</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, pp. 763-4

<sup>55</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, pp. 763-4

<sup>56</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 281

<sup>57</sup> Solé and Caballer, ‘Aproximació a la biografia política’, pp. 165-81

<sup>58</sup> Manent et al. (eds.), *Diccionari d'història eclesiàstica*, p. 501; Solé and Caballer, ‘Aproximació a la

In some areas where central government authority collapsed, the forms of the ensuing violence and its victims differed according to the particular social and political conditions in which the fragmentation of power occurred. In hundreds of towns and villages across Spain the sole victim of the revolutionary violence was the local priest, whereas in hundreds of others the priest was one among several targeted social constituencies, and in others still the clergy were saved from the violence when other targets were killed.<sup>59</sup> By examining some cases in which violence against religious personnel was much more selective than previously understood we can demonstrate that the anticlericalism of July-September 1936 was sometimes far from generating a situation in which ‘the churches were burned because they were churches and the priests were shot for being priests.’<sup>60</sup> In turn, this selectivity crucially provided the opportunities for at least some priests and lay Catholics to understand the anticlerical violence as a specific, selective response to particular socio-political antagonisms. Consequently, it also provided the opportunity for these Catholics to understand the civil war outside of the binary religious/antireligious schematic. From that understanding at the grassroots there grew the first shoots of a potential for reintegrating some Catholics, and indeed for those Catholics to consider practically their own integration within the Republic.

One of the key themes that emerges in cases where priests remained unharmed, and when anticlericalism took on less destructive forms, was that the revolutionary violence was explicitly being enacted as a clear condemnation of the Church’s betrayal of the moral of the gospels and of the Christian values it claimed to represent. At one Madrid church, anticlerical militiamen transformed a statue into the ‘Marxist Jesus’ and placed it on public display, one arm broken and repositioned on the crucifix ‘so that it appeared to be giving the clenched fist salute’.<sup>61</sup> And, as we will see in the next chapters, that representation and interpretation of Jesus as the ‘first socialist’ formed part of a discursive repertoire deployed by a diverse array of actors that allowed Catholics to interpret and understand their place in the wartime Republic.

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biografía política’, p. 170

<sup>59</sup> Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp. 248-52. Ledesma notes that in countless towns and cities, burning the Church and killing the priest were amongst the first actions taken in the aftermath of the coup, p. 250

<sup>60</sup> Manuel Delgado, *La ira sagrada; Anticlericalismo, iconoclastia y antiritualismo en la España contemporánea*, (Barcelona: RBA Libros, 2012), p. 65

<sup>61</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 170



This was something that had pre-war precedents too: newspapers reported that during the revolutionary events of October 1934 in Bembibre (León), a statue of Jesus had been saved from the flames of a burning church, exhibited in the town square with a sign that said: ‘Red Christ. We did not harm you because you are one of us.’<sup>62</sup> That story rapidly became part of the discursive repertoire of a small number of Catholic priests who had become involved in left wing political action during the Republic, not least the radical priest Juan García Morales, who had used the story as the title to his 1935 book condemning the Church’s allegiance with the political right.<sup>63</sup> Another priest spoke of a similar incident, remembering ‘those “red” Christs and infant Jesuses dressed in “militia clothes” with a placard at their feet declaring “You are with us!”’<sup>64</sup> The priest remarked further on the discursive shift that allowed Christ to be appropriated by the revolutionary left, of ‘those verses in which, by a turn of the letter, the Virgin of the Pilar has become a communist,’ and of ‘the joy with which [militiamen] celebrated the news which told of the religious of a certain monastery joining the militia to fight against the rebels.’<sup>65</sup>

Events like the rescue of the ‘Red Christ of Bembibre’ certainly gave some Catholic churchmen hope in the summer of 1936. These were small apertures in the *mentalités* of anticlerical protagonists that were immediately more nuanced than the image of bloodthirsty, uncontrollable, fanatical and irrational mobs running wild rapidly conjured up in Francoist propaganda.<sup>66</sup> It allowed them to interpret anticlerical attacks as constituting ‘a protest regarding the Church’s abject betrayal of the poor; an attempt to “purify” the institution, cleansing it of its materialistic sins’, rather than its complete removal from society.<sup>67</sup> These discourses would become part of a much wider discursive landscape as the war continued and, as the historian José Álvarez Junco makes clear, much of that popular criticism of the clergy was itself rooted in the

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<sup>62</sup> *El Sur: diario de la tarde*, 25 October 1934; *ABC* (Madrid), 26 October 1934

<sup>63</sup> García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*

<sup>64</sup> Semprún Gurrea, *A Catholic Looks at Spain*, p. 9

<sup>65</sup> Semprún Gurrea, *A Catholic Looks at Spain*, p. 9

<sup>66</sup> As the war went on, these claims became more extensive and widely printed. See for examples Estelrich, *La persecution religieuse*; Antonio Pérez de Olaguer, *El terror rojo en Cataluña*, (Burgos: Ediciones Antisectarios, Burgos, 1937); Aniceto de Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima. La Iglesia española mártir de la revolución roja*, (Salamanca: Nacional, 1940); for Castro Albarrán’s correspondence with Cardinal Gomá on the subject of ‘religious persecution’ see Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá*, VI, 6-418

<sup>67</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 170. Raguer recounts the thoughts of the priest Alfons Thió on this issue, who wondered of a group of anticlericals whether ‘they reject the ministers on account of Jesus or Jesus on account of his ministers?’, Raguer, *La Unió*, p. 362

Christian moral tradition.<sup>68</sup> That popular anticlericalism was provoked in part by the Church's 'betrayal' of the poor was emphasised clearly, 'infused with a considerable amount of residual belief in Christian moral principles'.<sup>69</sup> Thomas notes that anticlerical revolutionaries 'accused the Church of betraying the values of the gospel', and made 'made endless biblical allusions, discussed redemption and martyrdom, and constructed highly eschatological images of a wicked, sinful past and a projected utopian future.'<sup>70</sup>

That idea of a Church betraying its social mission found expression in the thought of Catholic individuals who supported the Republic before the war. For the devout priest Régulo Martínez Sánchez, the Republic and its political parties had certainly made mistakes over the religious question (not least over the educational issue) but that was nothing compared to the exploitation of workers and poor by the local moneylenders, caciques and clergy of rural Spain.<sup>71</sup> He had witnessed the torment of starving workers in his parish in Guadalajara where, as a young priest, his first action in 1919 had been to establish a Catholic agrarian trade union. He had seen it too in his childhood in Toledo – his father, a doctor, wished that he could have written prescriptions for bread and olives for the local villagers. That first-hand experience of the desperate poverty of Spain's rural workers meant that even before being ordained his faith in the institutional church had weakened. But Martínez Sánchez continued believing in his own ability to live a Christian life as a priest, regardless of the alliance between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the Restoration Monarchy, which was experienced on a daily basis in his parish through the Church's political antagonism and its alliances with local employers and elite sectors.<sup>72</sup> It was in this experience that the priest had welcomed the Republic with open arms: he was 'in favour, and said so, of Church and state being separated: it was fundamental to the

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<sup>68</sup> José Álvarez Junco, 'El anticlericalismo en el movimiento obrero', in Jackson, *Octubre 1934*, pp. 283-300; Pérez Ledesma, 'Studies on Anticlericalism', pp. 231-2

<sup>69</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, thesis, p. 72

<sup>70</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, thesis, p. 248; Julio de la Cueva notes too that in some earlier instances of anticlericalism, 'priests were to be censured not chiefly because of their reactionary ideological, political, social or cultural character, but because of their transgression of the values embodied in the Gospel', 'The Stick and the Candle: Clericals and Anticlericals in Northern Spain, 1898-1913', *European History Quarterly*, 26, 1996, p. 258

<sup>71</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, Régulo Martínez Sánchez, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173)

<sup>72</sup> Régulo Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, (Madrid: Ediciones 99, 1977), p. 7. These dynamics in Toledo more widely are referred to by Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, pp. 166-7, which must be seen as directly consequential in the significant anticlerical violence in the region.

well-being of both. I agreed with the dissolution of the Jesuits – they were the Republic’s bitterest enemy.’<sup>73</sup>

Martínez Sánchez was certainly not one for toeing the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s line: arguing face to face with Cardinal Segura in 1931 that his work in a school for orphans in Madrid took precedence over ecclesiastical duties, he drew upon complex Thomist theology to make his point and steadfastly refused to return to the tasks Segura demanded of him.<sup>74</sup> His intelligent, precise use of Church teaching and his excellent oratory skills certainly made an impression on Segura – the Cardinal seemingly took no action despite Martínez Sánchez’s refusal to return to his parish work, meaning that he remained an ordained priest when he joined Manuel Azaña’s Izquierda Republicana. His experience of the priesthood had been weakened so much over 1918-36 that he never thought about supporting the Church and its ‘crusade’, and ‘he did not regret his decision, despite the events he came to witness.’<sup>75</sup>

For other priests like Martínez Sánchez, their experiences in parishes across Spain made clear to them that many of the sentiments expressed in the anticlerical violence of the first months of the war represented the (undoubtedly violent) physical expression of breaking with the inflated political, social and cultural dominance of the Catholic Church, rather than specifically antireligious motivations.<sup>76</sup> Whilst nevertheless extremely violent, this revolutionary violence must be understood according to what Helen Graham calls a ‘*tabula rasa*: a satisfyingly instantaneous dissolution of political oppression as well as a reparation for accumulated social hurts’.<sup>77</sup> Martínez Sánchez remembered that ‘the masses wanted revenge, revolution.’<sup>78</sup> And with the revolutionary violence centred on that political oppression

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<sup>73</sup> Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 528

<sup>74</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, Régulo Martínez Sánchez, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173)

<sup>75</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 74

<sup>76</sup> It nevertheless remains difficult to identify homogenous ideological meanings behind such revolutionary actions. Understandings of this violence in such ‘ideological’ terms has led to an increased focus on the CNT-FAI in part because of its aggressive anticlerical rhetoric – see for instance Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War*, (Cambridge: Canto/Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 189-90; de la Cueva, ‘Atrocities against the clergy’, pp. 357-8. de la Cueva works beyond this limited picture of the violence, whilst Maria Thomas provides the most illuminating profiling of anticlerical protagonists during the summer of 1936, *Faith and the Fury*, particularly pp. 74-99

<sup>77</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, p. 86

<sup>78</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 54

and those social hurts, the forms and functions of the violence varied from place to place. And, just as Maria Thomas shows how the exact makeup of those revolutionary actors varied (though with some shared, distinct national characteristics) so too the victims of that revolution varied.<sup>79</sup>

It was in this scenario that small numbers of Catholic clergy and sometimes high profile Catholic individuals and their families were able to survive. In these individual cases, it was quite clear that they were able to survive because in the minds of local anticlerical protagonists, they did not form (as individuals) part of that political oppression and social hurt being purged. In many cases elderly or ill priests remained unharmed. In Asturias, the retired and blind José Palomo Martínez from Ujo and the elderly parish priest of Puente de los Fierros, José Álvarez Cabezas were both left in relative safety by local anticlerical actors.<sup>80</sup> Likewise the parish priest of San Feliz, Pola de Lena (Asturias) was reported to be ‘very ill’ and was consequently ‘left alone in his home,’ again seemingly because he had been seen in a positive light by local anticlericals.<sup>81</sup> One observer remarked that ‘my own experience completely convinces me that an enormous number of those terrible “reds” who are charged with the most abominable crimes – and abominable they sometimes are – would be glad to treat with priests who would understand them, and would be really glad to see those priests live in the perfection which is humanely possible.’<sup>82</sup> As the Catholic poet José Bergamín noted (but perhaps overemphasised), ‘the people still have respect for real religion, for spiritual things and for charity. The true Catholic is on the side of the people. Those who attend only to their religion and who do not mix up [sic] in political strife are not molested [sic].’<sup>83</sup>

This more nuanced understanding of the role of priests in society was evident all across Asturias, even in towns where physical violence against the Church had taken place previously. In October 1934, there had been anticlerical violence in the wake of a general strike, undertaken against what was perceived as the creeping take-over of government by the enemies of change. Initiated in response to the inclusion of

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<sup>79</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, pp. 74-99

<sup>80</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, pp. 812-4

<sup>81</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 810

<sup>82</sup> Semprún Gurrea, *A Catholic Looks at Spain*, p. 9

<sup>83</sup> North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, *Catholics Speak for Spain*, (New York: North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, 1937), p. 16

three *Cedistas* – anti-reformist and allied to conservative Catholicism – within the government (in the key posts of labour, agriculture and justice), it led to the formation of a revolutionary Workers’ Alliance by a small group of socialists, communists and anarchists in the northern mining valleys of Asturias.<sup>84</sup> Thomas notes how the ‘depth of revulsion and anger felt by the region’s armed workers regarding the Church’s political antagonism’ was fiercely demonstrated in the destruction of fifty religious buildings and the murder of thirty four religious personnel.<sup>85</sup> This commune lasted for almost two weeks before the Army of Africa, in a vicious foretelling of the violence it would embark on after July 1936, initiated the brutal suppression of thousands of left-wing activists and liberal political leaders. Though the commune had committed a series of violent murders, including the killing of thirty four priests, a number of other Catholic priests had aided the commune and had spoken out in protest at the violence of its repression.<sup>86</sup> As Asturias became an important political reference point in the revolutionary summer of 1936, so too the position of those who, including priests, had come to the aid of the revolutionary commune was again brought into focus.<sup>87</sup>

Now, in the summer of 1936, the actions and interventions of some of these priests and Catholic laity were remembered. Such was the case of Jerónimo Vázquez Álvarez, the coadjutor of the municipality of Mieres, at the heart of the Asturian coalmining industry: when he was found in 1936, the miners decided that the priest was ‘one of us’, and was respected.<sup>88</sup> Individuals held in high esteem for their actions in social work and for supporting the struggles of their local working class communities could be saved even as other priests were being hunted down with murderous intent. In the Asturian town of Moreda, where anticlerical groups smashed the icons dedicated to the Virgen del Carmen and San Antonio before torching the Church, the priest remained unharmed.<sup>89</sup> Here, the local parish priest Constantino Rodríguez Fernández had worked closely with many of the members of the new local

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<sup>84</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 79-86

<sup>85</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 68

<sup>86</sup> Some local priests provided direct material and spiritual assistance, but other priests across Spain were more actively involved: following the failed insurrection in Asturias, Juan García Morales was one of two hundred thousand signatories of a petition created by the left-wing group *Agrupación de Abogados Defensores de los encartados por los sucesos de Octubre de 1934*, led by the novelist and member of the Generation of 98 Ramón del Valle Inclán.

<sup>87</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 6 October 1936; *La Batalla*, 6 October 1936

<sup>88</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 814

<sup>89</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 809

revolutionary committee, who encouraged him to stay indoors for his own safety. They were also aware that the priest's position in the community might not be understood by everyone – warning Rodríguez that revolutionary groups from outside the town ‘would not take kindly to any suggestion that there was a priest on the committee!’<sup>90</sup>

Events in Moreda revealed aspects of a pattern that occurred across the landscape of the anticlerical violence initiated in July 1936. In most areas, a key factor in the dynamics of the violence was the entry of people from outside the community into small towns and villages, which functioned to break community relationships and make accessible a situation in which violence against the clergy and other perceived enemies could take place. This introduction of outside forces explains why some were killed ‘just for being priests’: it involved a harrowing process in which they were first saved by members of their local community and then killed by outsiders, obviously with the assistance of other local citizens who thought differently. In this, the existence of militia columns intent on taking the revolution out from cities like Barcelona provided an explosive catalyst in the detonation of extrajudicial violence. The most famous of these groups ‘spreading the revolution’ en route to the Aragon front were the columns led by the anarchists Buenaventura Durruti and José Pellicer Gandía.<sup>91</sup> But even in regions where roaming militia columns didn't wreak havoc, an external trigger was normally needed to unleash violence; as Thomas observes, descriptions of anticlerical killings committed without any kind of external intervention are difficult to find.<sup>92</sup> Anticlerical protagonists were not only violating fundamental societal ‘rules’ related to killing in general, ‘they were also breaking the taboos which surrounded the murder of a community member, of somebody from “inside”’.<sup>93</sup>

The ruralised nature of much of Spanish society generated stronger community loyalties and greater concern over the killing of priests because of the tightly knit bonds of community life. In this environment the coadjutor of the parish of Lorio, part

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<sup>90</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 809

<sup>91</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 223, p. 252

<sup>92</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, pp. 158-9

<sup>93</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 161. Outsiders also then functioned as an alibi for anticlerical protagonists, both psychologically and as Francoist authorities began collecting evidence of the violence

of the Asturian municipality of Laviana, remained unharmed by anticlerical actors, not only because of his advanced age – he had been the coadjutor of the parish since 1912 – but also because his brother was a local militia leader.<sup>94</sup> It was clear those close ties to agents involved in revolutionary activities crucially changed the priest's perceived status in the summer of 1936. These local dynamics were also visible in the case of Gregorio Fernández, parish priest of a small village in Burgos, who was saved from the revolutionary violence of the summer because he was well known for his republican political views and because he had been 'affectionately held [in esteem]' for his 'kindness' and 'humility' by many members of the local community.<sup>95</sup> When Francoist forces reached his village, members of the Popular Front committee pleaded with him to flee with them.

Patterns of political mobilisation in the rural world during the 1930s meant that even by July 1936, the idea that the *patria chica* standing alone against the outside world was still widespread in many rural communities, and this helped ensure that some priests were protected from the 'outside world' by local people. In the village of Lucainena de las Torres in Almería, the priest of the Church of San José remained an active member of the community despite the establishment of a revolutionary committee. Masses were still being held until the arrival of a group of militiamen from nearby Tabernas on 24 July, who immediately declared that they had come to 'make the revolution.'<sup>96</sup> Collaborating with the committee and local people in the requisitioning of the church, they also asked if anyone in the town wanted to criticize the priest. When nobody complained, the militiamen announced that the priest was free to continue living in the town, provided that he removed his cassock.<sup>97</sup> Just a few miles away in the town of Sorbas, one of the leaders of the town's newly formed local committee, Domingo Martínez, had known the local priest, José Martínez Siles, since childhood. The two had an enduring respect for each other and despite his position, Martínez quickly arranged for the parish priest and his family to be driven to their

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<sup>94</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 816

<sup>95</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 97 Gregorio Fernández would later be imprisoned in the monastery of Carmona with Régulo Martínez Sánchez, to whom he eventually recounted the story of these events.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 160

<sup>97</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 160. My thanks to Maria Thomas for assistance in locating these episodes in AHN, FC-Causa General, 1164, Pieza 10, Exp. 3, pp. 85-7 (Almería) and FC-Causa General, 1164, Pieza 10, Exp. 4, pp. 176-7 (Almería)

hometown of Senés in late July, where they were able to remain safely (or in safety) until the end of the war.<sup>98</sup>

In Mojácar (Almeria), the local committee coordinated the destruction of the town's church following the defeat of the coup. The parish priest, meanwhile, was informed by the committee that, given that he had only arrived in the town on 16 July 1936, they considered that he had done nothing to warrant being detained.<sup>99</sup> Similar efforts on behalf of the newly constituted revolutionary committee saved the life of a priest hiding in Parla (Madrid), about twelve miles from the capital. As militia columns from nearby areas arrived in the town, the committee indicated that the priest had fled, possibly saving his life.<sup>100</sup>

In places all across Spain, some of those priests with strong links to the working class communities of their parish were saved. This was made possible in rural Spain because parish priests lived close to the community and were accepted first and foremost as individuals, rather than as representatives of a discredited institutional Church, and because of other existing social and cultural solidarities of rural town and village life. Whether or not a priest was able to survive depended clearly upon the crucial intersection of a number of variables, of which their own publicly-understood political stance and the interaction between local members of their community and outsiders remained the most significant. In urban areas and the Republic's larger cities, these processes were much more volatile and unpredictable: in Madrid, where the ability of the remaining forces of order to control the nearly two hundred private prisons (*checas*) run by numerous political organisations was severely circumscribed, and, as we have seen, over seven hundred religious personnel were killed in the capital during the war.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 157

<sup>99</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 157

<sup>100</sup> AHN, FC-Causa General, 1509, Pieza 1, Exp. 3, pp. 170-2 (Madrid); Testimony of Cristina Rufo Sánchez, email to author. See also Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 164

<sup>101</sup> The population of Madrid was also fluctuating significantly: between 200,000 and 500,000 refugees had arrived by October 1936 – and ways needed to be found of providing hygienic shelter or of moving people on to other areas of Republican Spain. As early as mid-December 1936 it was reported that 60,000 people had been evacuated from Madrid in just a single week through the efforts of the Comité de Auxilio al Niños, although this movement remained insufficient to deal with the problem. See *El Socialista*, 15 December 1936; 9 January 1937; 26 March 1937



But even amidst the revolutionary terror of Madrid, individuals well known for the social work and support of the political left were able to survive. The priest Leocadio Lobo had dedicated himself to intensive pastoral activity across three parishes in the city for more than fifteen years, where he had worked extensively in densely populated inner-city parishes and in constant and direct contact with workers' families, whom he strove to comfort in the difficult times of sorrow and death.<sup>102</sup> His pastoral experience with families in need, and his contact with liberal Catholics in Madrid had strongly shaped his perspective on Spain's social ills, and in the aftermath of July 1936 Lobo was quick to declare publicly that the revolutionary anticlerical violence that gripped Madrid (and elsewhere) was an assault not against religion, but an attack on clericalism and the political role of the Church.<sup>103</sup> But those evangelising efforts certainly did not guarantee his safety: in one forty eight hour period, Lobo was detained on four separate occasions by militia groups and was saved from a *paseo* only by chance of passing by the house of a friend who was also a well-known republican official.<sup>104</sup> With even the principal city *checas* run by left-wing parties and unions numbering at least twenty-five, the possibilities of 'popular justice' remained wide-ranging, volatile and imbued with undercurrents of common murder and theft.<sup>105</sup> The ability of left-wing politicians and local communities to save their priests from harm (as was sometimes occurring in rural Spain) was infinitely more difficult in urban environments, where the revolutionary charged atmosphere was more claustrophobic and faster-moving, an intoxicating compression of time and space, in which 'days [were] like hours, and months like days'.<sup>106</sup>

Lobo was eventually rescued and later, in a broadcast on Madrid radio in 1937, after the bulk of violence had died down, Lobo publicly thanked those who had saved his life, and for those who had aided his mission in other ways. He also made it clear that in Madrid at least, he was not the only priest aided by anticlericals: 'I know

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<sup>102</sup> González Gullón, 'Leocadio Lobo', p. 275; See also Gonzalo Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia en España, 1931-1939: Tomo II: La Guerra Civil, 1936-1939*, (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, S.A, 1993), p. 366

<sup>103</sup> Leocadio Lobo, *Primate and Priest*, (London: Press Department of the Spanish Embassy, 1937), passim; reports of his early activities in e.g. Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, I*, 1-193; *VIII*, 8-114

<sup>104</sup> José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, p. 10

<sup>105</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 260

<sup>106</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 41

priests who, lacking means, are receiving daily bread from the hands of workers.’<sup>107</sup> Of course, not all these priests in the capital (or elsewhere) supported the Republic or were inclined to understand the revolutionary violence in such analytical or peaceful terms. Many supported the right and would later come to form part of a fifth column that expanded rapidly as the war dragged on, but this only further added to blurred political boundaries. It was clear that Catholicism could not always function as an accurate mark of identity separating allegiances in the war, even in the midst of immediate anticlerical violence.<sup>108</sup>

Other priests and religious personnel did remain vocally loyal to the Republic in Madrid. Amongst them was Régulo Martínez Sánchez, who by 1937 was no longer working in the orphanage that had caused him to clash with Cardinal Segura, but was a straight-talking public orator and Izquierda Republicana member urging on the defence of the city. Included in that number was Juan García Morales, the radical – and sometimes virulently anticlerical – priest who broadcast regularly from the radio centre of the militia-occupied War Ministry and who seemingly socialised freely in the streets of the city. He too had long been an outspoken supporter of workers’ rights: he had used his newspaper columns to speak of the false inevitability of events like Casas Viejas and Asturias, believing that if the wealthy classes and the clergy who supported and justified this disparity of wealth and power had been concerned about the precarious life of peasant farmers or miners, such incidents would not have occurred.<sup>109</sup> After the experience of the two years of reactionary conservative government between 1933-5, García Morales wrote in his regular column for *El Heraldo de Madrid* that ‘our prayers have been answered’, calling the victory of the Popular Front the ‘reconquest of the Republic of 14 April.’<sup>110</sup> Again, amidst the anticlerical storm of the summer of 1936 it was the priest’s pre-war work that was remembered – his position secured and only understandable through years of work. It was even reported in the Madrid press in September that Encarnación Sierra, the communist *miliciana* and leader of the cigarette workers’ syndicate on the *Calle de Embajadores* in Madrid had declared García Morales ‘the idol of the parties of the

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<sup>107</sup> This speech is reprinted as Lobo, ‘Cómo respetó el pueblo’ in *El catolicismo en la España leal y en la zona facciosa*, (Madrid and Valencia: Servicio Español de Información, 1937), pp. 8-11

<sup>108</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 342

<sup>109</sup> For instance *Heraldo de Madrid*, 25 October 1934

<sup>110</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 18 February 1936

left’ – her words certainly spoke of much more than his actions over one summer.<sup>111</sup> And, as the war continued both of these priests would come to play a much larger role in the Catholic life of the Republic.

Also in Madrid during the summer of 1936 was Amable Donoso García, twenty-eight years old and devoutly Catholic.<sup>112</sup> Known to his friends and later comrades as ‘Pablo’, Donoso had been a priest in Huelma (Jaén) until shortly before the war, when he had become disillusioned with the Church’s political belligerence and its increasingly aggressive rhetoric on behalf of the political right. Increasingly concerned with the plight of the poor and himself a young man attracted to the egalitarian ideals of the political left, Donoso left the priesthood and in March 1936 joined the local branch of the PCE.<sup>113</sup> With the outbreak of war Donoso moved to Madrid and in the dangerous environment of a revolutionary city unknown to him, had to rely upon the networks of the PCE for accommodation, food and his personal safety. Added to the fear of the ‘uncontrollables’ and the city’s plethora of *checas* controlled by a multitude of political organisations, the communists were as ruthless as those other political organisations in wanting to root out the enemy within: that Donoso had been a priest in Jaén – and was still a practising Catholic – undoubtedly ensured his movements were closely watched. But Donoso quickly took on an active role in the JSU, first in Madrid and then across the Republican zone: working as a librarian, in party educational programmes and working his way up to the political leadership of the PCE by the end of the war, the ‘communist-priest’ developed an extensive network of political cadres, activists and militants across Alicante, Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia.<sup>114</sup>

That Donoso had left the priesthood and was actively involved in JSU/PCE political and social networks in Madrid offered him some safety. However, a small

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<sup>111</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 15 September 1936, 29 September 1936; *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936. Sierra was a member of the provincial PCE committee and the Agrupacion de Mujeres Antifascistas in Madrid, see also *La Vanguardia* 13 December 1936

<sup>112</sup> Archivo del Tribunal Territorial Primero (ATTP), Sumario 48924, proceso 48.924 contra Enrique Sánchez García y diez más. See also CDMH, Tribunal Especial para la Represión de la Masonería y el Comunismo (TERMC), 16656, Sumario 160-46-C contra Amable Donoso García por delito de masonería (Comunismo)

<sup>113</sup> ATTP, 48924

<sup>114</sup> CDMH, 16656, Sumario 160-46-C; ATTP, 48924; José Barajas Galiano, *Batallones disciplinarios. Esclavos del Franquismo*, I, (Barcelona: Colección Memoria Antifranquista del Baix Llobregat-Associació per a la Memòria Històrica i Democràtica del Baix Llobregat, 2007), p. 28

minority of other priests across the Republic were also able to continue their work in left wing politics after the coup without ‘removing their cassocks’. One priest in Murcia was noted to have been able to continue his ministry after July 1936 because of his positive involvement with the local revolutionary committee.<sup>115</sup> In Grado (Asturias), for some years before the outbreak of war, the priest Mauricio Santaliestra Palacín had taught local children in the ornately decorated palatial, colonial style house known as El Capitolio.<sup>116</sup> In the aftermath of the military coup, Santaliestra joined the town’s newly organised war committee and the local branch of the communist party.<sup>117</sup> Collaborating with the committee and local people in the requisitioning of the church and other buildings in the town, Santaliestra personally oversaw the conversion of the grand nineteenth century El Capitolio for war, clearing out desks, bookcases and ornate period furnishings as the building was transformed into a makeshift barracks.<sup>118</sup>

These priests were renegotiating the boundaries of revolutionary violence by actively participating in the construction of a new society and in the unprecedented transformation of the political sphere that accompanied it. In doing so, they were able to secure a space and identity for themselves within the new social and political order under construction. As José Luis Ledesma makes clear, taking part in revolutionary actions often acted as a way in which those involved could secure positions of power in this new environment, whilst in other cases joining these groups also acted as a safety net, offering protection and deflecting attention from themselves in localities where all the inhabitants had an intimate knowledge of the political and religious allegiances of the community.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, pp. 144-5

<sup>116</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 53; Various materials concerning the history of Grado during the civil war, and the history of the building ‘El Capitolio’ are available via [cultura@grado.es](mailto:cultura@grado.es) and <http://www.ayto-grado.es/> [last accessed 31 May 2015]

<sup>117</sup> CDMH, PS-Santander, Caja. 9, Exp. 16

<sup>118</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 53; Santaliestra is listed along with other committee members in *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Oviedo*, 273, 26 November 1936. He was eventually executed by Francoist forces in Avilés on 12 December 1937. Reports of his death are discussed in chapter two.

<sup>119</sup> Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp. 235-49; ‘La “santa ira popular” del 36’, p. 179. These are dynamics evident across the vast fragmentations of European society in the 1930s and 1940s; embodied perhaps most visibly in the Märzgefallene, the term used by Nazi politicians after 1933, as huge numbers of Germans joined the party with opportunistic motivations and through a desire to secure their personal safety.

This was also the case for some priests who were able to ‘hide’ in plain sight, or gain the protection of otherwise anticlerical groupings. Such was the way in which the priest Jesús Arnal was able to survive in the hostile atmosphere of rural Catalonia. Having only taken up his new ministry in the small pueblo of Aguinaliu, to the north west of Lleida, just a year before the outbreak of the civil war, Arnal had not been able to prove his liberal credentials to the village’s inhabitants over years of pastoral care as other priests had done elsewhere.<sup>120</sup> A ‘strikingly modern’ priest, the thirty-one year old Arnal had nevertheless caused a commotion when he rode into his new parish on a motorbike and wearing worker’s overalls.<sup>121</sup> But on the night of the coup Arnal, one of the first in the village with a radio, heard the broadcasts that indicated an uprising had begun. Having seen tensions rise in his local area over the course of the previous year, Arnal immediately realised the gravity of the situation and the danger to his life. In the nearby town of Candanos, his old friend and FAI militant Timoteo Callén was president of the local committee. Arnal quickly rode to Candanos and sought shelter, but in the first days of the war the situation soon turned again; with Callén away from the town, radical FAI elements again tried to imprison Arnal. With Callén unable to guarantee the priest’s safety in the town, the committee president instead suggested that Arnal could join the infamous anarchist column of Buenaventura Durruti, whom Callén knew, but this was hardly a straightforward move. Durruti was the founder of the FAI and, according to contemporary observers, the arrival of his column in Lleida on 25 July 1936 resulted directly in the deaths of a priest and fourteen seminarians, and the burning of the city cathedral.<sup>122</sup>

Arnal was given shelter within the Durruti column, his safety certainly not guaranteed but a risk worth taking. Living alongside anarchist militiamen, Arnal developed an understanding of the war’s anticlerical violence far removed from those that dismissed it as irrational ‘godless’ destruction, acknowledging that priests were perceived as the ‘favourite instrument of capitalism in its struggle against the proletarian masses.’<sup>123</sup> He understood too that the ecclesiastical hierarchy and certain

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<sup>120</sup> Jesús Arnal, *Por qué fui secretario de Durruti*, (Andorra la Vieja: Ediciones Mirador del Pirineu, 1972), pp. 17-8

<sup>121</sup> Arnal, *Por qué fui secretario de Durruti*, pp. 18-9

<sup>122</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 243

<sup>123</sup> Jesús Arnal, *Yo fui secretario de Durruti. Memorias de un cura aragonés en las filas anarquistas*, (Zaragoza: Mira Editores, 1995), p. 19

influential figures within the Church could come to be seen as targets through their political statements or perceived alliance with the Restoration regime, but ‘never the widespread hostility to clergymen by the mere fact of their existence’.<sup>124</sup> It was this contextualised understanding of anticlericalism that in some ways explains how, in this extraordinary situation, Arnal and Durruti developed a level of mutual respect. It took some time before Arnal was revealed to many of his comrades to be a priest, indicating the inherent limitations of his safety within the largest of the anarchist militias. But, when his status as a priest was revealed to committee members, a number embraced Arnal, assuring him that he could count ‘on our friendship as before, and, to convince you, tonight we will celebrate!’<sup>125</sup> After the war Arnal would remark again of his relationship with the anarchist leader Durruti, ‘cemented in mutual respect for our ideas.’<sup>126</sup> Durruti had seemingly reciprocated that emergent comradeship by presenting Arnal with a package containing a beautifully bound Latin bible, a short time before he was killed on the Madrid front in November 1936.<sup>127</sup>

An almost identical situation occurred on the outskirts of Madrid, where it was discovered that one educational cadre in a JSU militia unit was a priest. It was clear that the priest had fled the anticlerical violence of his locality and had sought shelter ‘in plain sight.’ Another member of the militia group, Miguel Nuñez, remarked that this ‘discovery caused a certain commotion amongst the men’, but that ‘the priest’s own attitude helped him considerably.’<sup>128</sup> As soon as he was discovered, Nuñez recalled that the priest had displayed a willingness to discuss the matter ‘openly and frankly’ and his attitude that ‘history was on the side of the poor’ had encouraged other members of the JSU group to engage more positively with the discovery.<sup>129</sup> But much more than his ability to debate the theological implications of the Church’s alliance with the old regime, what endeared him most to his fellow militiamen was that he had been fighting rifle in hand against the enemy. For the priest, as with many disparate individuals in the fragmenting power structures of post-July 1936, actions spoke much louder than words as participation in a variety of symbolic acts offered

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<sup>124</sup> Arnal, *Yo fui secretario de Durruti*, p. 19

<sup>125</sup> Arnal, *Por qué fui secretario de Durruti*, pp. 86-7

<sup>126</sup> Arnal, *Por qué fui secretario de Durruti*, pp. 14-15

<sup>127</sup> Arnal, *Por qué fui secretario de Durruti*, p. 94

<sup>128</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, Miguel Nuñez González, A1 E1-E2 (51-59); Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 293

<sup>129</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, Miguel Nuñez González, A1 E1-E2 (51-59)

the opportunity to quickly invent a new identity. Another priest remarked of ‘the sympathy, the respect, the brotherly affection...with which anarcho-syndicalists, communists and socialists (genuine ones!) used to treat a priest who I knew, who, sometimes by scolding them familiarly, sometimes by teasing...had won their hearts.’<sup>130</sup> The criticism that the Church had confined itself to empty rhetoric rather than direct action was commonplace among many workers, and it was even shared by reformist priests: spurring on involvement in social initiatives and left wing politics even in the midst of anticlerical outbursts, one priest declared that the Church had to ‘confess its own guilt’ for having ‘ignored the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* in favour of scratching the ears of the wealthy...while people starved.’<sup>131</sup>

Those exclusivist and excluding power structures were challenged directly by diverse social constituencies who took advantage of radically expanded political opportunities made accessible by the July 1936 coup. In doing so, ordinary people across Spain directly confronted the huge influence that the powerful Catholic Church had held over their everyday lives. Anticlericalism became a central instrument in the popular imagination of a hoped-for *tabula rasa*, but although the Church was undoubtedly targeted as an institution in 1936, the violence directed against religious personnel was not necessarily indiscriminate, despite the efforts of Francoism and the institutional hierarchy of the Church to transform the meanings of this violence.<sup>132</sup> And in fact, while that violence was a heterogeneous, complex phenomenon, it was always in some ways a selective one: there was always a rationale.

Individual priests who had no history of conservative political militancy or who had not come into conflict with members of the local community were sometimes protected in the aftermath of the coup. They were aided or assisted by local townspeople, newly created local militia groups, village and neighbourhood committees, previously existing unions and political organisations, and still existent yet fragmented governmental authorities, each of which had different understandings

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<sup>130</sup> Semprún Gurrea, *A Catholic Looks at Spain*, p. 9. Semprún’s article also appeared in *Esprit*, 1 November 1936

<sup>131</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 15 September 1936; *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936

<sup>132</sup> See for instance España Ministerio de Justicia, *Causa General: La dominación roja en España*, passim, alongside a voluminous nature of martyrological works

of the post-coup environment.<sup>133</sup> This was a situation more precarious in urban areas, precisely because of a greater element of personal anonymity, combined with a political landscape often more chaotic than rural towns and villages.<sup>134</sup> Although Leocadio Lobo was able to survive the violence in Madrid, as the repeated attempts to arrest him had shown, if priests were apprehended by militia columns or by other groups to whom they were not personally known, they could be so easily and lethally reduced to a symbol of the institutional Church.

Whilst some elderly priests were left unharmed by virtue of their advanced years, or because of illness, the survival of many of the priests examined here can be directly linked to their dedication to intensive pastoral activity amongst Spain's working classes. One priest loyal to the Republic declared, in the aftermath of the most destructive months of the violence, that in this conflict between 'the mighty, the rich and... privileged of the world' and 'the poor, the humble and the needy', Jesus would have stood 'with the humble sinners and hungry crowds'.<sup>135</sup> His sentiments were echoed by another, who declared that he did 'not understand how some Catholics... can fire on the people.'<sup>136</sup> The efforts of such priests had encompassed an array of socially reforming initiatives, from providing food and shelter to the homeless and unemployed poor, establishing outreach centres and providing the opportunity for social events within a broadly spiritual environment, all the way to active militancy on behalf of socialist, social democratic and communist political options. In this, they were surviving not through twists of fate or divine intervention, but from conscious decision making that saw them become active participants in the post-coup Republic.

For those priests who were able to survive the anticlerical violence, coming to terms with this rapidly changing social and political environment was the fundamental focus of their early wartime experience: in doing so, some of these individuals interpreted the violence as a more powerful variant of longstanding, violent reactions against the repressive techniques enforced by the social and political elites of Restoration Spain. And they were able to do this readily precisely because this

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<sup>133</sup> In Madrid, the Catalan Catholic lawyer and UDC member Maurici Serrahima sheltered eleven capuchin monks in his own home, at considerable risk, Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 153

<sup>134</sup> For Madrid in particular, see Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 260-2

<sup>135</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 10 December 1936

<sup>136</sup> *El Pueblo Manchego*, 23 March 1937



understanding of the violence accorded with their pre-war perspective on the social and economic realities in Spain, as practically observed through their religious ministry. They based their experiences throughout July to December 1936, the most vicious months of the anticlerical storm, on an understanding of this violence both as an assault on the Church as a politicised institution, and in part ‘as a Christian-inspired bid to cleanse the Church of its perceived sins and wrongdoings’.<sup>137</sup> Without question the consequences of the coup and the anticlerical violence unleashed as a result in Republican territory remained harrowing and dislocating, but based on those cultural reference points, this was a Calvary to be experienced and endured, but nevertheless an experience that would not shake them from their hopes and goals. Some would attempt to remain hidden from view, to see out the war, but others became more determined than ever to continue their ministries and to actively participate in the struggle against the military coup.

Once the first months of the conflict passed, anticlerical violence substantially decreased as extrajudicial violence in Republican territory became increasingly controlled as part of the reconstruction of central Republican authority. Other groups also began to substitute the clergy as main targets, not least political prisoners and soldiers (as the events at Paracuellos in November 1936 would demonstrate). As the initial coup developed into a long civil war with an important international dimension, the war generated new logics of violence that were more related to its own intrinsic dynamics, namely the political and military control of territories and populations.<sup>138</sup> But that certainly did not mean priests were now safe. Throughout the war the Republic remained a conflictive and fraught environment for priests and Catholics and as this thesis will explore further, understanding, interpreting and acting within the landscape of the wartime Republic engendered political infighting and painful self-analysis, and challenged ideological coherence, just as it both constructed and destroyed hopes and dreams.

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<sup>137</sup> Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 177

<sup>138</sup> Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 389-91

## Chapter Two: Catholics in the Republican media, standing ‘side by side with the people’

*‘We (i.e. Spain, the Spain that thinks, works and fights) do not attack the faithful, whatever the nature of their faith. We respect above all honourable Catholics, children of the people.’<sup>1</sup>*

*El Mundo Obrero*, 21 September 1936

*‘Among those who call themselves Marxists there is a high spiritual life which is shown courageously in their moral elevation, in their sacrifice to the ideal, their magnificent solidarity, their Christian disregard for worldly goods ...their revolutionary dreaming and their anguished hope of a better humanity’.<sup>2</sup>*

José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull, *Crusade or Class War?* 1937

On 19 September 1936, the Madrid daily newspaper *La Libertad* carried a short article advertising ‘un folleto excepcional’ in the centre of a page of notices concerning the business of Madrid’s workers syndicates, trade union organisations and combat militias.<sup>3</sup> Containing ‘¡Tres discursos del presbítero García Morales!’ the pamphlet included speeches broadcast on Madrid radio during August and early September by the priest and social reformer Juan García Morales, frantically urging on the defence of the Republic against the military rebels. Over the first months of civil war, García Morales had also produced countless newspaper columns that appeared in the national press and in smaller political publications, appeared at political rallies and delivered lauded speeches, always working with and amongst the capital city’s press networks,

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<sup>1</sup> *El Mundo Obrero*, 21 August 1936

<sup>2</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *Crusade or Class War?*

<sup>3</sup> *La Libertad*, 19 September 1936. The advertisement was for the pamphlet *Texto íntegro de los tres discursos pronunciados ante los micrófonos del Ministerio de la Guerra, el día 21 de agosto; del Cuartel de los Regimientos de Ferrocarriles de Leganés, el día 6 de septiembre y del Partido Comunista el día 13 de septiembre de 1936, por el sacerdote don Juan García Morales*, (Madrid: Socorro Rojo Internacional, 1936)

labour syndicates and worker organisations.<sup>4</sup> With thousands of the pamphlets sold in Madrid alone, this was a mass market that had already proven its appetite for García Morales' speeches. Indeed, the first two editions of the advertised pamphlet had sold out so quickly that Socorro Rojo had immediately set about organising the rapid printing and distribution of a third edition, comprising 50,000 copies.<sup>5</sup>

In the 'war of words' that had rapidly emerged alongside the physical confrontations of the Spanish Civil War, pamphlets like this readily available and widely-circulated 'folleto excepcional' formed part of an increasingly numerous body of works produced by priests and lay Catholics in Republican-held territory. Alongside party newspapers, tracts, leaflets and the continued influence of the mainstream press, such publications were part of a much larger ideological confrontation rapidly evolving in the post-coup world of civil wartime Spain.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, in Republican-held territory, the bitter public battle against organised, politicised Catholicism that stood at the heart of many of those new political opportunities opened up by the coup ensured that, publicly at the very least, spaces for Catholics like García Morales often rapidly disintegrated. As the first chapter of this thesis indicated, new forms of political opportunity made accessible only by the coup, and the consequent fragmentation of power in territory which remained under nominal Republican authority, were supported by a wave of extrajudicial violence in which anticlericalism and iconoclasm played a central role.<sup>7</sup> Seventy-one per cent of the extrajudicial killing of clerics, priests, monks and nuns in Republican territory during the war occurred before the end of September 1936.<sup>8</sup> And, with much of this violence committed by members of trade union organisations and militia columns, sometimes in deeply iconoclastic, ritualised murders, the existence (and popularity) of a pamphlet containing speeches from a priest that 'aroused so much emotion in all Spanish

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<sup>4</sup> See his work for instance in *El Sol*, 20 August 1936, *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936; *España Evangelica: Revista Protestante*, 3 September 1936

<sup>5</sup> *La Libertad*, 19 September 1936

<sup>6</sup> Gerd-Rainer Horn, 'The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language: Foreigners' perceptions of social revolution, (Barcelona, 1936-1937)', *History Workshop Journal*, 29(1), 1990, pp. 44-9; George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, (London: Penguin, 1962), pp. 7-10; David Deacon, *British News Media and the Spanish Civil War*, (Chippenham: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 9

<sup>7</sup> See particularly Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*; Manuel Pérez Ledesma, 'Studies on Anticlericalism in Contemporary Spain', *International Review of Social History*, 46 (2001), pp. 227-55, and Maria Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, passim

<sup>8</sup> José Luis Ledesma, 'Delenda est ecclesia: de la violencia anticlerical y la guerra civil de 1936', Seminario de historia, UCM/UNED/Fundación José Ortega y Gasset, 25 June 2009, pp. 11-3; Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp. 763-4

people' appears, at first, difficult to situate within this environment.<sup>9</sup> Combined with this, in rebel-occupied Spain, the simultaneous, virulent rewriting of the military coup by those who supported it as a religious crusade ensured that heterogeneous understandings of the war's religious fabric quickly atrophied and disappeared from view.<sup>10</sup> This was a process that in many ways had begun before the war itself, growing exponentially as the Church secured its position at the heart of the new state being constructed in insurgent occupied territory.<sup>11</sup>

By the time García Morales spoke on Madrid radio in late August, urging on the defence of the Republic in what had now become a protracted conflict, the material and psychological necessities of modern warfare were already bearing down on the Republic with vicious immediacy. Shackled within months by the material realities of Non-Intervention, it was readily apparent that without the vast mobilisation of the population, the war against the military rebellion simply could not have been fought.<sup>12</sup> This was as true for radical revolutionary elements as much as those behind the reconstruction of parliamentary democracy – a disunited Republic would lose the war, which would inevitably mean losing the revolution, however understood.<sup>13</sup> There consequently was an urgent need for the wide-ranging mobilisation of the Republican population, including citizens on the home front and, increasingly, the reconstituted armed forces behind a cause that they willing to fight for or, at the very least, defend.<sup>14</sup> Appealing to multiform sectors of the Republican population, each with their own goals and future aspirations, in turn necessitated a vast propaganda war which would allow all such constituencies, many united only in their advocacy of progressive politics, to channel their energies toward the threat posed by the military rebellion and its supporters. That included the need to embrace and mobilise Catholics in Republican territory that had not identified with the rebel 'crusade.'

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<sup>9</sup> *La Libertad*, 19 September 1936

<sup>10</sup> España Ministerio de Justicia, *Causa General*, passim. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 4 May 1940; Enrique Plá y Deniel, *Las dos ciudades*; Ledesma, 'La "Causa General"', p. 207

<sup>11</sup> Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, pp. 53-66

<sup>12</sup> Mirta Núñez Díaz-Balart, *La Prensa in la zona de guerra Republicana durante la guerra civil española (1936-1939)*, (Madrid: La Torre, 1992) and Jesús Timoteo Álvarez (ed.), *Historia de los medios de comunicación en España; Periodismo, imagen y publicidad*, (Barcelona: Ariel, 1989)

<sup>13</sup> See for instance, 'El camino de la victoria' in PCE, *El Partido Comunista por la libertad y la independencia de España (Llamamientos y discursos)* (Valencia: Ediciones del PCE, 1937), p. 24

<sup>14</sup> James Matthews, *Reluctant Warriors*, pp. 63-7, 91-3; Reig Tapia, *La Cruzada de 1936*, p. 130

This chapter consequently seeks to explore the presence of this small number of priests and lay Catholics who operated in the ranks of the Republican media during the first year of the war in pursuit of that goal. The discursive repertoire deployed by those individuals as they made public their commitment to the fight against the rebels indicated a shared mental universe, informed by Catholicism and permeated by ideas that found increasingly common currency in the wartime Republic. This chapter illustrates how these priests (and other lay Catholics) became more determined than ever to continue their ministries and to actively participate in the struggle against the military coup, with the difficult experiences of the first months of the war – not least the anticlerical violence – serving only to confirm in their minds that they had a role to play in the Republic’s struggle. Participating and responding to a call to arms in their own ways, the war was about more than surviving an outpouring of anticlerical violence. And as the war continued, increasingly Republican political authorities would utilise, appropriate and reciprocate such ideas – and indeed their Catholic advocates – in order to present positively their vision of the Republic, at home and abroad.

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Amidst the disorientating and terrifying danger of revolutionary Madrid, on 21 August 1936 Juan García Morales made his first appearance on the city’s airwaves.<sup>15</sup> Broadcasting from the buildings of the Republic’s War Ministry, the priest furiously condemned the involvement of the Church hierarchy in the military uprising in the first of the three speeches that would be printed in the pamphlet advertised by *La Libertad*.<sup>16</sup> These were the same government buildings, on the city’s Paseo de la Castellana, from which Dolores Ibárruri and other communist orators had urged on the defence of the capital from the first hours of the war.<sup>17</sup> And though the buildings were occupied by the same revolutionary militia groups and members of leftist parties and unions that had converged on Madrid’s churches and the homes of religious personnel from those first hours of war and revolution, García Morales moved freely about the

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<sup>15</sup> Juan García Morales was the pseudonym of Hugo Moreno López. The priest’s personal file is stored at the Archivo Central de Curia de la Archidiócesis de Madrid (ACCAM), FP, Hugo Moreno López, XV, AM 12.1, indicated by González Gullón, *Leocadio Lobo*, p. 279

<sup>16</sup> *El Sol*, 20 August 1936; Juan García Morales, *Reproducciones dedicás respetuosamente a las personas amantes de la verdad*, (Mexico; Frente Popular Español, 1936)

<sup>17</sup> Paul Preston, *Comrades: Portraits from the Spanish Civil War*, (London: Harper, 2006), p. 287

Ministry.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, far from being another symbolic target in the rebuilding of a ‘new Spain’ the priest was, by all accounts, treated like ‘a hero’ by the militiamen occupying the Ministry.<sup>19</sup> The communist daily *Mundo Obrero* reported that following the conclusion of his broadcast on 21 August, he was ‘welcomed into the courtyard by a multitude of *milicianos* and soldiers,’ who ‘cheered and carried him triumphantly on their shoulders.’<sup>20</sup>

Given the still rife anticlerical atmosphere of Madrid, many other priests in the city had quickly taken to moving about the city carefully disguised and without attracting attention. But as the priest’s radio broadcasts from the War Ministry continued throughout the late summer of 1936, García Morales’ public profile quickly increased.<sup>21</sup> As the previous chapter indicated, only through understanding the realities of pre-civil war Spain can such wartime dynamics be understood. Analysing García Morales’s pre-war perspective on the social and economic realities in Spain, as practically observed through his religious ministry, provides telling insights into his wartime roles, and provides a necessary framework within which his work during the early months of the war be adequately understood. As this chapter illustrates, this is a pattern more widely observable amongst those priests who would, over the course of the war, take part in increasingly prominent media initiatives encouraging the defence of the Republic.

Fifty-three years old when the war broke out, García Morales had worked for a number of Madrid’s left republican newspapers and periodicals during the 1920s and, with the proclamation of the Republic, from 1931 his media output had dramatically increased.<sup>22</sup> In the new open, pluralist environment of the Republic, García Morales had been able to express vocal support for its progressive, reformist ambitions, writing regular columns for large-circulation newspapers including the *Heraldo de Madrid*

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<sup>18</sup> *Texto íntegro de los tres discursos...*

<sup>19</sup> *España Evangelica: Revista Protestante*, 3 September 1936

<sup>20</sup> *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936; *España Evangelica: Revista Protestante*, 3 September 1936

<sup>21</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 15 September 1936, 29 September 1936; *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936

<sup>22</sup> García Morales produced regular columns in both the *Heraldo de Madrid* and *La Libertad*, and as this chapter indicates also worked with or for other periodicals over the period 1931-9. See also José María Martínez, ‘Modernismo literario y modernismo religioso: encuentros y desencuentros en Rubén Darío’, *Cuadernos del Centro Interdisciplinario de Literatura Hispanoamericana*, 11, 2009, pp. 100-18 and Felix Sánchez Rebollo, *Periodismo y movimientos literarios contemporáneos españoles (1900-1939)*, (Madrid: Huerca y Fierro Editores, 1997), pp. 157-8

and *La Libertad*.<sup>23</sup> García Morales also made efforts to emphasise that this was a political decision based in a concern for humanity and because of – rather than in spite of – his religiosity. These were newspapers read by broad sectors of Madrid society and across the Republic so when, in May 1932, he used his column in the *Heraldo de Madrid* to appeal for widespread Catholic support for the Republic, he reached a significant audience.<sup>24</sup> Declaring ‘that the Church could live with all forms of government which, ratified by the people, are legitimate’, his veiled attack on the Church’s hostility to the Republic came on the back of much more obvious attacks against the ecclesiastical hierarchy: on a number of occasions he referred to the Spanish Church as a ‘disgrace,’ an institution dominated by ‘fat cats and aristocrats.’<sup>25</sup>

Concerned with how to live a religious life in a rapidly transforming Republican world, García Morales understood that the culturally reactionary worldview of Spain’s conservative patrician elite was sustained by an equally reactionary Church hierarchy. His condemnation of the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy throughout the years of the Second Republic was sustained and well recognised, embodied most fully and coherently in 1935 with the publication of a compilation of his articles and speeches. The message of the work – entitled *El Cristo Rojo* – was clear, asserting that the true role of Catholicism was to stand ‘side by side with the poor’ rather than to ‘celebrate the rich.’<sup>26</sup> Building upon an understanding of popular religion conceived of as belonging ‘to the people’ as against the ecclesiastical hierarchy and informed more by liturgy than by catechism this was in some ways a spirituality of the masses, markedly distinct from the ‘official’ Catholicism of the Spanish Church.<sup>27</sup> Possessing an enviable knowledge of progressive European Catholic thought, García Morales was convinced that Spanish Catholics remained far behind the social advances of progressive, modernising Catholicism, pointing out the stark contrast in the relationship between the Church in Spain and its flock with several other European countries, most notably Ireland.<sup>28</sup> Though the Spanish Church

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<sup>23</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 14 April 1931

<sup>24</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 27 May 1932

<sup>25</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 25 August 1931 and 22 October 1931

<sup>26</sup> García Morales, *El Cristo Rojo*, passim

<sup>27</sup> For this in thematic context, see Stephen Wilson, ‘Introduction’ in Stephen Wilson (ed.), *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-53

<sup>28</sup> García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*, p. 38

could continue to blame a ‘lack of piety’ alongside the time-honoured enemies of freemasonry and Judaism, it still refused to ‘confess its own guilt’ in the development of anticlericalism: in his eyes, attacks on the Church were simply evidence of its perpetuation of a deeply reactionary, insular order.<sup>29</sup>

This was a theme that García Morales had shown a cogent, critical awareness of for some time. As the 1917 appearances of the Virgin to three children at Fátima and Cova de Iria had quickly become the symbol of the Church’s opposition to Bolshevism across Europe – a beacon of hope in fearful times – García Morales was quick to demonstrate that process at home too: the Marian apparitions beginning in 1931 at Ezquioga (Guipúzcoa) revealed evocatively the intermingling of religion and politics that lay at the heart of right-wing politics in the Second Republic.<sup>30</sup> Explaining why ‘Catholics really do not need to resort to apparitions and miracles,’ García Morales offered the images and symbolism of an alternative political culture to that ‘monopolised by the right’.<sup>31</sup> It was material that the priest would draw widely upon again in the summer of 1936: his vision of an alternative future, a possible new society with a more open and plural culture, had seen the priest viciously condemn Gil Robles – the ‘main evil of the Republic’, a view only now confirmed with further immediacy. In work that was charged through with references to other Catholics who shared his own political ideology, García Morales offered instead a different vision of Spain from that offered by the conservative Catholic hierarchy and the ‘fat cats and aristocrats’ of the radicalising political right.<sup>32</sup> Fundamentally clear was that this new world still held a place for Catholicism.

It was this conceptualisation of Catholicism – and its abandonment by the Church – that gave García Morales no doubt that Christ would ‘have stood with the revolutionaries.’<sup>33</sup> This was an opinion consolidated in the aftermath of October 1934, reconfirmed during his proactive campaigning during the February elections of 1936

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<sup>29</sup> García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*, p. 86; *Heraldo de Madrid*, 22 October 1931

<sup>30</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 22 October 1931; Christian, *Visionaries*, p. 32

<sup>31</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 22 October 1931

<sup>32</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 7 October 1932, 24 January 1933, 28 November 1933 and 24 January 1934; García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*, pp. 38-40, 128, 174. Of particular note were the priests Luís López-Dóriga and Basilio Alvarez, the first of whom García Morales referred to as ‘perhaps the most prodigious talent of the Spanish Church at the dawn of the twentieth century’; see Tezanos Gandarillas, ‘El clero ante la República’, pp. 276-84

<sup>33</sup> García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*, pp. 19-20



and again now, in the summer of 1936.<sup>34</sup> So, with García Morales' radio broadcasts in the revolutionary summer of 1936 the culmination of work beginning long before – his sentiments the same and his understanding of Catholicism as belonging to 'the people' unchanged – it was clear that even the anticlerical violence occurring all around him could not alter a position consolidated over the experiences of those previous years. Although his understanding of Spain's social and political worlds had been radicalised and accelerated by the war itself, García Morales continued to view the war not through the narrow lens of revolutionary church burnings and the killing of priests, but through the much wider one of equalising change being shut down by an older, hierarchical order.

Importantly too, García Morales was not the only priest broadcasting across Madrid's airwaves in the first weeks and months of the conflict. Nor was he the only priest making public an understanding of the conflict framed in these terms. Across the city on 1 September 1936, the priest and Izquierda Republicana member Régulo Martínez Sánchez broadcast a speech in which he urged on the defence of the city and of the 'legally elected Republic', deploying biblical imagery to emphasise his position as a loyal Catholic priest standing in opposition to the military rebellion.<sup>35</sup> And like many other analyses of the war, Martínez Sánchez recognised that rebellion not as a religious 'crusade', but as a radical escalation of right wing attempts to destroy the progressive ambitions of the Republic and its supporters. He too built upon a body of work assembled long before the war and, with his broadcast drawing upon much of the same material he had used in the midst of the February 1936 elections, the priest declared that '[Cardinal] Segura and the right both speak of hell, where the real hell is one in which they govern.'<sup>36</sup> As with Juan García Morales, it was clear that Martínez Sánchez's strident criticisms of the Church's political allegiances with the radicalising right was already well-formed. Such critiques would only be expanded and emphasised further during wartime with the justification of the rebel war effort by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In 1933, the newspaper *Luz* had reported at length on a conference organised by the radical left-socialist Izquierda Radical Socialista, during which Martínez Sánchez had reinforced the message that the true role of Catholicism

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<sup>34</sup> *Heraldo de Madrid*, 18 February 1936 for García Morales' electoral campaign of February 1936

<sup>35</sup> *La Libertad*, 6 September 1936

<sup>36</sup> See for instance *Heraldo de Madrid*, 11 February 1936

was to stand side by side with the poor. The priest's comments had been supported by 'a communist, full of support for the priest, who explained that Jesus was a precursor to Lenin.'<sup>37</sup> The unnamed militant went on to declare to his comrades that 'this minister of religion' offered an example to all in the struggle for workers' rights and the social advance.<sup>38</sup> Martínez Sánchez built upon that message further in an article entitled 'religious policies and social advances' and throughout the years of the *bienio negro* he appeared at a large number of conferences condemning the alliance of the Church and political right, which was, in his eyes, an alliance with the oppressors against the oppressed.<sup>39</sup>

These themes were readily apparent too in the public declarations of the Madrid priest Leocadio Lobo who now too, in the summer months of 1936, saw the culmination of long-developing processes. His pastoral experience, his constant concern for families in need, and his contact with like-minded Catholics in Madrid, still the isolated centre of Republican political machinery, had shaped a strong perspective on stifling clericalism and the abandonment of poor workers across the country.<sup>40</sup> With Lobo's assiduous parish work well underway in the spring of 1936, he had noted how the capital's atmosphere was already tinged with violence. As the city's churches thronged with the faithful celebrating the Easter festival, growing ecclesiastical backing for pro-insurrectionary political movements – including José Antonio Primo de Rivera's radical fascist Falange – forced Lobo in May to refuse to 'continue with the preparation of young men for fulfilling their Easter duties, because each one of them carried a pistol in his pocket.'<sup>41</sup> Such concerns had rapidly become a reality and later, as already noted, Lobo would reflect on those experiences in a widely printed newspaper article, declaring that he did not know how the rebels could 'fire on the people.'<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Luz*, 10 June 1933

<sup>38</sup> *Luz*, 10 June 1933

<sup>39</sup> *La Libertad*, 3 May 1933, 12 December 1935, 26 December 1935 for his most prominent criticisms of church and political right before the war. See also AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, Régulo Martínez Sánchez, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173)

<sup>40</sup> González Gullón, 'Leocadio Lobo' pp. 275-6; Leocadio Lobo, *Primate and Priest*, (London: Press Department of the Spanish Embassy, 1937)

<sup>41</sup> Leocadio Lobo, *Open Letter to the Editor of The Times*, Barcelona, June 1938, London School of Economics Archives, Coll. Misc. 0091/38

<sup>42</sup> *El Pueblo Manchego*, 23 March 1937

Clear throughout the early wartime and earlier, extensive, peacetime work of priests including Juan García Morales, Régulo Martínez Sánchez and Leocadio Lobo is a complex understanding of Catholicism based unflinchingly in the difficult experiences of Spain's working classes. Living and working amongst social constituencies who increasingly saw the Church as an enemy, these priests offered ideas of social justice delivered through Catholic teaching that chimed with the experiences and goals of working class political organisations. Contextualising the work of this small number of priests and lay Catholics within these relationships and their translation into action across the landscape of the civil war allows us to work beyond the limited parameters of the theologically-centred perspectives that dominate much of the existing scholarly literature.<sup>43</sup> Not least amongst the limitations of such frameworks is a singular focus on engagements in a complex intellectual debate in which all sides sought to apply contrasting interpretations of Catholic theology to the war, giving the false impression that Catholics could only assimilate information within an insular Catholic context. Indeed, such a perspective is demonstrably proved false by the September 1936 pamphlet '¡Tres discursos del presbítero García Morales!', in which the priest was, through a speech aired to multiple audiences, able to criticise the Church's deployment of saintly apparitions as a political tool and subsequently provide an analytical commentary on the egalitarian dreams contained within the worker anthem *L'Internationale*, indicating a richly nuanced awareness of immediate political and social issues.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the efforts of these priests, amongst others, to articulate publicly their understanding of the war as a socio-political phenomenon – based on their own experiences and always through the lens of Catholicism – the historiographical focus has long been focused on theological complexities and the 'just war' debate. There is perhaps an inevitability here, given the speed with which the Church had deployed traditional Catholic principles in its justification of the rebel war effort. But as more

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<sup>43</sup> José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), pp. 145-56. Criticisms of the just war tradition as applied to modern conflicts emerged from various intellectual currents of Catholicism during the twentieth century – see for instance George Barry O'Toole, *War and Conscription at the Bar of Christian Morals*, (New York: Catholic Workers Press, 1941), Richard McSorley, *Kill? For Peace?* (New York: Corpus Books, 1970) and Patricia McNeal, *Harder Than War: Catholic Peacemaking in Twentieth Century America*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991)

<sup>44</sup> *Texto íntegro de los tres discursos...*

recent historiography demonstrates increasingly, and as this thesis indicates throughout, the experience of war remained much more complex, fraught and challenging than any formulaic doctrine, however intellectually coherent. Individual experiences, not only of the war itself but of the Republican project more widely, had a significant impact on how these complex theological conceptualisations were applied to real world events and the manner in which these discussions were constructed. As the historian K.T. Hoppen has pointed out of the interaction between religious and political identities, ‘religious life does not change merely in response to Episcopal command. Revolutions in outlook and behaviour, in practice and belief depend ultimately upon deeper shifts in the practices of a community and in the relationships within it.’<sup>45</sup>

And so, in wartime, the shared defence of the Republican project from these socially-aware priests became increasingly vocal and often radicalised – they now faced not just a political, ideological assault on their values but a direct military threat to its survival. It was this perspective that encouraged García Morales to draw upon the lyrics of *L’Internationale* in a public speech before an audience of Madrid’s communist militias in September 1936, arguing evocatively that the continued oppression of workers was the result of the association of the Church with the forces of the political right, and that the civil war represented a last defence against such exploitative socioeconomic conditions.<sup>46</sup> Appealing to the secular politics of the assembled workers and political cadres, García Morales castigated the Church for having ignored the message of the papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, choosing to side with Spain’s wealthy classes whilst the poor starved.<sup>47</sup> Evoking the symbolic bonds of a popular war effort fought in the name of social justice, his was a performance that, by all accounts, was very warmly received.<sup>48</sup> The value of the priest’s speeches were instantly recognised, particularly amongst those Catholic priests and laity who understood that anticlericalism was not simply an assault on religion but a challenge to organised, political Catholicism. García Morales was invited to repeat the speech in a radio programme broadcast

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<sup>45</sup> K. T. Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) p. 211

<sup>46</sup> *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936

<sup>47</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 15 September 1936; *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936

<sup>48</sup> *El Mundo Obrero*, 7 September 1936

across the capital.<sup>49</sup> And, in continuing to write in newspapers with still-large circulations, including *La Libertad*, the priest was gaining an audience not only among radicalised workers, but also – and importantly – providing continuities that could help pre-existing audiences of liberal Catholic groups and middling constituencies – many of whom may have read his columns in Spain’s daily newspapers – find solace and comfort in a familiar voice during wartime.

Accessing these audiences was a task made immeasurably more difficult but the exigencies of wartime. Republican state fragmentation had done more than just create new political opportunities, opening up, as illustrated in the previous chapter, vast new cultural and intellectual possibilities. With the Republic’s monopoly on legal violence dislocated, drastic changes in the structure of political opportunities had provoked an atomisation of power across the country, radically altering Republican society.<sup>50</sup> An avalanche of propaganda from party newspapers, tracts, leaflets and pamphlets flooded Republican society, made even more visible by the flyers, pamphlets and posters of the revolutionary streets. Recording over 1376 wartime magazines published in the Republic, Serge Salaün explains that in this rapidly and radically altering environment many failed to reach double figures in terms of editions, but even so, they were an index of the opening up of a new cultural horizon.<sup>51</sup> But in so many ways this revolutionary society involved the destruction of the old as much as the construction of the new and, with anticlerical violence having quickly emerged as an instrument with which to configure these new social structures, propaganda discourses that gave meaning to anticlerical actions and aims formed a constitutive part of the radicalised atmosphere.<sup>52</sup> The anarchist Juan García Oliver spoke of ‘endless propaganda against religion’, fuelling the revolutionary imagination and at the same time giving birth to an environment that was incredibly fraught for those social constituencies existing outside the parameters of this new world.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Texto íntegro de los tres discursos...*

<sup>50</sup> Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, p. 170, 195-7. As Casanova points out more widely, many of these workers were not mobilised before the war within trade union organisations and worker movements.

<sup>51</sup> Serge Salaün, *La Poesía de la guerra de España*, (Madrid: Castalia, 1985), p. 274

<sup>52</sup> *Solidaridad Obrera*, 27 July 1936, 15 August 1936, 18 August 1936

<sup>53</sup> Juan García Oliver, *El eco de los pasos* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1978), p. 347. As Maria Thomas reminds us, that while the overall number of clerical victims of Republican home front violence was dwarfed by other social groups, what was quite singular was the sustainedly ferocious determination to remove all traces of Catholic cultural influence, Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, p. 249

This frightening new world had already been rendered further disorientating as pre-existing organisations and their multitude associational networks collapsed. As one example amongst many, on 20 July 1936 the Madrid offices of the conservative daily *ABC* had been assaulted and appropriated by the city's revolutionary workers. Many of its employees fled to insurgent-held Seville and just three days later had the newspaper back up and running as a semi-official organ of insurgent propaganda.<sup>54</sup> Until the end of the war, two versions of *ABC* would exist: a politically conservative newspaper run from rebel-held Seville and a loyalist daily in Madrid.<sup>55</sup> It was clear that although *ABC* survived – albeit in new forms dictated by the parameters of war – and like other mainstream and political media would continue to act as a point of cultural contact between different sectors of the Republic, dramatic changes forged in the processes of 18 July had refocused attentions.<sup>56</sup>

In Madrid alone, the number of existing newspaper titles being printed fell dramatically and for many smaller periodicals and journals the war meant their end. It was these publications that had often offered a medium for heterogeneous Catholic thought to emerge and the space in which to develop audience networks. Indeed the war also brought with it the end of the experimental *Cruz y Raya*, directed by the poet José Bergamín. Perhaps the most famous of the progressive Catholic periodicals published in Spain, *Cruz y Raya* had dared to criticise the ecclesiastical hierarchy throughout its three-year lifespan.<sup>57</sup> This was not only through its challenge to theological orthodoxy in its insistence that Catholicism was just one 'medium' open to the incorporation of multiple literary and philosophical ideas, but also in direct assaults on the Spanish Church from Catholic and non-Catholic contributors alike.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Kessel Schwartz, 'Culture and the Spanish Civil War – A Fascist View: 1936-1939', *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 7(4), 1965, p. 558. The Seville version continued where the pre-war *ABC* left off, attacking the ideological basis of the Republic and the political left wherever it could.

<sup>55</sup> Schwartz, 'Culture and the Spanish Civil War', p. 558

<sup>56</sup> Whilst technological developments were beginning to place radio and photography at the heart of the media's reporting of war, newspapers and the wider print media in the form of advertisements, leaflets pamphlets and posters still remained the most accessible and the most populous medium for the battle to represent the war.

<sup>57</sup> Helen Wing, *The Dialectics of Faith in the Poetry of José Bergamín*, (London: W.S. Maney, 1995), p. 6

<sup>58</sup> Alonso García, *Estudio sobre la revista 'Cruz y Raya'*, p. 20. Whilst many of its leaders and contributors were practising, staunchly Catholic individuals, this was not a requirement of its contributors. See especially *Cruz y Raya* editions 20 (November 1934), 21 (December 1934) and 25 (April 1935) for articles challenging the ecclesiastical hierarchy from Catholic and non-Catholic contributors.

With the closing down of *Cruz y Raya*'s publication (amongst countless others) and the vast, revolutionary reshaping of the Republican media world, peacetime networks and communicative channels established between contributing authors were never far from disintegration. For priests and lay Catholics to continue to make public their commitment to the Republican project was often at great risk, reliant frequently on personal friendships and – not without considerable courage – continued association with many of the political organisations (and their supportive social constituencies) now heavily engaged in revolutionary, often anticlerical, violence. Whilst some public figures, like Bergamín, could put their trust in organisations such as the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas, or Martínez Sánchez, able to trust the associational networks of the Izquierda Republicana for safety and assistance, others had to take more risks or, in many cases, withdraw from public life.<sup>59</sup>

These very real and immediate fears were no less relevant to those audiences of liberal, progressive Catholics who had engaged with the work of García Morales or Martínez Sánchez, or read publications such as *Cruz y Raya* before the war. Thus whilst these priests and lay Catholics continued to work publicly (and some new individuals emerged), the sheer complexity of understanding the reception of their wartime work is further complicated by the often acute scarcity of empirical material available. As countless numbers of ordinary men and women went into hiding in their homes or with friends, others fled towns and villages fearful of their safety, and others simply refocused their daily lives, attempts to examine reception must be explored through an analytical perspective and through plausible interpretative possibilities generated as these ideas and discourses emerged and were disseminated. Thus, what remains fundamental to our understanding is not reception in itself, but the conditions in which that reception was given meaning. As the two epigraphs at the beginning of this chapter indicate, priests and secular media outlets reciprocated discourses which, in both religious and political terms, could explain the war as a challenge to

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<sup>59</sup> Such withdrawals from public life were commonplace and often traumatic, dislocating processes, the impact of which long outlasted such lived experiences. Such was the impact on the priest Josep Maria Llorens i Ventura who, working under the pseudonym Joan Comas, had played an active and visible public role in Republican social and political life before the war. The intellectual and psychological impact of the war permeates his *L'Esglesia contra la República espanyola*, (Toulouse: Impr. Régionale, 1961), which the priest did not publish for almost twenty-five years after the outbreak of war.

progressive change, democracy, equality and workers' rights by an unfair and repressive system.

In the broadcasts and newspaper columns of both Juan García Morales and Régulo Martínez Sánchez after July 1936, the delegitimation of the coup and the now clearly-apparent backing of the Church for that coup was conducted through similar discursive structures that spoke of the two priests' shared goals and hopes for the future. In the first instance, their use of religious symbolism to explain and understand the civil war built upon pre-existing narratives that, in making their understanding of Catholic thought applicable to the class conflicts and culture wars of 1930s, had been deployed long before the war.<sup>60</sup> This was a symbolic bond mediating the message, engaging the audience and fostering an environment in which such ideas could be interpreted, understood and acted upon. Those languages formed the basis of crucial communicative discourses between the press, the government and its citizens that remained vital to the Republic's ability to fight the war. In part too because they wanted to convince 'non-believers' and in part because they recognised that such arguments were more acceptable in the new post-coup political order (just as they had been able to adapt from 1931), they cast their public arguments for their convictions in language that amalgamated biblical and socialist themes.<sup>61</sup> Such public statements indicated that these individuals had identified commonalities between their own understandings of the war and those of an array of progressive, even sometimes radical, political organisations. Principally, as this chapter shows, they identified the values of the Gospel with the values not only of the pre-war Republic, but so too with many of the progressive ideas being espoused across the landscape of the wartime Republic.

If the common currency of the Republican project was a shared interest in progressive society and human welfare, in the broadest terms, then these ideas offered a religious 'access-point' into that project, even in the midst of civil war. At the forefront of those shared ideals stood a conceptualisation of Jesus as the 'first socialist', standing side by side with the poorest members of society.<sup>62</sup> The idea of

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<sup>60</sup> See for instance the similarities in the content of *Texto integro de los tres discursos...* and García Morales, *El Cristo Rojo*

<sup>61</sup> This theme is also rehearsed conceptually in Greenwald, *Religious Convictions*, p. 44

<sup>62</sup> Whilst the shared mental universe of these Catholic figures is discussed here throughout, the genesis



Jesus as the first socialist would increase in prevalence, based on a reading of the New Testament as a revolutionary platform and Jesus as a hero, as the revolutionary Christ – perhaps even a leader of the proletarian masses of biblical Galilee.<sup>63</sup> It figured in some more mainstream Republican propaganda efforts and also importantly in the self-interpretation of these priests and lay Catholics who utilised such a narrative, perceiving themselves as apostles of this Christ figure. These ideas and metaphors were accessible and acceptable to a wide Republican audience – in part because they did not involve practical choices being weighed in terms many of those constituencies had rejected so visibly. That rejection had long-standing roots, conditioned by the Restoration system, and its free expression from 18 July 1936 had, quite unsurprisingly, led directly to anticlerical violence.

Many of these priests added a public expression to their understandings of the summer's anticlerical violence, emphasising the root cause as the political belligerency of the Church in newspaper articles, pamphlets and public statements. On 13 September 1936, the newspaper *El Socialista* had carried a report from an anonymous priest 'far from the official line followed by the Church' who, given the conduct of the 'crusade' had little doubt as to why the people of Spain 'refuse to see us [the church] as legitimate representatives of Christ.'<sup>64</sup> Understandings of the extrajudicial violence through such 'abandonment' and as a 'settling of scores' provide access to the normative beliefs of these often progressive individuals – indicating further that interpretations of this violence were grounded not only in the immediate endurances of wartime, but in personal experiences ascertained and understood long before the war.

In framing the war in this manner, such priests sought to appropriate religious ideas for their own cause and directly used these discourses as a subversion of the Francoist rhetoric of crusade. For commentators like García Morales and Martínez

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of these ideas as a 'symbolic bond', reciprocated publicly by left-wing political figures, was evident before the war too, see for instance *La Luz*, 10 June 1933

<sup>63</sup> José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, p. 229; it was a theme deployed by both Gallegos Rocafull and Leocadio Lobo at their speeches in Brussels in November 1936, and frequently before and during the war by Juan García Morales. This theme would also permeate the mental universe of these Catholic priests in exile long after the war, with Joan Comas' *L'Esglesia contra la República espanyola* dedicated to 'Jesus, divine worker of Nazareth.'

<sup>64</sup> *El Socialista*, 13 September 1936

Sánchez, the involvement of priests in the uprising, particularly in Carlist Navarre, was ‘proof of their spiritual corruption...[they] were not able to fight with the spiritual weapons [of Christ]’ that they had now portrayed as the tools of the carpenter.<sup>65</sup> In this working of Catholic teaching there was a clear and consistent focus on ‘Christ the worker,’ standing in stark contrast to the rebel portrayal of ‘Christ the King’. The message was clear: Jesus was represented as sharing the hardships and human condition of Spain’s workers and, standing loyal to the Republic – as a defender of those people – was emphasised as the necessary corollary to the Catholic faith.<sup>66</sup>

Following García Morales’ lead, on 20 September 1936 Leocadio Lobo broadcast on Madrid radio.<sup>67</sup> Emphasising that he was not a communist, he did however stress that he wished to communicate ‘that all of their [the PCE’s] legitimate and just aspirations were Christian ones.’<sup>68</sup> Beginning his broadcast by declaring himself instead to be a ‘son of the people, before whom I am nothing,’ Lobo declared that he loved ‘the people with all of [his] heart,’ professing the Catholic faith to be universal, not subject to ‘caste or class.’<sup>69</sup> Lobo noted that he was still in contact with the ecclesiastical authorities and in possession of all relevant ecclesiastical authorisations, pre-empting rebel propaganda seeking throughout the war to discredit priests as having been suspended from their ministries.<sup>70</sup> At this point Lobo did not refer to the anticlerical violence of the Republican zone – although he would, in detail, as the war continued – but instead affirmed that regardless of immediate events, as a Catholic he was obligated to remain faithful to the legitimately constituted government of Spain.<sup>71</sup> Even regardless of the statements issued throughout the summer of 1936 by leading members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Lobo made it clear that Catholicism did not entail loyalty to the old order rallied against the

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<sup>65</sup> *Controversy on Spain*, p. 30

<sup>66</sup> This is an idea also repeatedly used by the Catalan poet, volunteer soldier and Catholic Joan Sales, permeating his *Uncertain Glory* and embedded frequently in discussions with his fellow poet Màrius Torres, correspondence between which is available at <http://www.lletres.net/sales/cmt/>. See for instance letters dated 2 February 1937 and 29 April 1937

<sup>67</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 22 September 1936. Even the conservative daily *ABC* had, before the war, described Lobo as an ‘eloquent orator’ after his appearance at a public event, *ABC*, 12 June 1921

<sup>68</sup> *El Socialista de Madrid*, 20 September 1936; *ABC* (Madrid), 22 September 1936; *El Cantábrico*, 24 September 1936

<sup>69</sup> The speech also appeared in partially reprinted form in works produced by the Republican embassy in London, such as the pamphlet *Catholics and the Civil War in Spain*, (London: The National Council of Labour, Transport House, 1936), pp. 8–9

<sup>70</sup> *Catholics and the Civil War in Spain*, p. 8. This is explored in detail in chapter three of this thesis.

<sup>71</sup> *El Socialista de Madrid*, 20 September 1936

Republic. He explained that the role of the Catholic community in public life was not to ensure the imposition of sectarian doctrines but to act on ‘its moral convictions’, to share its ‘experience in serving the poor and vulnerable’, and to participate actively in the ‘dialogue over our nation’s future.’<sup>72</sup>

Replicating the clear emphasis of García Morales and Martínez Sánchez on the nature of the civil war as a class conflict, with its visible distinction between the ‘wealthy’ and the ‘starving’, Lobo deployed an understanding of citizenship intrinsically linking his Catholic faith with the goals and ideals of the Republic. Unlike much of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Lobo used his position as a representative of the Church – and his ability as a skilled orator – to proclaim, in sermons to his inner-city flock and now more extensively across the capital’s radio waves, that his deeply religious oath placed him side by side with Spain’s masses and, by extension the Republic as the government of the people, even before its existence as a legitimate political power.<sup>73</sup> Just as García Morales was also doing, Lobo deployed the flexible ‘symbolic bond’ of the ‘people’ into his writing and speeches, seamlessly linking discourses of *el pueblo de Dios* and *el pueblo español*. Crucially for Lobo, they were the same as he combined biblical references and Church teaching with the Republic’s long standing propaganda efforts to emphasise its existence as a nation created by and for its citizenry. The potential spaces available for Catholics who supported the Republic in this manner were made clear by the Catholic daily *El Pueblo Manchego* – under moderate socialist control during wartime – as it printed a series of Lobo’s speeches.<sup>74</sup> In one article, entitled ‘Confession of Father Leocadio Lobo, Catholic priest and son of the people [pueblo],’ Lobo declared – and not for the first time – that he did ‘not understand how some Catholics have been able to join this uprising.’<sup>75</sup>

Lobo’s clear and repeated emphasis on the ‘people’ – the laity as the crucial building block in the Church and too, in the Republican nation – was part of a discursive strategy built upon a number of key symbolic bonds, and, as this thesis

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<sup>72</sup> *Catholics and the Civil War in Spain*, pp. 6-9

<sup>73</sup> *El Socialista de Madrid*, 20 September 1936; *El Pueblo Manchego*, 23 March 1937

<sup>74</sup> *El Pueblo Manchego*, 23 March 1937; for the newspaper, see Isidro Sánchez Sánchez, *La prensa en Castilla-La Mancha: características y estructura (1811-1939)*, (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1991), p. 37

<sup>75</sup> *El Pueblo Manchego*, 23 March 1937

indicates, widely used by other Catholic priests working in the wartime Republic.<sup>76</sup> Above all, the primacy of ‘the people’ was a supreme principle guiding not only radical political alternatives, but some Catholics too. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, Régulo Martínez Sánchez confirmed too that he had taken ‘the side of the pueblo [del lado del pueblo].’<sup>77</sup> Similarly, in an article detailing ‘the reasons for a Catholic attitude’ printed in *La Vanguardia*, the Andalusian priest José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull utilised discursive structures and symbols that had long been established in currents of working class anticlericalism in Spain, but he combined them with religious metaphors and biblical references.<sup>78</sup> Portraying the Church as the psychological hand of a corrupt *ancien régime*, Gallegos Rocafull drew his readers to the biblical story of the Pharisees. He asked his readers that if Christ had been alive in Spain in 1936, in this war ‘between the rich and privileged of the world and the poor and needy,’ would he have stood with the Sadducees and the powerful Pharisees, or ‘with the lowly sinners and hungry crowds?’<sup>79</sup> That symbolic bond between civic and religious discourse was given further emphasis with the reprinting of the article in the Jaén daily *La Mañana*. In this version the article’s headline was extended to read ‘Why I am with the people: reasons for a Catholic attitude,’ a telling addition that further worked to confirm the laity as a fundamental bloc in Republican survival.<sup>80</sup>

These articles sought to appeal to Catholics as members of a shared religious community, and, at the same time, presented discursive themes which functioned crucially to identify those Catholic constituencies intrinsically with the civic Republican community.<sup>81</sup> Rejecting the association between the political right and their faith, a small number of these priests led a developing campaign within the Republican media to emphasise what they saw as facets of a compatible religious identity within the notion of civic Republican identity. The process of their thought

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<sup>76</sup> This would continue throughout the war too; see chapter five of this thesis

<sup>77</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, Régulo Martínez Sánchez, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173)

<sup>78</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 10 December 1936

<sup>79</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 10 December 1936

<sup>80</sup> *La Mañana*, 11 December 1936

<sup>81</sup> This idea of fighting ‘for the people’ also apparent in a statement from the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas, 31 July 1936 that appeared, amongst others, in *El Sol* on 31 July 1936. The statement, signed jointly by the Catholic poet Bergamín, highlighted that the rising indicated through its ‘militarism, clericalism, and aristocratic cast attitudes,’ how old forms of conservatism had gained a new impetus by joining forces with ‘fascism’. At the end over fifty signatories of various political persuasions declared their ‘full and active identification with the people,’ who was ‘gloriously fighting side by side with the Popular Front government.’

was clear: regardless of the secularising nature of the Republican political project, Jesus would have chosen the ‘hungry crowds’ which, given the social and cultural exploitation suffered by Spain’s ‘crowds’ at the hands of the country’s conservative patrician elites, clearly associated Jesus and his Catholic flock with the cause of the Republic.<sup>82</sup>

Though this discursive strategy was built upon publicly, and accelerated in scale and scope during wartime, it too built upon ideas and strategies deployed more widely by Catholics who had long identified their concerns over the entrenchment of Catholicism within the radicalising political-religious nexus of the right. In this, their concerns echoed the comments of Matías Usero Torrente, the intellectual Galician priest and social reformer, whose 1934 book had reminded readers of a popular Catholicism far removed from that espoused by the Church; a community established by ‘the first Christians’ that was ‘communist, free, a little anarchist (sic) and federal.’<sup>83</sup> It was a revelation that Usero Torrente believed could strike a chord with modern revolutionary movements – they were, in Usero Torrente’s words, the ‘revolutionary cries of the oppressed masses’, and it was through this flexible, shared heritage that it was hoped a wide variety of actors could mobilise behind the common goal of ‘the people’ against the rebellion.<sup>84</sup>

The flexible and amorphous nature of discourses concerned with a commonly-shared ‘people’s war’ also allowed room for *Mundo Obrero* to declare in August 1936 that ‘we (i.e. Spain, the Spain that thinks, works and fights) do not attack the faithful, whatever the nature of their faith. We respect above all honourable Catholics, children of the people.’<sup>85</sup> As one Valencian communist explained to his comrades, this flexible symbolic repertoire would attract supporters to the cause regardless of their background and political affiliation.<sup>86</sup> This was a process that would again develop further later, over the course of the Second World War, as, all across Europe, Catholics and communists (and the political left more widely) were able to reconcile seemingly disparate positions in the shared fight against Nazism. The earlier

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<sup>82</sup> This again echoes García Morales’ claim that ‘Christ would have stood with the revolutionaries’; García Morales, *El Cristo rojo*, p. 20

<sup>83</sup> Matías Usero Torrente, *La iglesia y su política*, (Buenos Aires: IMAN, 1934) pp. 42-3

<sup>84</sup> Usero, *La iglesia*, p. 43

<sup>85</sup> *El Mundo Obrero*, 21 August 1936

<sup>86</sup> Núñez Seixas, ‘Nations in Arms against the Invader’, p. 48

antecedents of those processes would, in Spain, come to form the groundwork for mobilising efforts throughout the civil war. Part of an open door (*'mano tendida'*) policy extended towards Catholics in a bid to foster dialogue and a united front against fascism, these efforts would see the unified Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas (JSU) executive under Santiago Carrillo work towards a prospective alliance with the Republic's loyal Catholics, urging, all 'young believers' who wished to defend the Republic to collaborate with the JSU in its efforts.<sup>87</sup>

Quickly following *Mundo Obrero's* August declaration, the anarchist Federica Montseny declared too that 'now we are all neither socialists, nor anarchists, nor communists or republicans, we are all antifascists.'<sup>88</sup> Although Montseny's claim that 'we are all antifascists' was decidedly at odds with CNT political actions during 1936, her decision to also later attend a conference with the Catholic priest Regúlo Martínez Sánchez in Madrid indicated that there was at least some room for mutual action. If Montseny's individual efforts, inevitably also driven by pragmatic incentives in wartime, did not necessarily reflect the libertarian movement in general terms, it was clear from an increasing variety of cultural productions that amongst many other left-wing organisations there was a perceived place for Catholicism (distinguished from the Church) in any future Spain. Instructive of the reach of such a 'symbolic bond' is the wartime poetry of Rafael Alberti, who was actively involved in the defence of Madrid in the 1936–37 period, serving in the Aviation section of the army.<sup>89</sup> As secretary of the government-sponsored Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas para la Defensa de la Cultura, editor of the journal *El Mono Azul* and close associate of José Bergamín, Alberti was also one of the central figures in the Republic's attempts to use art and literature to mobilise support for the regime among the Spanish population. And, similarly to the symbolism deployed by García Morales and Lobo – and indeed *Cruz y Raya*, to which he had contributed – Alberti hinted at a representation of Catholicism distinguishing between the essence of Christianity, and the corrupt

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<sup>87</sup> *Ahora*, 19 May 1937 and 20 May 1937

<sup>88</sup> Montseny's speech on 31 August 1936 was reprinted in *Solidaridad Obrera*, 2 September 1936

<sup>89</sup> James Heaney, 'Posibilidades creadoras': Religion, Revolution and the Transformational Self in the Plays of Rafael Alberti, 1931–39', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain, Portugal and Latin America*, 91(4), 2014, pp. 549-573

culture and practices of the Catholic Church, suggesting a place in the Republic for ‘honourable Catholics’.<sup>90</sup>

Appeals to ‘honourable Catholics’ within the heterogeneous and multi-faceted campaigns through which Republican mobilisation was maintained naturally also focused on the military. This was part of a long process of state-(re)building always conducted within the exceptional conditions generated by the war itself and, as soldiers – whether professional officers, volunteers or, increasingly, conscripts – rapidly became the vanguard of any future Republic, the vast mobilisation of the population behind a cause it was willing to fight for, or defend against, remained vital. So with the seemingly inherent links between soldiering and ideas of ‘heroism’ in war well-recognised, keen attention came to be paid to devoutly Catholic military figures in this public identification and recognition of ‘honourable Catholics.’ Late in the winter of 1936, as the capital came under increasing siege, the influential Soviet journalist Mijaíl Koltsov would laud General Vicente Rojo, a devout Catholic, in an article that appeared in *La Libertad*, with Koltsov noting in his diary in December 1936 that as ‘new books will be written’ about the struggle for freedom, they ‘will be written about Vicente Rojo.’<sup>91</sup>

Koltsov’s commitment to emphasising the importance of Catholic soldiers was emblematic of the extent to which the PCE was engaged on a programme of promoting unity behind the war effort. As Helen Graham makes clear, the war massively accelerated a process whereby the PCE (and, indeed the PSOE, building upon its own pre-war growth) was increasingly becoming a ‘conduit through which previously unorganised sectors of the population began to engage in the public sphere, and thus through which a new national and political fabric was being made.’<sup>92</sup> For the PCE, this process – tied to *mano tendida* efforts but always set against deep-rooted antimilitarism and anticlericalism, now exacerbated post-July 1936 – always retained a focus on Catholicism, whether in its military mobilisation strategies or in home front

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<sup>90</sup> Heaney, ‘Posibilidades creadoras’, pp. 556-7, 568-9

<sup>91</sup> Mijaíl Koltsov, *Diario de la guerra de España*, (Barcelona, Editorial Planeta, 2009), p. 346: diary entry of 20 December 1936. Koltsov knew Rojo personally, and wrote about him on more than one occasion, Paul Preston, *We Saw Spain Die, Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War*, (London: Constable, 2009), p. 211

<sup>92</sup> Helen Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts: Demythologizing the End of the Spanish Republic’, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 89 (7-8), 2012, p. 260

campaigns. *Milicia Popular*, the *Diario del Quinto Regimiento*, was clear in demonstrating that commitment from as early as September 1936. Publishing excerpts from a radio broadcast by the Catholic politician Ossorio y Gallardo, *Milicia Popular* explored what it meant for Catholics to fight in defence of the Republic, pointing out to soldiers that the speech was ‘full of clear concepts and demonstrations of the unreason, cruelty and vileness of [the Republic’s] enemies,’ reinforced by the ‘significance of being spoken by a true Catholic, repugnant to the corrupt Church.’<sup>93</sup> And just a week later, the publication emphasised to soldiers that ‘fervent Catholics’ remained with the Republic in the fight for freedom and democracy, their ‘sincere Catholicism’ ‘perfectly compatible’ with the struggle for the Republic.<sup>94</sup>

Clear here is the extent to which the PCE sought from the early months of the war to offer a safe haven and stability for Catholics within the military and particularly its career officers, whose professional formation had come from the military academies of monarchist Spain, but whose world had been ripped apart by the military coup.<sup>95</sup> Just as the JSU urged all young believers on the home front to unite in the struggle, so too the PCE afforded Catholic officers – many of whom were often socially conservative but looking to locate themselves in an environment seemingly hostile on all sides – this opportunity, deliberately turning itself into the incarnation of war and victory. Officers such as the infantry captain Miguel Gallo Martínez quickly took advantage. Having earlier been imprisoned for his involvement in the rebellion of Jaca in December 1930, Gallo Martínez joined the PCE with the outbreak of war – in response to the military coup.<sup>96</sup> A practising Catholic, Gallo Martínez spent the first months of the war acting as a liaison between loyal military units and militia columns until he was wounded in fighting around Somosierra, to the north of Madrid. Returning to the capital, Gallo Martínez would, for the rest of the war, lead Fifth Regiment units and then receive a number of promotions within the command structure of the Popular Army.<sup>97</sup> And if soldiers like Gallo Martínez joined the PCE

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<sup>93</sup> *Milicia Popular*, 8 September 1936

<sup>94</sup> *Milicia Popular*, 13 September 1936

<sup>95</sup> Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts’, pp. 261-2. For the appeal of the wartime PCE to a mass audience, Fernando Claudín, *The Communist Movement. From Comintern to Cominform* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 230-1

<sup>96</sup> *El Castellano*, 3 January 1931

<sup>97</sup> Cristóbal Zaragoza, *Ejército Popular y militares de la República (1936-1939)*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1983), p. 25, 58. Gallo Martínez was promoted again in November 1937, *El Luchador*, 11 November 1937



for those reasons then, it was largely because the party seemed best placed to achieve self-protection and self-advancement.

This opportunism within what remained, more widely, a largely clientelist political environment, indicates vitally that the stability offered by the PCE did not turn Catholic army officers into ‘believing’ communists, and it certainly did not encompass them all, just as Catholic priests working in the Republican media could opportunistically collaborate with PCE-affiliated journalists and organisations without being ideological communists. And as priests such as Martínez Sánchez and Lobo could make a point of refusing to subscribe to communism, so too vehement anti-communist discourses emerged within the Republican army from a number of its Catholic soldiers at all levels.<sup>98</sup> This was true not least of the tough-talking artillery officer Joaquín Pérez Salas; with a reputation gained amongst his men for extraordinary courage and leadership in battle as much as for his diet of seemingly nothing other than strong coffee and aspirin, Pérez Salas remained visibly and vocally anti-communist for the duration of the war, declaring the need to win the civil war ‘despite the commissars.’<sup>99</sup> Far from being a cadre of the radical left, Pérez Salas supported – and fought for – the Republic because he perceived the Republic as offering a hopeful future far removed from the fixed social hierarchies demanded by the insurgency and its supporters.<sup>100</sup> He too had fought for this open future long before the outbreak of war in July 1936: arrested and imprisoned for his part in the military uprising against Primo in 1929, Pérez Salas was freed as part of the Berenguer amnesty in time to take up an active role in the Republic from its birth.<sup>101</sup> ‘I’m a republican’, he declared repeatedly – although in the context of civil war this was not a straightforward statement – lamenting that it ‘is sad that nobody believes I’m a republican.’<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *El Socialista de Madrid*, 20 September 1936; *ABC* (Madrid), 22 September 1936; Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 267

<sup>99</sup> Antonio Cordon, *Trayectoria. Memorias de un militar republicano*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 1977), p. 265; Carlos Lopez Serviá, ‘Don Joaquín y los “paseos”’, *Historia y vida*, 4, 1974; Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, pp. 312-3; Isabelo Herreros, ‘Toledo en la narrativa española de la Guerra Civil: escritores y personajes’, *Archivo Secreto; revista cultural de Toledo*, 5, 2011, p. 355

<sup>100</sup> Cordon, *Trayectoria*, pp. 255-7; Jesús Pérez Salas, *Guerra en España (1936-1939)*, (Mexico City: Imprenta Grafos, 1947) p. 42, 77-9

<sup>101</sup> Zaragoza, *Ejercito Popular*, pp. 289-92; María Teresa Suero Roca, ‘Un General de la República: Joaquín Pérez Salas’, *Tiempo de Historia*, 74(7), 1981, p. 106

<sup>102</sup> Cordon, *Trayectoria*, p. 254

These nuances indicate that efforts to attract Catholics to the Republican cause, on the home front and on the battlefields, were not solely confined to the PCE's *mano tendida* strategies. Certainly, the PCE sought to access that discursive mobilising strategy and the ideals upon which Catholic opposition to the military rebellion were based, and would do so with ever increasing influence as the war continued. But clear too was that Catholics, who understood their Catholic identities as naturally compatible with republican ideals, could utilise, through conscious choice, those same networks accessed by the PCE in its *mano tendida* strategy to consolidate and reinforce their own position.

And so as communist party cadres and publications declared that they stood side by side with 'honourable Catholics,' so too those claims were replicated and reciprocated, sometimes ideologically, sometimes opportunistically, by priests and lay Catholics across the Republic. In a conference on 6 September at the headquarters of the Regiment of Railways and Sappers in Leganés, southwest of Madrid, García Morales spoke to his 'comrades of the world, and my brothers!' declaring that 'many Spanish priests are on the side of the people and with the people's cause.'<sup>103</sup> Embraced by the town's mayor, Pedro González González, and the military commander of the local antifascist committee, José Fernández Lerena, García Morales was given a warm welcome at an event also attended by the division's commander General Castellón and a number of other political and military dignitaries.<sup>104</sup> Again advocating physical defence of the Republic by 'the people', García Morales spoke of priests who 'wear the honoured uniforms of the popular militia, and that they stand opposed to their brothers in the priesthood who have left the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus on the altars.'<sup>105</sup> Much less enthusiastically, the Madrid priest Régulo Martínez Sánchez would later speak about the dynamics of this relationship in the capital. Before a large audience at an outdoor event organised by the PCE, Martínez Sánchez argued that it 'was not the communists but the people who were fighting,' remembering later the 'communists didn't take that too well, but the people stood and cheered.'<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *El Sol*, 6 September 1936. See also *Texto íntegro de los tres discursos...*

<sup>104</sup> *El Sol*, 6 September 1936

<sup>105</sup> *Catholics and the Civil War in Spain*, p. 6

<sup>106</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 267

Speeches and newspaper articles like these functioned to emphasise conceptualisations of Republican citizenship that challenged both the military rebellion's claim of a 'crusade' and the violent anticlerical rhetoric of revolutionary groups operating within Republican controlled territory. In doing so, priests working in this fragmented media landscape represented an ideal opportunity for the large (and unwieldy) Republican coalition government under Largo Caballero as it desperately sought to regain control of the state. Though their work and position would not be fully exploited by the Republican government until after the appointment of Juan Negrín in May 1937, the work of priests in the media nevertheless represented a discourse of moderation and loyalty useful to the Republican authorities seeking to display, and above all to an international audience, its pursuit of liberal-democratic objectives rather than radical revolutionary change.

Consequently in mid-October 1936, as the Republic began its long and arduous process of regaining centralised control of the state, the priests Leocadio Lobo and José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull were summoned by the PSOE minister Julio Álvarez del Vayo.<sup>107</sup> At the meeting, the pair were informed that Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo, Spain's ambassador to Belgium, had organised a congress of Catholic antifascists to be held at the Brussels Embassy, with the two already pencilled in to give keynote speeches. The organisation of such a congress illustrated that already the Republic was well aware of the need to emphasise the existence of Catholics opposed to the military rebels to a European audience. Such efforts would expand rapidly over the course of the war, evolving in form and coming to function as a key element in the Republican war effort.<sup>108</sup>

The fight to convince the diplomatic gallery watching on had already been severely hampered by the existence from July 1936 of newspaper reports in the European democracies referring to the 'Anti-God' nature of the Republic.<sup>109</sup> Lobo and Gallegos Rocafull were thus charged with working, as Catholic priests, to emphasise abroad the liberal nature of the Republic. Inevitably too, given the undeniable realities

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<sup>107</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 33-4

<sup>108</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 31-4; see also chapter four

<sup>109</sup> In Britain *The Tablet*, 1 August 1936, *Catholic Times*, 14 August 1936 are indicative of this widespread discourse. See also James Flint, "'Must God Go Fascist?': English Catholic Opinion and the Spanish Civil War", *Church History*, 56, 1987, pp. 364-74

of the anticlerical violence occurring in Republican territory, their work served as a damage-limitation exercise on the international stage.<sup>110</sup> And perhaps for the same reason it was the moderate republicans Lobo and Gallegos Rocafull and not, for example, García Morales – who had already infuriated the ecclesiastical hierarchy and publicly associated himself with communist elements in Madrid – who were invited by government officials desperate to stress moderation to an international audience. Leaving Madrid on 27 October for the Brussels embassy via Paris, the two spoke at the congress held on 7 November.<sup>111</sup> Lobo and Gallegos Rocafull spoke on ‘the military rebellion as seen from Madrid’ to a crowd of over one hundred and thirty tightly packed into the Embassy, although Lobo’s speech was interrupted by pro-Francoist shouts from a minority within the crowd (later escorted away from the Embassy by the Belgian police).

That attempts were made to disrupt Lobo’s speech indicates the concern with which pro-Francoist constituencies viewed the priest.<sup>112</sup> Undeterred, Lobo continued by again reinforcing his opinion that the war was much more than the religious conflict that rebel propagandists were busy constructing: the conflict was, he declared, the result of Spaniards disputing the future of their own polity and society.<sup>113</sup> Deconstructing the concept of ‘order,’ it was clear that Lobo saw the conflict as one in which progressive social change, social mobilisation and potential future freedoms were being assaulted as by conservative forces rallied around older reactionary modes of thinking, not least an idea of ‘order’ that stood far removed from equality and democracy.<sup>114</sup> In this he repeated his earlier declaration that the Spanish people and many Catholic supporters of the Republic had risen ‘to defend a just cause’ and, at the same time, reaffirmed to his attentive audience that in this struggle the communists had generally conducted themselves ‘with a remarkable sense of responsibility and prudence.’<sup>115</sup> So too Gallegos Rocafull asked the audience whether this could truly be a ‘religious war’, as the rebels claimed – how were the rebels to

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<sup>110</sup> *Deux prêtres espagnols parlent de la Tragédie de l’Espagne*, (Anderlecht, S. Hiernaux, 1936)

<sup>111</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 228-9; González Gullón, ‘Leocadio Lobo,’ p. 281

<sup>112</sup> See also chapter 5 for the continued discrediting of loyal priests by Francoist propagandists.

<sup>113</sup> *Deux prêtres espagnols parlent*; The pamphlet is also printed in Spanish as *3 grandes católicos os hablan: Ossorio y Gallardo, Leocadio Lobo, José María Gallegos*, (Santiago de Chile: Comité Pro España Republicana, 1936)

<sup>114</sup> *3 grandes católicos os hablan*, passim

<sup>115</sup> *Deux prêtres espagnols parlent*, p. 3

explain the numerous Catholics, true to their faith and ‘sincere believers’ who had stayed loyal to the Republic?<sup>116</sup>

The embassy tour was organised by the Republic’s newly formed propaganda ministry, which took its lead from the earlier creation by the Catalan autonomous government of a Propaganda Office in the summer.<sup>117</sup> This latter, led by the young journalist Jaume Miravittles of the left liberal Esquerra republicana de catalunya, had attempted to avoid partisan or party-political propaganda in favour of a much wider ‘antifascist’ discourse that would generate and ‘maintain the enthusiasm of the people.’<sup>118</sup> Miravittles’ own background in the organisation of the Popular Olympiad, the iconic alternative to the 1936 Berlin Olympics, ensured a multimedia effort was immediately undertaken via cinematography, photography and the radio, alongside the organisation of cultural events such as contests, fairs and sports exhibitions.<sup>119</sup>

Far from simply working to disseminate information about the war to Catalonia’s population, Miravittles was fully aware that ‘maintaining the enthusiasm of the people’ required a much wider focus on initiatives to reconstruct the internal cohesion of the population.<sup>120</sup> Miravittles’ leadership of the Generalitat’s Propaganda Office spurred him to efficient, precise action on a number of fronts, his understanding of how best to utilise resources already well-honed. A fundamental aspect of Miravittles’ concern with ‘maintaining enthusiasm’ included appealing to those in Catalonia who remained broadly supportive of the Republican project but who were nonetheless terrified by the fraught and dangerous environment of social revolution. Amongst those were Miravittles’ own mother and brother, both practising Catholics, who represented a much wider community within the Catalan Church which had stood as a progressive, liberal alternative to the central ecclesiastical hierarchy already mobilised behind the ‘crusade,’ but who, as members of the laity

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<sup>116</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 218-9

<sup>117</sup> Ramon Batalla i Galimany, *Jaume Miravittles i Navarra; Intellectual, revolucionari i home de govern. Els anys joves, 1906-1939*, unpublished thesis, (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2010), pp. 434-5

<sup>118</sup> *La Humanitat*, 21 August 1936; *La Vanguardia*, 26 January 2007

<sup>119</sup> Josep M. Bernils, ‘Jaume Miravittles, comissari de Propaganda de la Generalitat, 1936-1939’, *Revista de Girona*, 187, 1998, p. 41. Miravittles was the secretary of the Executive Committee of the Popular Olympiad and in the immediate aftermath of the military coup was appointed secretary-general of the Central Committee of the Antifascist Militias of Catalonia.

<sup>120</sup> Jaume Miravittles, *Mes Gent Que He Conegut*, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1981), p. 63 and *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, 5 October 1936

and clergy were threatened directly, and on a daily basis, by the revolutionary atmosphere of Catalonia.<sup>121</sup>

If instances of extrajudicial violence of the Republican zone, and particularly that directed against the clergy, were much reduced by the end of 1936, this was still an environment in which public demonstrations of religiosity were fraught with danger. Nevertheless, Miravittles recognised the critical value of Catholicism at the heart of the Republic's developing propaganda efforts, and that for any such efforts to be legitimised and successful there was an urgent need to reach out and offer tangible support to those Catholic citizens.<sup>122</sup> Shortly after the war had begun he attended a 'public mass' as an official representative of the Generalitat held in a basement near to the Plaza de Catalunya.<sup>123</sup> Even in this still embryonic process of reconstituting the political and social fabric of the Republic, Miravittles would later attend another mass with his mother and brother – as a representative not only of the present government, but of a future in which state-sanctioned freedom of worship could (once again) exist in a restored democratic polity.<sup>124</sup>

Though Miravittles was in his public role certainly struggling against the tide in his first months, he was soon joined in his propaganda work by the former Jesuit priest and librarian of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, Joan Vilar i Costa. From this moment on, Vilar's key role within the Propaganda Office formed part of a crucially important legitimising process in which practising Catholics, and particularly priests loyal to the Republic, were integrated within strategic roles. Though again – and quite inevitably – Catalonia led the way as a result of its much more developed and nuanced (pre-war) polity, efforts remained ongoing in Madrid, and over the course of the war the capital would remain the site of significant progress in this regard. These changes were representative of the tying together of grassroots

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<sup>121</sup> The existence of such communities is discussed in the letter to Jaume Miravittles from Ossorio y Gallardo, 8 September 1935, PSM, n.2235 reprinted in Arnau González i Vilalta, *Un catalanòfilo de Madrid. Epistolario catalán de Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo (1924-1942)*, (Barcelona: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2008), pp. 312-4; Batalla, *Jaume Miravittles*, p. 448, p. 644. Miravittles was stunned at the scale of popular mobilisation and horrified at the assassination of civilians in the streets of Barcelona, remarking that a 'man has been assassinated simply because his sister was a nun. Why? It was a terrible mistake they were making.'

<sup>122</sup> Batalla, *Jaume Miravittles*, p. 458

<sup>123</sup> José Maria Gironella, *100 españoles y Dios*, (Barcelona: Ediciones Nauta, 1969), p. 430

<sup>124</sup> Batalla, *Jaume Miravittles*, p. 573

initiatives with government funding and, increasingly, government direction, that would form the basis of much larger processes developing over the course of the war. Notwithstanding the very real limitations the war had wrought to the landscape in which this cultural output could exist, Vilar saw his propaganda work as a logical extension not only of his contributions to the earlier Catalan journal *Ciutat*, which ran for twenty issues in the 1920s and sought to promote Catalan ‘ideas and culture,’ but of his pre-war identity as a committed citizen of the Republic.<sup>125</sup> Given that artistic and literary background, and his friendship with a good number of Catalonia’s leading modernist writers and poets, Vilar fully embraced both the forms and functions of Miravittles’ multimedia propaganda work – this not only as a priest willing to publicly demonstrate his support for the Republic, but also as a talented media expert well aware of the value of that position. In many ways a personification of that ‘symbolic bond’ discussed ever more visibly, Vilar embraced his citizenship as an opportunity to meaningfully participate in new ways in processes of Republican cultural construction.<sup>126</sup>

Always working behind the scenes in the production of the Propaganda Office’s cinematic propaganda, Vilar’s most recognisable – and indeed most visible – work was in the design, production and publication of a series of religious information bulletins; the *Boletín de Información Religiosa* and *Boletín de Información Católica*.<sup>127</sup> Building upon his own pre-war work with the journal *Ciutat* and comfortable with modern techniques, working from offices permeated by modern, multimedia ideas, the tone of Vilar’s information bulletins replicated that of Miravittles’ wider propaganda efforts. These bulletins, regularly produced from January 1937, were intended to provide readers with an informed and accurate picture of the religious fabric of the Republic, featuring news, interest articles and editorial comments from priests and renowned lay Catholics loyal to the Republic. In this, the

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<sup>125</sup> *Ciutat; Ideari d’art i cultura*, 1(1), 1926, available at [http://www.diba.es/scripts/ftpisa.asp?fnew?xbc&CIUTAT/1926/CIUTAT\\_19260201.PDF&1](http://www.diba.es/scripts/ftpisa.asp?fnew?xbc&CIUTAT/1926/CIUTAT_19260201.PDF&1) [last accessed 22 October 2014]

<sup>126</sup> Albert Manent, *Del Noucentisme a L’Exili; Sobre la cultura Catalana del nou cents*, (Barcelona: L’Abadía de Montserrat, 1997), p. 194. Earlier in the year, he had formed part of the artistic organisation Penya Oasi, led by the Catalan modernist novelist Prudenci Bertrana. Named after the cafe in which they met, just off the Ramblas in Barcelona, the group included some of Catalonia’s most talented writers and poets; Joan Vilar i Costa, *Montserrat; glosas a la Carta colectiva de los obispos españoles*, (Barcelona: Instituto Católica de Estudios Religiosos, 1938), pp. 67-77

<sup>127</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 235

publications stood as a symbolic expression of the existence of Catholic support for the Republic and the commitment, on behalf of Republican authorities, to restore pre-war normality to wartime life wherever possible.

The general tone of Vilar's bulletins reflected much wider efforts stressing moderation and toleration to an audience at home and abroad, their conceptual themes replicating those that had emerged from grassroots efforts across the Republican zone during the summer. Contrasting conceptualisations of an Old Testament God of destruction and violence with the compassion, reconciliation and love of the New Testament, this distinctly Catholic narrative was mapped onto secular politics, as the bulletins stressed loyalty to new politics, democracy and the Republic. Catholics were encouraged to embrace this new world, with a clear division drawn between religious persecution and the violence of the summer as a political settling of scores; readers were again reminded that the Church was perceived by many as a right-wing political institution, even though the papal encyclicals of Pius XI and Leo XIII had warned against fascism. And perhaps unsurprisingly given the judiciousness of both Vilar and Miravittles where media operations were concerned, the *Boletín de Información Religiosa* and *Boletín de Información Católica* were published in several languages. At home, they were distributed in Spanish and Catalan, whilst English, French, German, Latin and Esperanto translations were printed and delivered to prominent clerics and officials worldwide.<sup>128</sup>

Though the two bulletins covered broadly the same material, it was clear that they were designed with different audiences in mind: Vilar's *Boletín de Información Católica* was distributed equally in print runs of 1,000 in Spain, Britain and France and with an additional 500 copies in Latin, whilst the wider international-ranging *Boletín de Información Religiosa* was delivered in print runs of 3,700 in English, 850 more in French and a supplementary 500 copies in Spanish.<sup>129</sup> The publications had relatively small print runs despite the wide geographical spread of their distribution – particularly the Spanish version of the *Boletín de Información Religiosa* – suggesting that was, at this still early stage, primarily a targeted diplomatic effort, rather than a

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<sup>128</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, pp. 235-6; Hilari Ragner, 'La Iglesia durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil' in Paul Aubert (ed.), *Religión y sociedad en España (siglos XIX y XX)*, (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 2002), p. 50

<sup>129</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 335



publication for general domestic consumption.<sup>130</sup> But at the same time, Vilar was spending a huge amount of time and effort on the production of a radio programme that focused on much of the same material as the print publication. Delivered straight ‘from the microphones of the Generalitat’, confirming to listeners – and comforting them, in what remained a fraught environment – the official nature of the programming, the radio programmes gave further tangible evidence of the government’s efforts.<sup>131</sup> Their frequency also suggested that a domestic audience was never far from Vilar’s thoughts. And, although we can only speculate, listening to a radio broadcast in sheltered homes might have been a more immediate and crucially much ‘safer’ option for many of Catalonia’s Catholics than receiving printed publications.

Broadcast at nine o’clock on Sunday nights by both the Radio Associació de Catalunya and Ràdio Barcelona, Vilar spoke regularly and at length about the role of Christianity in the conflict.<sup>132</sup> Deploying already recognisable discursive themes, Vilar spoke regularly about the position of prominent Catholic public figures and priests opposed to the military rebellion (and opposed to fascism more widely), portraying them in flexible terms as part of a wide-ranging ‘antifascist’ alliance. Vilar also stressed the inherent links between working class politics and the Catholic faith, a relationship that was evolving in real terms in an increasing multitude of ways. In this, Vilar’s bulletins did not seek to minimise the existence of Catholics in Barcelona and elsewhere who were willing to support the rebels, but sought to engage with those political positions and develop nuanced refutations of the existence of any ‘crusade’.

Taking the lead in the broadcasts, Vilar was also assisted by the research and contribution of other priests, particularly in the production of the alternate-fortnightly programme that followed Vilar’s regular ‘Catholic’ broadcast, which aimed to draw in opinion from Spain’s Protestant minority.<sup>133</sup> This was certainly important for it showed a Republic tolerant of all faiths; the very nature of the broadcast made it was

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<sup>130</sup> CDMH, PS-Alicante, 146-2. Copies of the bulletin appear amongst the wartime papers of the former Deputy Mayor of Alicante, the Izquierda Republicana politician and practising Catholic Franklin Albricias Goetz.

<sup>131</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 335. Vilar’s radio broadcasts were also mentioned in the Francoist press; see Xavier de Sabalu, ‘La cuestión religiosa entre los Rojos’, *Razón y Fé*, 1938, pp. 381-2

<sup>132</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 335

<sup>133</sup> Massot i Muntaner, *Església i societat*, p. 504

also clear that the civil war was less about a ‘religious war’ and more concerned with determining the political and social future of Spain – either open and plural or closed and hierarchised. It is inevitably hard to ascertain how these broadcasts were received, but with the programmes airing regularly until at least 1938, when they became subsumed within much wider governmental efforts, a broadly favourable response from the intended audience is reasonable to assume. For Catholic listeners, Vilar’s programming likely provided solace and emotional support, from the safety of home, for almost two years.<sup>134</sup> And although Vilar was heavily criticised for his attempts to reconcile the revolution with Catholicism and was threatened repeatedly by libertarian elements in Barcelona, he, and indeed Miravittles too, recognised the fundamental importance of the radio broadcasts.<sup>135</sup>

That prospect of extreme violence would remain palpable, but the desire to see the programme remain on air meant that, given the personal protection of loyal assault guards, Vilar’s broadcasts continued weekly, even over the Christmas weekend of December 1936, providing comfort to Barcelona’s Catholics at a time of religious celebration irrevocably changed by war.<sup>136</sup> If his superior Miravittles was convinced that the Republic essentially had the power of reasoned thought behind it, feeling little requirement for exaggerations or lies in his propaganda efforts, that position was clearly replicated by Vilar. The priest-turned-propagandist refused to deny the existence of such threats to either his own position, even with police guards, or to the countless thousands who had no such safety net. The priest’s bulletins and broadcasts did not seek at any point to dissimulate the realities of anticlerical violence nor the intransigence of many of Catalonia’s Catholics.<sup>137</sup>

In part, Vilar’s refusal to deny the existence of anticlerical violence was aided significantly by the realities of a Republic regaining control. After the initial wave of anticlerical assaults, churches had been closed by Republican authorities and many priests taken into protective custody as those authorities sought as far as possible to

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<sup>134</sup> In March 1938, one pro-rebel newspaper would refer to the bulletins as the ‘farce of religious propaganda across Marxist radio’, organised by a ‘renegade priest’ (though misspelling Vilar’s name as Vilart), see *El Día de Palencia*, 28 March 1938

<sup>135</sup> Their position was replicated in *Solidaridad Obrera*, 21 September 1937

<sup>136</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, pp. 275-6

<sup>137</sup> See also the much later ‘graffiti’ posters that appear threatening such work later in the war, (chapter five); Vilar, *Montserrat* p. 276

regain control and protect the Republic's citizenry, regardless of their political leanings.<sup>138</sup> Other priests were being sheltered by politicians, family friends and local townspeople across the Republic, and so by the time Vilar's religious information services were up and running – regularly by January 1937 – anticlerical violence was substantially decreasing. Other groups also began to substitute the clergy as targets. With the transformation of the initial coup into a long civil war, extrajudicial violence was increasingly related to the dynamics of war itself, not least as a result of the evolving political and military control of territory and populations and the gearing of the Republic towards total war.<sup>139</sup>

The imaginative and versatile techniques and messages of the Republic's propagandists, including Vilar's industrious efforts ensured that, especially in Catalonia, Catholicism was becoming an increasingly crucial aspect of efforts to restore Republican legitimacy. The Catalan example would later come to exert growing influence upon the Republic as a whole, demonstrating the available potential of a modern, progressive, democratic polity. In Madrid too, the work of Catholic priests across a variety of media was taking root and would germinate further throughout the war. But despite efforts within the government of the Basque minister Irujo and from grassroots Catholics to pursue religious normalisation, combined with these Catholic voices urging on the war effort against the military rebels, the need for caution remained at the forefront of Republican planning.

With the military rebels having used the assault on the Catholic Church in Republican territory to justify their vision of the war as a crusade from the first days of the war, much of the initial focus of religious propaganda in the Republic had been forced towards refuting those claims.<sup>140</sup> Analysing the anticlerical violence that formed the justificatory cornerstone of the rebel 'crusade' as a socio-political phenomenon, this challenge to rebel propaganda had been complemented by, and constructed around, discourses that stressed Catholic loyalty to the democratic Republic and more widely, and often symbiotically, to 'the people'. Throughout, care had been taken never to deny the existence of that anticlerical violence and, now that

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<sup>138</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, p. 339

<sup>139</sup> Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, pp. 389-91

<sup>140</sup> The same was true of their international efforts, Hugo García, *The Truth About Spain!: Mobilizing British Public Opinion, 1936-1939*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), pp. 149-51

the phenomenon was becoming more limited, the Republic's propagandists could work proactively, and on the offensive.

That dramatic reduction in extrajudicial violence against the clergy in the Republic stood increasingly at odds with growing reports of violence against the clergy in rebel-occupied territory. As those reports intensified over the late autumn and through the winter of 1936-7, a nuanced, complex picture of the war became more readily available to both a domestic and international audience. The arrest, imprisonment, torture and execution of clergy provoked by the insurgency aroused alarm across Europe, and rapidly added significant weight to the propaganda efforts of Catholics still loyal to the Republic. In the same month that a pastoral from Cardinal Gomá, Primate of Spain, appeared declaring the war to be 'of one civilisation against another...[a] war waged by the Christian and Spanish spirit against another', the Catholic writer and diplomat José María Semprún Gurrea wrote in the French periodical *Esprit* that 'a special chapter should be given to the persecution of priests and religious not sympathising with the insurgents.'<sup>141</sup>

Violence against the Basque clergy quickly became the most recognisable aspect of this persecution, so much so that even Gomá travelled to Salamanca to address the rebel authorities after learning of the execution of a number of priests.<sup>142</sup> The execution of sixteen priests by rebel authorities over the autumn of 1936 represented a serious blow to attempts by the Church hierarchy to detach Basque nationalists from the Republican war effort and, more crucially, demonstrated the tangled contradictions beneath the carapace of the 'crusade'. Nevertheless, since the war (as indeed also during it), these executions have come to form part of a regional-nationalist narrative that has run parallel to the civil war itself: for many clerical apologists, those criticising the violence against Basque priests misconstrued what was 'simply' political violence against separatist nationalists, clerical or otherwise. In many ways this line was convenient for both the Church and the Francoist authorities allied behind the 'crusade', allowing their war effort to be legitimised as an 'anti-

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<sup>141</sup> Gomá's pastoral is discussed in Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia*, pp. 179-82; *Archivo Gomá*, VI, 6-242; *Esprit*, 1 November 1936

<sup>142</sup> Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia*, II, p. 136

communist' and 'anti-separatist' struggle, and at the same time repudiate the pluralist forms of Catholicism that existed within Spain.<sup>143</sup>

Yet for huge numbers of Basques, their Republican citizenship was intrinsically Catholic. In a war effort driven by the Basque nationalist PNV, this community fought against the rebels based on 'the doctrine and jurisdiction of the Holy Catholic Church' in all 'manifestations of its internal life and its relationships with other nations, peoples and states.'<sup>144</sup> Here, Catholicism and citizenship of this nation were much more difficult to separate, and the war was given meaning by the media in nationalist terms that were imbued with deeply religious symbolism.<sup>145</sup> As early as 5 August the PNV newspaper *Euzkadi* had described the conflict in language replicating the symbolic bond used by Catholics across the Republic – a war 'against the *pueblo*' and deeply imbued with Catholic symbolism.<sup>146</sup> When *Euzkadi* reported the execution of one hundred and forty 'priests and religious' on 10 November, it declared the 'murderers' to be the 'advocates of Imperial Spain', advocates of the Restoration system desperate for a return to its exclusivist, hierarchical social order rooted in absolutist Catholicism.<sup>147</sup>

In this, Catholic citizenship was portrayed through a narrative structure of death and resurrection, suffering and redemption. A theology of war based above all on suffering, death and resurrection in replication of 'the sacrifice of Christ the King' formed a framework in which sacrifices were made and in which atrocities committed by the rebels were represented by the Basque media and understood by its citizens. Embracing this specifically Catholic citizenship – a sacrifice for the nation in replication of Jesus' sacrifice for all people – the obituaries of fallen *gudaris* were

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<sup>143</sup> Pérez Ledesma, 'Una dictadura "Por la Gracia de Dios"', pp. 187-8. Though Pérez Ledesma does not pick up on the idea of 'dissident Catholics' specifically, there are significant parallels with his discussion of Francoism as based on totalising, essentialist ideas that ignore individualisms and pluralist thought.

<sup>144</sup> J.L. de la Granja, 'El aranismo, ideología dominante del Partido Nacionalista Vasco en los años treinta: Acta de la Asamblea de Bergara', in *II Congreso Mundial Vasco. Congresode Historia de Euskal Herria*, V, (Txertoa: San Sebastián, 1988), p. 470

<sup>145</sup> In Bilbao eight daily newspapers had become eleven by June 1937. Just as had occurred in the rest of Spain, the outbreak of war had brought much of the area's media infrastructure under the control of various political forces: in San Sebastián the popular front organisations took control and replaced many of the local dailies with *Frente Popular* until the fall of the city in September. In Bilbao, just as with *ABC* in Madrid the right wing newspapers *La Gaceta del Norte*, *El Pueblo Vasco* and *El Nervión* were seized and their ideological orientations turned toward pro-Republican statements.

<sup>146</sup> *Euzkadi*, 5 August 1936

<sup>147</sup> *Euzkadi*, 10 November 1936, 18 November 1936 and 12 December 1936

framed within a hagiographic model heavily imbued with ideas of Christian martyrdom.<sup>148</sup> Spread through the pages of antifascist media publications and propaganda across much of the political spectrum, a cult of sacrifice quickly emerged in distinctly Catholic language. These fallen soldiers were martyrs, their lives given – in a subversion of the ‘crusade’ – ‘for God and for Euskadi.’<sup>149</sup>

The widespread usage of this hagiographic form illustrated that Catholicism was being deployed as a mobilising tool, and the war given meaning through the lens of Catholic thought. Even the anarchist newspaper *CNT del Norte* declared in February 1937 that contrary to propaganda portraying them as anticlerical ‘antichrists,’ ‘Cain is Burgos, Salamanca, Sevilla...Cain is the aristocracy, Cain is fascist dictatorship.’<sup>150</sup> The emphasis again was on the reconstruction of a national political and social fabric in which all those rallied behind the Republic could work together – the wartime experience of anarchists in the Basque Provinces had involved fighting side by side with Catholic constituencies against supporters of the rebellion. The communists too made efforts to deploy Catholic symbolism throughout the war in their newspaper *Euskadi Roja*.<sup>151</sup> Another communist publication declared that ‘everyone knows that [in this war] Catholics have not remained neutral...[but] eminent and irreproachable Catholics defend the cause of the Spanish government.’<sup>152</sup> Across the entire Republican political spectrum the Basque press was saturated with the language of Catholicism, to the extent that sometimes seemingly enormous contradictions in content and form emerged: in one edition of *Euskadi Roja* a eulogy to the communist ideologue La Pasionaria was filled with the Catholic symbolism of sainthood and holiness, the Basques her ‘somos tus fieles hijos...’<sup>153</sup>

If it seemed that war was an environment naturally geared towards the ideas of sacrifice inherent in Christianity – an arena in which faith could be lived out, tested, and animated – crucially such discourses were infused with pre-war cultural

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<sup>148</sup> CDMH, PS-Barcelona, 940; *Euzkadi*, 22 September 1936; Inaki de Aberrigoyen, *Sept mois et sept jours dans l’Espagne de Franco*, (Paris: H.G. Peyre, 1930), pp. 120-2. See also George L. Mosse, *De la Grande Guerre au totalitarisme: la brutalisation des sociétés européennes*, (Paris, Hachette littératures, 1999), p. 88

<sup>149</sup> *Euzkadi*, 2 December 1936

<sup>150</sup> *CNT del Norte*, 17 February 1937

<sup>151</sup> *Euskadi Roja*, 9 June 1937

<sup>152</sup> *ERI; revista semanal ilustrada del Partido Comunista de Euzkadi*, 6 February 1937

<sup>153</sup> *Euskadi Roja*, 30 December 1936

references. Many of those references were drawn from Catholic practices. In a mirror image of the insurgent crusade, many *gudaris* saw their sacrifice as one for God and for Euskadi, and in that order. When the Catholic volunteers José de Urrutia and José Galíndez Urkixo spoke on separate occasions of suffering and dying with Christ, and living eternally alongside their saviour, they replicated a common template of understanding the war.<sup>154</sup> But crucially here, these were understandings of the war fundamentally conditioned by longer-term cultural references and were not confined to the Basque Provinces. Many ordinary soldiers across the Republic came to perceive their cause as one for the future of Spain and, by extension for many ordinary Catholics within the ranks of the Republican army that was taking shape, it would become a fight too for the place of their faith within that future. In his diary, the *Guardia Civil* officer Antonio Escobar Huerta wrote that ‘God writes straight with crooked lines ... if my life and those of all who have fallen serves to ensure [civil war] does not happen again, our blood will not have been in vain.’<sup>155</sup>

The difficult choices many Catholics faced in their loyalty to the Republic emerged and were reconciled through their faith. In a final letter from Agustín Pérez Rodríguez to his family before his execution at the hands of Francoist forces, the *carabintero* wrote that he did not want them to be ‘left with the dark name’ of someone who had been executed for ‘being a Marxist,’ but that he was to die ‘only through the cowardice of my superiors and subordinates’ who had rebelled against the government. Nevertheless, Pérez understood his position through his devout Catholicism, declaring that he would ‘die a Christian, as [I] confess and take communion.’<sup>156</sup> So too before his execution by rebel military authorities in 1937, the veteran artillery officer José Franco Mussio accepted confession and the prayers of chaplains, whilst Admiral Antonio Azarola y Gresillón, executed by a rebel firing squad at the Ferrol naval base for refusing to join the military rebellion – a refusal determined precisely because his Catholic faith determined that he would remain loyal to a sworn oath – held onto religious icons he carried with him, pressing a crucifix to

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<sup>154</sup> *Gudari*, 15 April 1937. See also *Euzkadi*, 5 January 1937 and 21 March 1937

<sup>155</sup> Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, p. 192

<sup>156</sup> Ángel Rodríguez Gallardo ‘A represión franquista no concello de Tui’ in Xose Paz Antón (ed.), *O Miño, unha corrente de memoria*, (Ponteareas: Alén-Miño, 2007), p. 100; José Ramón Rodríguez Lago, *Cruzados o herejes: la religión, la Iglesia y los católicos en la Galicia de la Guerra Civil*, (Galicia: Edicións Nigra Trea, 2010), p. 147

his lips in the moments before his death.<sup>157</sup> With death tangibly close, it is clear that these devout soldiers could at least take comfort in knowing that their absolved souls could look forward to going straight to Heaven: here, Catholicism provided a vocabulary to help render war experiences meaningful.

Beyond making sense of the war through religious faith on an individual level, the Republican press also utilised the ‘martyrdom’ of devout Catholics at the hands of the insurgency and its supporters in order to construct specific meanings of the war. Not least was a process of deconstructing the rebels’ attempt, through the narrative of crusade, to monopolise Catholicism. This was a process beginning as early as August 1936 and increasing over the winter of 1936-7 as more details about the conduct of the rebel war effort became readily apparent, thus reinforcing understandings of the rebel war effort as conditioned by the violent rejection of democratic, socially-levelling change, and not as a Catholic ‘crusade’. Whilst the Basque experience had illustrated this most visibly to an international audience in the early months of the war (and would continue to do so long after the war) it was clear that alternative ideas about Catholicism would be targeted ruthlessly by the rebels across Spain, regardless of whether they were advocated by laity or priests. And so, replicating and reciprocating the narrative being deployed in the Basque Provinces, the deaths of these Catholic individuals were framed in hagiographic terms, their religiosity logically tied to their rejection of the insurgency.

This was a process articulated throughout Republican news reporting of atrocities against priests, such as was demonstrated by *ABC* (Madrid), in late January 1937, as it reported the earlier murder of a Franciscan priest by the rebels.<sup>158</sup> The fifty-seven year old Emiliano María Revilla, killed in September 1936 near to the small municipality of Gumiel de Izán (Burgos), shared a profile consistent with many of those priests now lined in up in opposition to the rebel cause. Revilla’s experiences of military service, in the brutal landscape of colonial Morocco, reinforced an already nascent perception of a corrupt monarchy exploitative of its population. On his return to Spain the priest had become a vocal advocate of the social and cultural

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<sup>157</sup> Rodríguez, *Cruzados o herejes*, p. 144; Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, p. 92. For military bonds of oath, see James Matthews, *Reluctant Warriors*, p. 16 and Michael Alpert, *El Ejército Popular de la República, 1936-1939*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2007), pp. 96-102

<sup>158</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 28 January 1937



emancipation a Republic promised to offer beyond the Restoration system.<sup>159</sup> Though he had spent much of the 1930s in Madrid working for the illustrated magazine *El Mundo Gráfico*, when war broke out Revilla was in Burgos caring for his sick mother. And with Burgos at the heart of the ‘crusade,’ Revilla was denounced as a ‘red priest’ for his heavy criticism of the extrajudicial violence committed by the insurgency and its supporters. His execution by Falangists came after almost a month of incarceration.<sup>160</sup> According to the *ABC* (Madrid) report, Revilla died clutching a crucifix and shouting ‘Long live the Republic!’<sup>161</sup> His death as a martyr for the cause was accentuated and underscored by reference to his heroism at the disastrous Battle of Annual in 1921: when ‘armed only with a crucifix’ he charged ‘toward certain death’ to rescue a wounded legionnaire, returning to carry a second soldier to safety ‘whilst bullets whistled past.’<sup>162</sup> Though Annual was deeply ingrained in the minds of many as deeply symbolic of the oppressive Restoration order, in this hagiographic report Revilla’s actions spoke only of a hero desperate to save the suffering working-class conscripts of the colonial army, driven by his faith. And if the report of his death was significantly abridged in the same day edition of *La Vanguardia*, the report still ensured that the manner of his death, crucifix in hand and his declaration in favour of the Republic remained central.<sup>163</sup> Just as had occurred in the Basque Provinces, for those sympathetic to the Republic’s cause Revilla’s actions at the moment of death were something to be celebrated, the dual symbolism of the crucifix and loyalty to the Republic transforming the priest into an icon of true citizenship.<sup>164</sup>

As the story of Revilla’s execution illustrated, from the outset of the war, the work of a small number of priests and lay Catholics within the media had worked

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<sup>159</sup> *ABC*, 17 September 1921; 13 November 1921; 23 November 1921

<sup>160</sup> Según Isaac Rilova Pérez, *Guerra Civil y violencia política en Burgos (1936-1939)*, (Burgos, Dosssoles, 2001), pp. 171-86. In Burgos there had been no violence in the immediate aftermath of the 17-18 July coup, except that meted out by the supporters of the insurgency itself.

<sup>161</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 28 January 1937; *La Vanguardia*, 28 January 1937

<sup>162</sup> *El Telegrama del Rif*, 5 November 1921: Revilla had been put forward for the Laureada de San Fernando, Spain’s highest military honour, for his action, see *ABC* 17 September 1921 and 23 November 1921

<sup>163</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 28 January 1937

<sup>164</sup> Revilla’s death worked to combine religious symbolism with loyalty to the Republic, contrasting significantly with the insurgency’s attempt to portray their cause as that of religion. Given the military leadership of the insurgency, Revilla’s existence as a military hero directed further questions at the insurgency’s legitimacy: snippets of news articles from 1921 were later reprinted as part of a eulogy to the fallen priest. It was well recognised that a practising Catholic and former hero of the army now aligned against the Republic was a significant propaganda coup, *La Vanguardia*, 28 January 1937

from to construct a 'bottom-up' conceptualisation of Republican citizenship intrinsically linked to Catholic religiosity. On a personal level, the work of these priests and lay Catholics provides tangible evidence of their own self-identification, how they came to terms increasingly with their own roles and positions within the wider processes of the conflict, and the meanings they attributed to the war itself. Their efforts sought to disseminate a unified and inclusive narrative of the war from a position that portrayed Catholic faith and loyalty to the Republic as naturally linked. In this, work conducted by priests including García Morales, Lobo and Martínez Sánchez amongst others played a vital role – appealing not only among radicalised workers, but also – and perhaps more importantly – amongst liberal Catholic groups. Although these discourses of Catholic citizenship were disseminated by a small number of individuals, in this they were representative of the aims and goals of significantly larger social constituencies within the Republic which had rejected the right-wing politics of the conservative, patrician insurgency but who were nevertheless frightened by the radical changes opened up by revolution.

These individuals worked with and for the Republic in these propaganda roles over a period of dramatically changing circumstances, in which their lives and the society in which they lived was fractured and transformed beyond anything they had hitherto experienced. Illuminated are the processes through which they reconciled their position with the Republic as citizens and supporters and how, at the same time, the Republic came to understand their position within its polity. In addition – and intrinsically linked to the role of the media during the conflict – is how both the Republic and this group of prominent priests and lay Catholics sought to extend these connections so they embraced a much wider audience as the war continued. It was clear that in efforts aimed toward legitimising Republican government and re-limiting political opportunities within the structures of liberal democracy (or at the very least *proposed* liberal democracy), the symbolic bonds deployed by these individuals to represent publicly their shared commitment to the Republican war effort provided opportunities to conduct wide-ranging social mobilisation. Building upon an ideal of a war fought 'by and for the people', however understood, disparate social constituencies could be united behind the war effort and the reconstitution and reconstruction of that open progressive future envisaged by the Republic.

But the undermining of those goals over the next years of war – and the aspirations of those Catholics amongst many others – was realised quite literally in the huge physical and psychological destruction unleashed by Francoism. As the next chapter will examine in detail, in the other zone, Francoist forces deliberately eliminated devout Catholics and practising priests under the banner of their ‘crusade’, confirming that only particular readings of Catholicism were acceptable in their future Spain. Exploring the lives and experiences of a number of the Catholics directly targeted in the Francoist zone, it becomes obvious that religious faith itself was nowhere near enough to save from execution a whole range of Catholics, from local Republican activists, through unaffiliated civilians to conscript soldiers and priests. The next chapter goes beyond the representation of their deaths in Republican reportage, exploring the extent to which Francoist violence shaped and reshaped how Catholics in the Republic understood themselves, the Republic and the trauma of war.

### Chapter Three: Francoist ‘anticlericalism’ and the consecration of the ‘crusade’

*‘Clear-sighted observers have been able to write these words about the war: “it is a race of speed between Bolshevism and Christian civilisation.”’<sup>1</sup>*

Cardinal Isidro Gomá y Tomás

*‘If the world in general believed that the Generalissimo fought atheism, it was also time they realised that what the Generalissimo fought was not atheism, but constitutionalism. It was what all generalissimos fought everywhere, whether with a crucifix or something else in their hands.’<sup>2</sup>*

Shevawn Lynam, *The Spirit and the Clay*

By the first months of 1937, political authorities had worked hard to bring extrajudicial violence under control across much of Republican territory, even amidst the intense paranoia, fear and suspicions circulating in cities under siege, and against the revolutionary experiments still underway.<sup>3</sup> Catholics in hiding, sheltering with friends, or otherwise protected by political authorities, were beginning to move about more freely, and there were small apertures beginning to open in which masses were being held in homes and private buildings. Newspaper reports, pamphlets and other cultural production represented a visible re-articulation of such ideas. Catholics could also tune in to their radios to hear publicly-renowned Catholic figures – including politicians, diplomats and intellectuals – stress their own loyalty to the legitimate, popularly elected government and its future aspirations, encouraging them to trust in the Republic for safety.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Carta colectiva de los obispos españoles a los de todo el mundo con motivo de la guerra de España, 1.VII.1937’, reprinted in Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VI*, 6-242 and Isidro Gomá y Tomás, *Por Dios y Por España. Pastorales – instrucciones pastorales y artículos – discursos – mensajes – apéndice, 1936–1939*, (Barcelona: Rafael Casulleras, 1940), pp. 560-90

<sup>2</sup> Shevawn Lynam, *The Spirit and the Clay*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954), p. 39

<sup>3</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 380. Increasingly those under threat were imprisoned, in part for their own protection – although the guaranteed safety of prisoners would remain of significant concern to Republican authorities

The mayhem being brought under control in Republican territory contrasted sharply with the state sanctioned, widespread and continuing violence being committed in rebel-occupied territory. From the first moments of the coup, and even in areas where there was no resistance, the new military authorities had deployed terror, presiding ‘over an extermination, mainly perpetrated by co-opted civilian death squads and vigilantes, of those sectors associated with Republican change’.<sup>4</sup> As Helen Graham makes clear, it was not only the politically active that were targeted, or those who had directly benefited from redistributive land or social and labour reform, but also those who symbolised cultural transformation.<sup>5</sup> Thus, lay Catholics committed to democratic change and progressive, liberal priests were targeted alongside other groups who ‘symbolised cultural change’, including ‘reformist teachers, self-educated workers, and ‘new’ women’.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter begins by exploring the lives and experiences of a number of those Catholics who were directly targeted by Francoist authorities and supporters of the military coup, including the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In doing so, it informs in important ways our understanding of the Francoist repression – not least as the Catholic Church and its vast associational networks in Spain have continued to propagate binary narratives of the civil war that ignore such violence against priests entirely.<sup>7</sup> For a multitude of reasons explained later in this thesis, the exception to this rule remains the execution of sixteen Basque priests during the autumn of 1936 and the imprisonment and exile of many more. However, as this chapter illustrates, clerical personnel and lay Catholics all across Spain were targeted.

Whilst the Church chose to deal with these progressive priests – almost all of whom had been outspokenly critical of the ecclesiastical hierarchy – through targeted propaganda campaigns that sought to discredit them publicly, and through the suspension of their ministries, Francoist authorities often pursued more violent means

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<sup>4</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, passim; Graham, *War and its Shadow*, pp. 19-20

<sup>5</sup> Graham, *Very Short Introduction*, p. 29

<sup>6</sup> Graham, *Very Short Introduction*, p. 29

<sup>7</sup> This is demonstrated above all by the Spanish Church’s ongoing efforts to beatify the ‘martyred’ victims of anticlerical violence in Republican territory during the first months of civil war. Beginning in the late 1980s, the process has continued through John Paul II’s papal successors and remains a prominent issue well into the twenty-first century. This process has also manifested itself in events ostensibly not concerned with the civil war – see for instance Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to Madrid for World Youth Day 2011, covered in *Público*, 14 August 2011 and 25 August 2011

of silencing such critics.<sup>8</sup> If anticlericalism in Republican territory cohered around understandings of the Church and its representatives as part of a particular, politicised social order to be dismantled, so too these progressive priests represented heretical dissent in the eyes of the rebels and their supporters, anathema to Francoist ideas of any future Spain.<sup>9</sup> And, whilst the concept of ‘right-wing anticlericalism’ is most commonly deployed in analyses of the relationship between the regime and priests influenced by the liberalising changes encouraged by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, it nevertheless offers fruitful, if cautious, conceptual possibilities here.<sup>10</sup>

The targeting of progressive priests and lay Catholics also inflects our understanding of the cumulative cultural and social impact of the war amongst Catholics remaining in Republican territory. For some, experiences of the first months of the war had concretised and confirmed their earlier understandings of the conflict and their place within the Republic. For others, coming ‘out of the catacombs’ into which they had retreated amidst the anticlerical violence of the summer of 1936, the discovery of what many Catholics faced in rebel-held territory also became an important shaper of identity and responses not only to the war, but their place in the Republic.<sup>11</sup> Some of these Catholics, far removed from liberal and progressive strands of Catholicism during the preceding years, found new places in a world that, reshaped by war, no longer seemed certain.

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<sup>8</sup> For the suspension of ministries, see amongst others Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá*, VII, 7-144, 7-218, VIII, 8-290; Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, p. 48, p. 136, p. 210; José Luís González Gúllon, ‘Leocadio Lobo: The Spanish Civil War as Viewed by a Priest Exiled in the United States of America’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 98(4), 2012, p. 734

<sup>9</sup> Alfonso Botti reminds us that anticlericalism must not be tied to any particular interpretation of social, economic and political realities, but what must remain in focus is that ‘anticlerical attitudes intend to limit the presence and influence of the clergy...and [their] ideologies and cultures (whether antireligious or religious)’, ‘Anticlericalismo y laicidad en la posguerra, la Transición y la democracia’ in Emilio La Parra López and Manuel Suárez Cortina (eds.), *El Anticlericalismo Español Contemporáneo*, (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1998), p. 305. Such as this is visible in the immediate postwar years, it might also usefully be explored during wartime

<sup>10</sup> Gregorio Alonso, ‘Children of a Lesser God: The Political and Pastoral Action of the Spanish Catholic Church’, in Gregorio Alonso and Diego Muro (eds.), *The Politics and Memory of Democratic Transition: The Spanish Model*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), pp. 122-3, p. 126; Rafael Cruz, “‘Sofía Loren, sí; Montini, no’”: Transformación y crisis del conflicto anticlerical, *Ayer*, 27, 1997, p. 199; Richards, *After the Civil War*, p. 254

<sup>11</sup> Exploring these acts of violence against clergy all over Spain ensures that they are correctly understood beyond quantitative analysis, through their ability to ‘shatter existing paradigms of meaning’ amongst eyewitnesses or more disparate constituencies which eventually learn of such events, a conceptual focus explored in Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver (eds.), *The Memory of Catastrophe*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 7

Reports of rebel violence against Catholic priests and lay Catholics, emerging in the Republican press from December 1936, indicated that the rebels had carried out such atrocities almost everywhere they had seized control.<sup>12</sup> Although the first of these reports would take some time to be confirmed and verified, Republican authorities alerted visiting diplomats and observers to such occurrences, whilst some Catholic priests rapidly incorporated such atrocities into their already vocal rebuttals of the legitimacy of the rebellion.<sup>13</sup> The reports, relayed by daily newspapers and at a multitude of public events, indicated that priests had been arrested, tortured, and executed in Seville, Badajoz, Cordoba, Orense, Navarre and Rio Tinto.<sup>14</sup> In most of these regions, the rebel military authorities had taken control almost immediately after the coup of July 1936, meeting little resistance. Nevertheless, the ensuing repression was ferocious. Brutality reigned, in keeping with General Mola's instructions about the need for acts of terror that were 'exemplary in terms of both their severity and the speed with which they will be carried out, without doubt or hesitation.'<sup>15</sup>

Such conditions were readily apparent across the deeply conservative Galicia, where the repression was massively disproportionate to the limited resistance that had taken place in the aftermath of the coup. As Paul Preston makes clear of the repression here, as elsewhere, 'essentially, the 'crime' of those executed was to have voted for the Popular Front, or to have challenged their own subordination as workers or as women.'<sup>16</sup> In all four of Galicia's provinces, the coup had been successful within days, but it was here that the former priest and now PSOE member Matías Usero Torrente was killed by the rebels. Usero Torrente's crime was that he had dared suggest socialism was a logical political option for Catholics, suggesting that both Christianity and socialism represented a 'revolutionary cry of the oppressed masses against tyranny and injustice.'<sup>17</sup> A striking challenge to the traditionalist Catholicism endorsed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the priest's ideas were based in a keen academic interest in the comparative study of religions in modern politics. Based on

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<sup>12</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 5 December 1936; *La Voz*, 16 December 1936

<sup>13</sup> *La Voz*, 16 December 1936. Juan García Morales spoke at length about these atrocities to an audience at an event in Almería organised by the local branch of the Federación de Viajantes

<sup>14</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 5 December 1936

<sup>15</sup> Emilio Mola Vidal, *Obras completas*, (Valladolid: Librería Santarén, 1940), p. 1173, quoted in Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 179

<sup>16</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 180

<sup>17</sup> Matías Usero Torrente, *La Iglesia católica y su política*, (Buenos Aires: IMAN, 1934)

missionary work in Argentina during the 1920s and his experiences in Spain, Usero Torrente had published a tract on the circumscription of religion within totalitarian regimes and, honed in that quotidian missionary work, he held a deep empathy for those on the margins of society.<sup>18</sup> On his return to Ferrol shortly before the proclamation of the Republic in 1931, Usero Torrente had joined the PSOE: a decision the priest saw logically, and expressed clearly – first in his 1930 pamphlet *Democracia y cristianismo*, but also in diverse news publications including *El Correo*, *El Sol* and *La Voz*.<sup>19</sup>

But it was not just Usero Torrente's public work for both the socialist party (PSOE) and its union (UGT) that ensured the priest was targeted. Much more damningly, he was also a member of the *Fraternidad de Cultura Ferrolana*, and the director of the politically radical *Escuela Racionalista* in Ferrol.<sup>20</sup> At once he belonged to a fraternity of schoolteachers believed by the Church to have poisoned the minds of the workers with liberal ideas, and with his books and pamphlets already added to the ecclesiastical prohibited list, Usero Torrente had been excommunicated from the Church. In the summer of 1936, as local civilians worked from accusations, party and union records, and reports came in from local collaborators and rumour, lists were made of those who had disturbed the traditional structures of politics and society.<sup>21</sup> With the repression in the city – and across Galicia more widely – notable for the high level of such denunciations by parish priests, the Falange or hostile neighbours, the Church in Ferrol was certainly not the 'egalitarian and democratic community' that the priest believed it should be.<sup>22</sup> In the lists provided by local rightists and the Church hierarchy, Usero Torrente's name appeared, and he was executed on 20 August 1936.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Usero Torrente, *Democracia y cristianismo*, (Valencia: Cuadernos de Cultura, 1930); see also Usero Torrente, *Las religiones del mundo desenmascaradas*, (Valencia: Biblioteca Orto, 1933)

<sup>19</sup> Usero Torrente, *La Iglesia*, p. 8

<sup>20</sup> Usero Torrente, *La Iglesia*. The book is dedicated to 'my ex-comrades in the UGT', suggesting that Usero Torrente had also been involved in trade union activity before 1934

<sup>21</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 198-203

<sup>22</sup> Usero Torrente, *La Iglesia*, p. 63. For a general overview of the repression in Galicia, see Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 212

<sup>23</sup> Francisco Espinosa Maestre and José María García Márquez, *Por la religion y la patria*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 2014), p. 144



In a pattern replicated all across rebel-occupied Spain, the intense involvement of local actors, including the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the ‘inside knowledge’ they offered was a crucial factor in identifying targets.<sup>24</sup> Such collaboration ensured the construction and coordination of a mass base of perpetrators and the involvement of the local community at the epicentre of this violence, purging the Catholic community of alternative voices, including priests that had suggested the compatibility of their faith with reformist tendencies or leftist and Republican political identity. Those voices had often been heard from the immutability of the pulpit, the stage from which those priests could speak out in God’s name. To speak so freely and daringly in front of a potentially hostile crowd came with a price – for priests who had spoken out in favour of the Republic or against the atrocities being committed by the rebels, the pulpit also became the stage of their trial. From within their Churches came their denunciations, and their flocks formed judge, jury and sometimes, executioner.

In Zaragoza, the capuchin monk Salvador de Híjar was horrified at the executions being conducted by Falangist patrols in the city, but was met with a far from receptive audience to his criticisms.<sup>25</sup> Members of his fellow order immediately ensured that the monk, whose real name was Manuel Cardona Iñigo, was transferred to Pamplona, to be kept under the watchful eye of Francoist authorities and where, in a bid to silence his criticisms, the monk remained dislocated from his surroundings or any sense of community.<sup>26</sup> Although it remains unclear how he was able to escape, by the late summer of 1937 it was clear that Salvador de Híjar had reached Republican territory, where he was given safety under the watchful eye of a Workers’ Union near to Castellón.<sup>27</sup> Radio Valencia and the newspaper *Heraldo de Castellón* would make much of the monk’s status, broadcasting news of his safekeeping within a region that had, for the first months of the war, seen widespread and incredibly virulent extrajudicial violence.<sup>28</sup> Unable to target Salvador de Híjar physically, the priest’s

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<sup>24</sup> Peter Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials: Terror and Complicity, 1939–1945*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 58; Anderson, ‘Singling Out Victims: Denunciation and Collusion in the Post-Civil War Francoist Repression in Spain, 1939–1945’, *European History Quarterly*, 39(1), 2009, pp. 16-22

<sup>25</sup> His thoughts appear in, for example, *Política*, 5 November 1937

<sup>26</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VIII*, 8-290 and 8-366

<sup>27</sup> AHN, FC-Causa General, 1398, Pieza 1, Exp. 5, p. 161, pp. 164-5 (Castellón); Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VII*, 7-519

<sup>28</sup> AHN, FC-Causa General, 1398, Pieza 1, Exp. 5, pp. 164-5 (Castellón); Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VIII*, 8-290

arrival in Valencia was a point of some concern for Cardinal Gomá and the rebel political authorities desperate to restrain and silence anything that problematised their crusade. Local ecclesiastical authorities soon reported to senior officials and the rebel political leadership, hoping to quickly discredit the monk and seeking also to portray the broadcasts from Radio Valencia as baseless ‘red’ propaganda.<sup>29</sup>

In La Rioja, denunciations by churchgoers led to the murder of the priest Antonio Bombín Hortelano, a Franciscan monk from the tiny village of Anguciana who had often spoken out about the social injustices of the region in his sermons. When military rebels reached the village from the nearby town of Haro, the village community provided names and addresses of those to be executed, including Bombín.<sup>30</sup> Confrontations with groups of rightist collaborators also led to the execution of priests in other parts of Spain: nearby to Usero Torrente’s hometown of Ferrol, local Falangists and other supporters of the military coup had spent much of the summer collecting funds for the September festival dedicated to the Virgin de los Remedios, a devotion tied intrinsically to the glories of the Spanish Empire.<sup>31</sup> With calls for the war effort to form a new *reconquista* to save Spain coming from the radical political right in the form of the Falange and from the Church, the festival neatly encapsulated the political-religious nexus at the heart of the rebel cause. But in the tiny hamlet of Val do Xestoso (A Coruña), the parish priest Andrés Ares Díaz refused to collaborate with their efforts and to donate funds to such an overtly political cause.<sup>32</sup> He was quickly met with accusations from Falangist vigilantes that he was channelling funds to the Republican resistance and that he was a member of the Comintern-organised Socorro Rojo Internacional.

Arrested and taken to the village of Barallobre, Ares was forced to confess his ‘crimes’ to the parish priest there, Antonio Casas. But this was not only about Ares and his denunciation: Casas too had provoked suspicion because of his efforts to stop the repression in Barallobre.<sup>33</sup> For the Francoist authorities and their civilian collaborators, the ultimate goal was to find both men guilty: as Paul Preston notes, ‘it

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<sup>29</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá*, VII, 7-519 and VIII, 8-290

<sup>30</sup> Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, pp. 142-3; see also Editorial España, *Lo que han hecho en Galicia: Episodios del terror blanco en las provincias gallegas*, (Editorial España: Paris, 1938), p. 196-8

<sup>31</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 213

<sup>32</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 213; Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, p. 144

<sup>33</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 213-4

was hoped that the distressing sight of his fellow priest about to be shot might pressure Father Casas into admitting that he had helped Republicans escape.<sup>34</sup> A coincidence of timing saved the life of Casas – whilst subjected to repeated interrogation and torture, Cardinal Gomá's expression of outrage at the murder of Basque priests came just in time to prevent him being shot. Ares, on the other hand, was much more unfortunate: after confessing to Casas he had been taken immediately to the local cemetery, without trial or due process, and executed in the dead of night on 3 October 1936.<sup>35</sup>

Whether Casas had helped Republicans to escape or otherwise, collaboration with the political left was more than enough to ensure priests would become likely targets. Such was the case in the murder of the priests Bernardo Blanco Gaztambide, professor of Latin at an institute in Astorga (León), and Mauricio Santaliestra Palacín, a member of the war committee of Grado, Asturias. In October 1936 Blanco was suspended of his priestly duties by the local bishop because he had been known to associate with Republicans and socialists before the war and had attended a number of local political meetings held by these 'enemies of the Church.'<sup>36</sup> His friendship with Republican and left-wing intelligentsia was far too much for a priest in León: arrested by local vigilantes on 21 October 1936, Blanco was taken to the prison of San Marcos in León. He refused to take off his cassock when he was shot later at Mount Villadangos del Páramo.<sup>37</sup>

Similar events surrounded the arrest and execution of Mauricio Santaliestra Palacín, who had been saved from the anticlerical fury seemingly because of his active involvement in the political life of his local community in Grado. In the aftermath of the military coup, Santaliestra had joined the town's newly organised war committee and the local branch of the communist party.<sup>38</sup> With the arrival of Francoist forces in late September 1937, after months of fighting just miles from the town, Santaliestra

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<sup>34</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 214

<sup>35</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 214

<sup>36</sup> The priest's murder was also given fictional expression in a novel written by his nephew Ramón Carnicer, *Todas las Noches Amanece* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janes, 1979); Olegario Negrín Fajardo, 'La depuración del profesorado de los institutos de segunda enseñanza', *Historia de la educación*, 24, 2005, p. 515; Wenceslao Alvarez Oblanca, *La guerra civil en León*, (León: Edileasa, 2009), pp. 58-9

<sup>37</sup> Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, p. 138

<sup>38</sup> CDMH, PS-Santander, CU, Caja. 9, Exp. 16

was arrested along with the rest of the town's wartime organisational committee. After interrogation at the hands of his military captors – and the local ecclesiastical hierarchy, who had been involved in the repression from the outset – Santaliestra was transported to the town of Avilés, where he was executed on 12 December 1937.<sup>39</sup> Reports from the execution remarked that the priest 'died a believer' both in his faith and in his wartime actions, much to the dismay of his Church superiors.<sup>40</sup>

All across rebel-occupied territory, local landowners, rightist supporters and Falangist militias provided key information, assistance and manpower in the conduct of the repression.<sup>41</sup> In this, the violence that occurred was eminently local, based on prevailing social relationships and cultural traditions, and yet a singular focus on such specificities disguises a particular and permanent level of homogeneity evident permeating that terror.<sup>42</sup> This homogeneity was most evident in the towns and villages where the coup had been immediately successful, where there had been little – if any – resistance and where the ensuing terror could not be attributed to engagement with civilian or military resistance.

This terror was organised and directed from above, through instructions and orders passed down from rebel military authorities, although much of the dirty work was carried out by the large numbers of *requetés*, Civil Guard and Falangists who worked alongside the military and played a key role in locating and denouncing suspects.<sup>43</sup> The involvement of these local collaborators remained key. They understood the specifics of their *pueblos* and the local environment – although they were a heterogeneous group and had often differing personal reasons for their collaboration, they went out searching for victims, murdering and raping, torturing, interrogating and denouncing people who they knew.<sup>44</sup> That everywhere this included

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<sup>39</sup> Espinosa Maestre and García Márques, *Por la iglesia*, p. 145

<sup>40</sup> Garralda, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 53

<sup>41</sup> Anderson, 'Singling Out Victims', p. 22

<sup>42</sup> This is discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis and Graham et al, 'Paul Preston, The Spanish Holocaust', pp. 139-68; see also Julius Ruiz, 'A Spanish Genocide? Reflections on the post-war Francoist repression', *Contemporary European History*, 14(2), 2005, pp. 171-91

<sup>43</sup> Evidence of such collaboration is examined throughout Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, see as an exemplary case the repression in Segovia, pp. 201-3

<sup>44</sup> Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials*, p. 58: one military prosecutor in Castilla-La Mancha declared to a military tribunal that it 'is not me that condemns them [the accused] but their own villages, their own enemies and their own neighbours'. Anderson also draws fruitful comparative analysis with civilian collaboration in other totalitarian regimes here, pp. 81-91

dissident priests as well as trade unionists, members of left-wing parties, elected municipal officials, schoolteachers, ‘new’ women, who had committed no crimes, revealed the repressive terror to be all-encompassing. That terror also extended to those whose family members were being sought. José Julve Hernández, the parish priest of Torralba de los Sisones, was arrested by local rightists and taken to the prison in Teruel, his ‘crime’ being that one of his relatives was a mayor of the Popular Front.<sup>45</sup> The execution of Julve on 25 July came with at least the tacit approval of Monsignor Anselmo Polanco, the Bishop of Teruel-Albarracín.<sup>46</sup> At least one other priest was killed with the knowledge of Polanco, who had made attempts on other occasions to save the lives of some of the urban poor targeted in his dioceses – efforts that only confirmed the seriousness with which the Bishop was willing to deal with alternative Catholicisms. This violence was intended to destroy the parties, organisations and individuals voicing such sentiments, and to create an environment of fear in order to deter any resurgence of such ideas.<sup>47</sup> Alternative Catholicisms were hunted down alongside all those others who had sympathised with, and represented, the Republican programme before and during the war, and the new languages of political and social rights wrought by its reformist ambitions.

If the murder of Basque priests was complicated by regional-nationalist politics, those victims remained tied intrinsically to a terror intended to exterminate alternative Catholicisms. The same was true in Catalonia, where pious Catalans were targeted viciously.<sup>48</sup> The extent of an almost racist hatred of regional nationalisms was more than evident in the terror unleashed in these two regions, but here as elsewhere, such venom was unleashed with vitriolic magnitude against those who dared link their progressive political choices integrally to their Catholic faith. The arrest and murder of the Basque priest Santiago Lucus Aramendia illustrates this more than somewhat. Following the fall of Guipúzcoa in September 1936, a number of parish priests had been detained in Vitoria, while others sought sanctuary in the same city. The first

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<sup>45</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 451

<sup>46</sup> The Bishop had earlier framed the war in a pastoral sent out to all his parish priests in the language of St. Augustine’s *Two Cities* – a war between good and evil. See Amador del Fueyo, *Heroes de la epopeya: el Obispo de Teruel*, (Barcelona: Editorial Amaltea, 1940), pp. 85-8

<sup>47</sup> Michael Richards, ‘Los límites de la cuantificación: represión franquista y metodología histórica’, *Hispania Nova*, 7, 2007, p. 21

<sup>48</sup> Andrew Dowling, *Catalonia since the Spanish Civil War; Reconstructing the Nation*, (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), pp. 33-4

victim of these executions was Lucus Aramendia, a captain in the military chaplaincy corps known for his socialist and humanist politics.<sup>49</sup> Well known in the local community for sympathising with the PSOE, he had witnessed the vast disparity in material wellbeing in his native Pitillas and had advocated the redistribution of land under the Republic.<sup>50</sup> Escaping the grassroots violence of the first weeks of the war, the priest had sought refuge in the Convento del Carmen de Vitoria, where in the relative calm of the city he was able to celebrate mass freely. He also utilised the huge Carmelite library to research the theological foundations of the Thomist theory of just war that was beginning to form the central element of an international intellectual confrontation. On 3 September, Carlists arrived with an order from the new civil governor to take Lucus to Pamplona.<sup>51</sup> The same day the priest was lined up before a firing squad in Undiano, who ridiculed him, demanding that he remove his cassock – symbolically excluding him from their Catholic community – before shooting him and burying him in an unmarked grave.

The stark reality of the repression was that these individuals could not be saved by virtue of being priests. If Cardinal Gomá was broadcasting in late September that the war was ‘clash of civilisation with barbarism, of the inferno against Christ’, ‘dissident’ priests were deemed by the rebels to exist outside their understanding of what it meant to be a Catholic.<sup>52</sup> This Manichean interpretation of the civil war and the Republic allowed no room for nuances or ambiguities. The conduct of the war behind that reductionist narrative did, however, encourage some other priests and lay Catholics to reconsider what had seemingly been clear choices in July 1936. With reports of arrests and executions often taking some time to appear in the Republican press, some eyewitnesses to the violence began to reconsider their positions. The priest José Fernandez, from Valladolid, abandoned his support for the rebel war effort after witnessing the repression in Old Castile; ‘the reason was the assassinations...on

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<sup>49</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 185

<sup>50</sup> Jesús Equiza, *Los sacerdotes navarros ante la represión de 1936–1937 y ante la rehabilitación de los fusilados*, (Madrid: Editorial Nueva Utopía, 2010), pp. 25-8; Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 185

<sup>51</sup> Equiza, *Los sacerdotes navarros*, pp. 25-8

<sup>52</sup> Isidro Gomá y Tomás, *Por Dios y Por España. Pastorales – instrucciones pastorales y artículos – discursos – mensajes – apéndice, 1936–1939*, (Barcelona: Editorial Casulleras, 1940), pp. 306-15

the other side it may have been worse, but there the assassinations weren't being carried out in the name of religion.'<sup>53</sup>

Other priests who had managed to escape the anticlerical violence of revolutionary zones in the Republic were arriving in rebel-occupied territory over the autumn and winter of 1936. Many were from Catalonia, including a number of *fejocistas* – members of the FJCC, the reformist social organisation dedicated to improving the lives of workers within a Catholic environment.<sup>54</sup> That many of these refugees would come to support the rebels, despite their previously-held democratic convictions, indicates above all the impact of war itself, which shattered pre-war identities and recasting new lives through searing experiences.<sup>55</sup> But there were others who attempted to remain true to their democratic convictions, quickly finding themselves in trouble in rebel-occupied Spain. These refugees included Albert Bonet, the Catalan priest and social reformer who, in the summer of 1936, had been able to escape revolutionary Barcelona with the aid of Generalitat authorities.<sup>56</sup>

Soon after arriving in Italy, Bonet had sought a return to rebel-held Spain, his intention to aid the many *fejocistas* who had also fled from across Catalonia. Unable to secure passage to Italy on board one of the packed ships chartered by the Republican authorities, many had made the dangerous journey beyond the libertarian and anarchist checkpoints of Catalonia and Aragon into Spain's interior.<sup>57</sup> With this in mind, Bonet arrived in Pamplona in November 1936, having already written to both Franco and Gomá, the Cardinal Primate of Spain, to confirm his plans.<sup>58</sup> Although his democratising efforts had often run outside of those proscribed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, with his terrifying experience of the summer of 1936 still weighing heavily on his understanding of the war, Bonet was nevertheless stunned at the hostility that greeted his arrival in Pamplona – he was met immediately with death threats and an outpouring of abuse that was remarkable, even after having barely escaped with his

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<sup>53</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 417

<sup>54</sup> Hilari Ragner, *Salvador Rial, Vicari del Cardenal de la Pau*, (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadía de Montserrat, 1993), p. 166

<sup>55</sup> Michael Seidman, *The Victorious Counterrevolution, The Nationalist Effort in the Spanish Civil War*, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), p. 83, 159

<sup>56</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, pp. 118-9; Arasa, *La federació*, pp. 195-7

<sup>57</sup> Arasa, *La federació*, p. 210

<sup>58</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 118

life from Barcelona.<sup>59</sup> It did not take Bonet long to recognise the need to leave as quickly as possible, the threats to his safety so great that two bishops offered to provide a personal escort to the French border.<sup>60</sup>

As the panic-stricken experiences of Father Bonet and others demonstrated, beneath the Manichean divide of ‘good versus evil’ the reality on the ground across Spain was multiform and, chaotic – indicative that, despite the rebel proclamation of their cause to be a patriotic and Catholic defence of the fatherland against an anticlerical Republic, the war’s religious landscape was terrifyingly fraught on all sides.<sup>61</sup> But since Catholics who had remained in Republican territory were continuing to negotiate their own positions, and with priests and lay Catholics across the news media making themselves increasingly heard, they were joined by many more Catholics increasingly perceptive of the destructive realities of the rebel ‘crusade.’

Corroborating how diverse groups of Catholics (and Spaniards more widely) made sense of this shifting war experience by analysis of reception is difficult. Coming to terms with their own peacetime and wartime pasts, their present circumstances and potential futures, was inevitably a difficult and lengthy experience. It was rarely written about and often confined to the subterranean levels of the self, even before the exigencies of wartime had transformed daily life into an experience more searing than ever, requiring total concentration on immediate need. Whilst some prominent priests and lay Catholics committed to the Republic produced material justifying their own positions, or demonstrating their political loyalties through direct action, their audiences often did not write about their own experiences, instead responding and reciprocating such ideas by attending rallies, purchasing and discussing pamphlets and taking part in other similar activities.

The processes of negotiating and renegotiating identities in the conflict were most visibly elucidated by cultural productions shaped inexorably by the lived experience of the war. Prominent examples caught the public imagination, such as the work of Georges Bernanos, the French Catholic author who had initially supported the

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<sup>59</sup> For Bonet’s pre-war social efforts, see chapter one of this thesis and for criticisms, particularly Martínez Hoyos, ‘La Acción Católica’, pp. 153-4

<sup>60</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 119

<sup>61</sup> Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, pp. 140-6



uprising, and who was able to record his transformation into a vocal and vociferous critic of Franco after witnessing the repression in Mallorca.<sup>62</sup> Appalled as he watched lorries filled with detained prisoners taken to be shot, Bernanos was told by military officials that more than two thousand people had been killed, including women and priests like Jeroni Alomar Poquet, shot in the cemetery of Palma because of his loud protests at the imprisonment of his brother Francesc, a member of the middle-class Catalanist Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya.<sup>63</sup> Over the first six months of the war, Bernanos had written a series of articles in the French Catholic periodical *Sept*, the content and tone of which chart his progression of thought towards the eventual publication of his book *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune*, which bitterly attacked the atrocities committed by the rebels.<sup>64</sup> Appalled at the conduct in Mallorca of those supposedly fighting a religious war, Bernanos spoke of the horror of priests aghast at the massacres perpetrated by the rebels – his publications giving visible expression to the fears and horrors felt by Bonet and many of the *feijocistas* desperately seeking an escape from rebel territory. But those atrocities continued, again evidence of the rebel effort to strike fear into local communities as the terror was extended far beyond those involved in armed resistance or real crimes. The fifty-eight year old priest Antoni Rosselló i Sabater was arrested because of his links with Father Alomar Poquet and because his own brother was the Republican Mayor of Bunyola, and sentenced to thirty years in prison.<sup>65</sup>

If Bernanos shocked an international audience with *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune*, his sentiments were echoed across a growing number of newspaper articles, pamphlets and propaganda work composed by Catholics inside and outside Spain. Growing numbers of Catholics were beginning to re-evaluate positions chosen – whether with conviction or through circumstance – at the start of the war, not least the Catalan priest Josep Maria Tarragó. As one story amongst many, the priest's experience interlocks with wider narratives of how the war itself impacted upon

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<sup>62</sup> Georges Bernanos, *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune* (Paris: Plon, 1938), reprinted in English as *A Diary of My Times*, (New York: Macmillan, 1938)

<sup>63</sup> Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp. 142-3; Nicolau Pons i Llinàs, *Jeroni Alomar Poquet: el capellà mallorquí afusellat pels feixistes el 1937*, (Palma de Mallorca: Lleonard Muntaner, 1995) pp. 62-75

<sup>64</sup> *Sept*, 27 November 1936 and 11 December 1936; Josep Massot i Muntaner, *Bernanos et la guerre d'Espagne*, (Paris: Salvator, 2001), p. 83, 95

<sup>65</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá*, VI, 6-96

people in new ways, allowing us to understand much about what was at stake qualitatively and to perceive the impact of the civil war on its protagonists.

Just as for his colleague Bonet, the reforming efforts and social work of the Catalan priest Tarragó had not guaranteed him safety from being ‘taken for a ride’ in revolutionary Barcelona. Saved from militia detention by Republican authorities, indicative of their own efforts to limit extrajudicial violence and regain control of public order, Tarragó was provided with passage aboard a ferry chartered to the French Riviera.<sup>66</sup> But despite the safety of French soil, the priest soon opted to return to Spain, employed as a reporter by the Catholic daily *La Croix*, one of France’s most prominent Catholic publications. It was clear from his first column that the anticlericalism of revolutionary Barcelona had deeply influenced him: he reported to the readers of the French daily that in Navarre, many people ‘have not hesitated to resort to arms, to take to the streets...to end this policy of persecuting religious beliefs and traditions, and to prevent the establishment of a Red Spain.’<sup>67</sup> There the Churches were ‘full of people’ he said, a far cry from the bloody violence on the streets of Barcelona. One town even proudly declared that all of its ‘heroic’ adult male inhabitants had marched off to war, while in others able bodied men were sent back home because there were simply too many volunteers.<sup>68</sup>

Working under the pseudonym ‘Victor Montserrat’, the Catalan priest’s early reports portrayed the war in terms indistinguishable from rebel propaganda – a popular crusade, a war for God and for Spain. In one report, Tarragó described the arrival of insurgent troops in a small village near Somosierra, the mountain pass in the Sierra de Guadarrama north of Madrid.<sup>69</sup> The narrative was heavily imbued with religious symbolism: arriving rebels were reportedly greeted with cheering inhabitants and adulation, their efforts to ‘save Spain’ interspersed and contrasted with lurid stories of ‘red’ persecution and destruction – in this particular village, rebel troops found the local Church burned almost to the ground, its priest dead inside, chained to his altar to burn alongside it. The anonymity of the village itself ensured that Tarragó’s narrative formulation of liberation from anticlerical persecution could – and

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<sup>66</sup> Arasa, *La Federació*, pp. 198-9; Batalla, *Jaume Miravittles*, p. 428

<sup>67</sup> *La Croix*, 23 December 1936

<sup>68</sup> Antonio Pérez de Olaguer, *Estampas Carlistas*, (Madrid: Ed. Tradicionalista, 1950), p. 341

<sup>69</sup> *La Croix*, 7 January 1937

would – represent the Republican zone much more widely to the readers of *La Croix*. It is through these unerring descriptive – not analytical – frameworks that Tarragó engaged his audience: he ended one column in *La Croix* by asking ‘who can calculate the sufferings of these new martyrs? Who will ever know all the heroism displayed by the clergy during the present revolution?’<sup>70</sup> That narrative of clerical martyrdom also worked to conceal the realities of rebel violence against the clergy: much more widely, the brutal programme of repression formulated and conducted by the insurgent forces against ‘liberated’ communities is hidden from view, obscured in Tarragó’s columns by a continued focus upon the persecution of religious believers in Republican territory. The priest’s experiences with the columns of insurgent soldiers on the outskirts of Madrid are immediately followed by his ‘recollections’ of the ‘situation in Barcelona’ where, the readers of *La Croix* were informed, ‘gangs of women’ patrolled the city streets ‘hunting’ priests.<sup>71</sup>

Over the early months of 1937, as Tarragó began to recognise increasingly that the war was not being fought across such an easily distinguishable religious landscape, his reports turned away from the narrative of crusade.<sup>72</sup> His experience of the war in the Basque Provinces had proved deeply troublesome – Tarragó could only lament the fact that for many of those thousands mortally wounded on the battlefields, ‘their lips approached the same crucifix.’<sup>73</sup> At this point the priest-turned-reporter could only explain this paradox ‘in the ongoing persecution’ by the ‘desperate hope’ of nationalism. With a fuller understanding of the war constrained by his own brief, terrifying experience of the revolutionary Republican zone, Tarragó was nevertheless conscious that ‘it is very painful for the friends of Spain to see, in the ongoing persecution, Catholics themselves divided... for us Catholics, it is the most painful episode that takes place today in Spain. Catholics and Catholics are fighting each other.’ It was the first of many philosophical questions the priest would ask of himself – coming to terms with the war in this way was, for many thousands of Spaniards, a long and difficult process.

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<sup>70</sup> *La Croix*, 7 January 1937

<sup>71</sup> *La Croix*, 7 January 1937

<sup>72</sup> *La Croix*, 1 January 1937; 7 January 1937; 9 January 1937

<sup>73</sup> *La Croix*, 1 January 1937 and 2 January 1937

As with priests, so too many socially conservative Catholic army officers in Republican ranks had demonstrated a loyalty to the Republic based fundamentally in complex understandings of their duty as Catholic citizens. Many career officers had interpreted their roles in the first hours of the conflict as based unflinchingly in the obligations of military professionalism, driven not only by a deep respect for a sworn military oath but also by a deeply profound Catholicism.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, on this point Catholic doctrine seemed clearest of all; reminding soldiers that what they had ‘no right to do is recur to sedition.’<sup>75</sup> The loyalty of such career officers, their world detonated by the coup, encompassed a multitude of decisions – from those who chose carefully to defend political and ideological values espoused by the Republic with their lives, to those whose sworn allegiance to a military oath shattered family ties and lifelong friendships. The military capabilities of such career officers, if not always an identifiable ‘political’ loyalty, revealed the labyrinthine complexities of the conflict – and indeed ensured that they quickly rose to prominent leadership positions, their skill and bravery admired, acknowledged and required.<sup>76</sup>

The observations made by Tarragó in the Basque country were thus indicative of dynamics much wider, as contemporary observers noted the existence of such soldiers. It was of the ‘fidelity’ and ‘legalistic commitment’ of these Catholic soldiers, ‘even in spite of the continuous suspicions’ of many of their colleagues, that the military attaché lieutenant-colonel Henri Morel reported back to the French defence minister.<sup>77</sup> And, with the pressing need to construct a conventional military machine to confront the rebels, the cumulative process of mass mobilisation – in part through ever expanding conscription – saw the Republican armed forces buoyed further by recruits who included large numbers of Catholics.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Although he was arrested within days of the coup, the case of Leoncio Jaso Paz is indicative here – Jaso had carefully considered the order to rebel, and instead ‘with ample time’ chose to report to the town’s Republican civil governor late in the afternoon of 18 July; Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, pp. 409-10; *La Libertad*, 25 April 1937

<sup>75</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *Crusade or Class War?*, p. 9

<sup>76</sup> Examples of such practicing Catholic army officers appear amongst others in Zaragoza, *Ejército Popular*, pp. 262-4, 289-92, 295-300; Cerdón, *Trayectoria*, pp. 255-7. For media reportage of such promotions, see amongst others *El Luchador*, 11 November 1937; *Gaceta de la República: Diario Oficial*, 27 December 1937; *La Vanguardia*, 17 May 1938

<sup>77</sup> SHD/DAT, Série N 1920-1940, 7 N 2755 EMA/2, 15 March 1937 and 22 March 1937

<sup>78</sup> Matthews, *Reluctant Warriors*, pp. 22-3, 27-8

Within months of the first influx of conscripts in October 1936, the Republican military leadership had sought to appeal directly to such Catholics.<sup>79</sup> This was part of a much wider mobilising strategy, crucial not least because a reconstructed Republican Army had to incorporate an array of hugely different political and social backgrounds – including many who considered themselves practising Catholics but were fearful of their place in the Republic. One soldier, who before the war had been a member of the Catholic FJCC, was urged to speak to his comrades by one of the army’s political commissars – doing so, he declared his belief in the struggle for ‘the desire for social improvement, our desire for spiritual perfection.’<sup>80</sup> In this, the young Catholic’s words would be echoed by those of a pamphlet published by Socorro Rojo six months later and distributed amongst soldiers and civilians alike. That pamphlet stressed a shared ‘spiritual life that commonly manifests in...[the soldier’s] sacrifice for the ideal, in his magnificent solidarity in Christian detachment from worldly goods and their [Marxist] heroic example of natural virtues.’<sup>81</sup> Those same ideas also appeared in the trench publication *UHP*, its distribution concentrated around Guadalajara, which in January 1937 published a lengthy, full page article entitled ‘the words of a priest.’ The piece, written by the priest Juan Herranz, appeared as part of a double page spread addressed to all *camaradas combatientes* and portraying a fight for an open future, a ‘new spirit of a future Spanish society.’<sup>82</sup> Herranz, a self-styled ‘proletarian priest’ declared that ‘true Christians’ would see heavenly rewards in ‘collaborat[ing] in the fight against fascism and siding with the communists.’<sup>83</sup>

Had the clerical correspondent for *La Croix* reported on battlefields across Spain, he would have quickly observed that ‘Catholics were fighting Catholics’ far beyond the trenches of the Basque Country. Perhaps more importantly here though is that Tarragó’s experiences and reports were indicative of much wider dynamics, as identities were being forged and reforged in the maelstrom of events and experiences that had shaped the first year of the war. Just as Tarragó now increasingly understood

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<sup>79</sup> Mijaíl Koltsov’s biography of General Vicente Rojo can be understood as part of this process, Koltsov, *Diario*, diary entries of 20 December and 21 December 1936, pp. 343-6

<sup>80</sup> Pere Codinach i Verdaguer, *La Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya, (FJCC 1931-1936): la seva mentalitat moral, la seva influència social*, (Barcelona: Editorial Claret, 1990), p. 133

<sup>81</sup> *Religión y fascismo*, (Unknown: Comité Ejecutivo Nacional del Socorro Rojo de España, 1937)

<sup>82</sup> *UHP, milicias antifascistas alcarreñas*, 22 January 1937. In December 1936, *UHP* had also published an anonymously written piece entitled ‘Catholics, on our side’, *UHP*, 25 December 1936

<sup>83</sup> *UHP*, 22 January 1937

the ‘painful’ complexities of a war represented by the rebels as a religious crusade, so too all across the Republic, ordinary men and women were giving meaning to the war through their own lived experience. Thus appeals to Republican soldiers – volunteers and conscripts alike – encouraged Catholics to believe they had a vital role to play in the struggle ‘for the people, at the centre of the consciences of the world’ and, appealing to ‘Christians of good faith, believers who aspire to a better life’, appeals urged ‘Catholics apply the lessons...of a priest [Herranz] who has not renounced his beliefs to come to our side.’<sup>84</sup> Beyond the rebel narrative of a ‘crusade’, Catholics in the Republic were encouraged to understand the conflict through a narrative of socially equalising change being assaulted by the traditional forces of order and their destructive return to an older vision of society.

Importantly here, there were many priests and lay Catholics (and others) who were reciprocating and responding to this narrative of the war through their own experiences, as Republican efforts to rebuild a democratic polity and the conduct of the rebel war effort seemed to conform ever more to this broadly-defined narrative. With José María Tarragó beginning to develop concerns about the implications of the rebel ‘New Spain’ through his reportage – in a war now further complicated in his mind through the observance of ‘Catholics on all sides’ – a meeting with Falangist militiamen in December 1936 only prompted further introspection amidst deeply troubling ambiguities.<sup>85</sup> The priest was deeply shocked by the declaration of one Falangist that the ‘social encyclicals of the papacy had no place in Spanish society’.<sup>86</sup> With a reading of such papal encyclicals the basis for conservative, restrictive Catholic social efforts as much as for more progressive, egalitarian options, the comments forced Tarragó to reconsider what he had previously understood, even in the most basic terms, as a shared effort to anchor quotidian life across Spain in some form of humanitarian Catholicism. It seemed clear to Tarragó here that perhaps united less by a shared interest in Catholicism, the rebels were united through mutually-desired ‘barbarism’ – the destruction not only of the current Popular Front incarnation of Republican government, but the very concept of the Republic itself.<sup>87</sup> Convinced that this ideologically shared rejection of democracy ‘inevitably leads to the

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<sup>84</sup> *UHP*, 22 January 1937

<sup>85</sup> *La Croix*, 31 December 1936 and 9 January 1937

<sup>86</sup> *La Croix*, 31 December 1936 and 9 January 1937

<sup>87</sup> *La Croix*, 9 January 1937

establishment of a totalitarian regime,' Tarragó was rapidly coming to understand the fate meted out to 'disloyal' Catholics by the Francoist authorities was as severe as any violence in Republican territory.<sup>88</sup>

Horrified by the realities of rebel violence, and coming to understand that many of the 'reds' defending the villages that he had witnessed being 'liberated' had subsequently been executed, Tarragó's thoughts were drawn again to the future. And picturing Spain beyond war, he thought back to his long conversations with 'all classes of society,' of whom 'all, without distinction, gave me the same response...Peace. Those of the humble classes added, we also want to work.'<sup>89</sup> In many ways, Tarragó the social reformer, determined to reconcile Catholicism with social justice, was recast from the experience of the oppression of the country's poor and workers. Their understanding of the war grew increasingly distant from both the complex theology of a 'just war' deployed by much of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the martyrological literature – thematically identical to the wartime speeches and news summaries published by the rebel authorities – being published by religious personnel and lay Catholics from 1937.<sup>90</sup> Their experiences seemed closer to interpretations of the war being offered by those who had supported the Republic before the war, justifying their support in siding with 'the masses' and their 'revolutionary dreaming and their anguished hope of a better humanity,' deploying Christian values and teachings which they claimed had been abandoned by the institutional Church.<sup>91</sup>

Those changing ideas and the shifting of allegiances were often riddled with doubt, as individuals sought to reconcile their own hopes and dreams for the future of Spain with the realities of rebel-occupied territory. But in the very dynamics of these ongoing processes, these Catholics stood far removed from that static, hierarchised and repressive nation under construction. There was no place for such doubt, nor for dissenters, in the ideal static society sought by rebel Spain. And so the Church, in

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<sup>88</sup> *La Croix*, 8 January and 9 January 1937

<sup>89</sup> *La Croix*, 9 January 1937

<sup>90</sup> Estelrich, *La persecución religiosa*; Antonio Pérez de Olaguer, *El terror rojo en Cataluña*, (Burgos: Ediciones Antisectarios, 1937); Constantino Bayle, *¿Qué pasa en España? A los católicos del mundo*, (Salamanca: Delegación del Estado para Prensa y Propaganda, 1937); Luis Carreras, *Grandeza cristiana de España. Notas sobre la persecución religiosa*, (Toulouse: Les Frères Douladoure, 1938)

<sup>91</sup> See for example the interpretations of the war expressed throughout Gallegos Rocafull, *Crusade or Class War?*

exercising its disciplinary functions on behalf of that rebel society, sought to deal with these increasingly critical constituencies not only through the moral justification of violence against them, but through active protagonism in their targeting, arrest and – in some cases – execution.<sup>92</sup> It revealed a striking homogeneity in the forms and functions of repressive violence conducted by, with the assistance of, and on behalf of the Church against such priests and lay Catholics. Catholics would be given no quarter by Francoist authorities for their involvement in the Republican war effort: later, in April 1938, the politician Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera would be executed for his work in the Generalitat despite his devout, conservative Catholicism.<sup>93</sup>

Even Tarragó, despite the complexities of his situation, was quickly identified and targeted by rebel propagandists. On 8 January 1937, the day that Tarragó called the insurgent war effort a ‘triumph of barbarism,’ Juan Flors of the ACNdeP, working in Lourdes, wrote an urgent letter to Cardinal Gomá, informing the primate that the changing nature of Tarragó’s reports were ‘disastrous’ for the rebellion and that ‘an anarchist or a mason would not do better.’<sup>94</sup> Flors’ sentiments were echoed by José Antonio de Sangróniz, one of Franco’s chief diplomats, who wrote to Gomá complaining about the ‘sad and unfortunate campaign’ against the rebellion ‘conducted by newspapers like *La Croix*’.<sup>95</sup> From then on, Gomá’s office engaged with political, military and Church officials across Spain in an almost daily exchange of letters that would last for months.<sup>96</sup>

By this time too, extensive measures had been taken against other priests who had spoken out against the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>97</sup> Although it was unproven, there were suggestions that the Catalan priest Joan Vilar i Costa had been suspended as a priest because of his work with Republican authorities. Vilar’s suspension seems

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<sup>92</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 198; Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, “‘Loving the Punished’”, The Prison System and the Church in the Post-War Period’, in Peter Anderson and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco (eds.), *Mass Killings and Violence in Spain, 1936-1952: Grappling with the Past*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 138

<sup>93</sup> Hilari Ragner, *Divendres de passió; Vida i mort de Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera*, (Barcelona: Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, 1984), pp. 342-4, pp. 352-3; Albert Manent and Josep Raventós, *L’Església clandestina a Catalunya durant la Guerra Civil (1936-1939)*, (Barcelona: Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, 1988), p. 179

<sup>94</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-34

<sup>95</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-332

<sup>96</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VII*, 7-144; 7-218

<sup>97</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VII*, 7-144, 7-218



likely in light of the targeting of the Madrid-based parish priest Leocadio Lobo, who had also been suspended and prohibited from celebrating the sacraments in December 1936. In the decree suspending Lobo, Bishop Eijo justified the measures on account of the priest's 'scandalous public behaviour' in giving support in his radio appearances and writings 'to the enemies of the Church and of the fatherland.'<sup>98</sup> Gomá's office was also busy working to investigate Salvador de Híjar's escape to Republican territory, communicating with Capuchin ecclesiasts to ensure the monk was removed from the order.<sup>99</sup>

These 'dissident' priests now also included José María Tarragó, a concern much more immediate for the priest given that he still remained in rebel-occupied Spain. He was soon arrested and imprisoned in Salamanca in February 1937.<sup>100</sup> Like so many detainees in Francoist gaols, his crimes were deemed political and, like many more subject to the arbitrary justice of this vast repressive universe, his fate was in the hands of influence and luck as much as trial and evidence. In a strange twist of irony, it was only the support of Severino Aznar – the Christian democrat who had offered his support to the insurgency almost immediately in July 1936 – that saw Tarragó freed after two traumatic weeks.<sup>101</sup>

Crossing the border into France, the searing experience of war had dramatically reshaped what Tarragó thought he understood about Spain. The priest had written his final column for *La Croix* in January but now, in the midst of a striking worldwide expression of popular outrage against the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica on 26 April 1937, his sentiments echoed widely.<sup>102</sup> A colleague at *La Croix*, Jean Caret, urged Catholics on all sides to 'love one another', whilst in Paris a group of leading Catholic intellectuals including Cardinal Verdier, the archbishop of Paris, Jacques Maritain and Francois Mauriac amongst other ecclesiastics and lay Catholics

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<sup>98</sup> González Gúllon, 'Leocadio Lobo', p. 734. González Gúllon refers to Garay's statement in ACCAM, Leocadio Lobo, XV, A13, Leopoldo Eijo Garay, 'A los enemigos de la Iglesia y de la Patria, 5 December 1936

<sup>99</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VIII*, 8-290

<sup>100</sup> Manent et al. (eds.), *Diccionari d'història eclesiàstica*, p. 501; Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, p. 82 fn. 160 suggests that Tarragó's arrest was made following a meeting with Miguel de Unamuno, who died in December 1936

<sup>101</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, p. 82 fn. 160

<sup>102</sup> Indeed, criticisms of the rebel bombing of Republican cities were already prominent in the domestic media, see for instance the open letter written by a group of Catholic priests protesting the bombing of Madrid, *La Vanguardia*, 27 January 1937

formed the Ligue Internationale des Amis des Basques.<sup>103</sup> Mauriac would soon after claim forcefully that ‘one does not exterminate an old Christian people such as the Basques simply because they believed they were not duty bound to revolt.’<sup>104</sup> That Mauriac then drew direct comparisons between the suffering of the Basques and the future suffering of France indicated that the bombing of the market town of Guernica was an artefact of its times, fixed in the nightmare of widespread aerial attacks against civilians.<sup>105</sup> And whilst Guernica itself would become immortalised in Picasso’s giant painting, it was the culmination of a process that had already affected towns and cities across the Republic, not least the Basque town of Durango, the focus of a French pamphlet *Durango, Martyred Town*, which appeared at the same time as Tarragó’s criticisms became more vocal. The pamphlet hammered home a critique of the crusade, including a shocking photograph of a dead Basque priest, lying inert in front of images of the Mother and Child. This deformed Baroque scene can only have been in the mind of the Basque cleric and social worker Albert Onaindia, when he wrote to Cardinal Gomá following the bombing of Guernica, begging ‘for dignity, for the honour of the gospel, for Christ’s infinite pity, such a horrendous, unprecedented, apocalyptic, Dantesque crime cannot be committed.’<sup>106</sup> Onaindia, thirty-four years old and working in Valladolid as the canon of the city cathedral, had found himself in Guernica only by chance – travelling away from the frontlines towards Bilbao. There, Onaindia would recount his testimony to the Basque president Aguirre and then to a multitude of press reporters in France.<sup>107</sup>

Interviews with Father Onaindia appeared in the press with great immediacy. The left-leaning progressive Catholic journal *L’Aube* published one of the first reports under the headline ‘The Martyrdom of Guernica’ followed closely by publications including the communist *L’Humanite* and the Bordeaux newspaper *La France de Bordeaux et du Sud-Ouest*.<sup>108</sup> From there, further interviews, reproductions and excerpts of Onaindia’s eyewitness accounts flooded large-circulation secular and Catholic newspapers across France, Belgium and the Netherlands. So too in Britain

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<sup>103</sup> *La Croix*, 8 May 1937

<sup>104</sup> *Le Figaro*, 17 June 1937

<sup>105</sup> *Le Figaro*, 17 June 1937

<sup>106</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 435

<sup>107</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!*, pp. 139-40

<sup>108</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!*, pp. 140-1

and France, Republican propaganda agencies rushed out pamphlets and brochures to government officials and sympathetic political and aid organisations.<sup>109</sup>

The eyewitness testimony provided by Onaindia was also reproduced by Josép María Tarragó, although no longer writing for *La Croix*. Tarragó's place as a thorn in the side of the insurgency was reconfirmed with the rapid emergence of a book written under the name Victor Montserrat – the pseudonym Tarragó had used for his newspaper columns – from the small French publishing house H.G. Peyre.<sup>110</sup> Appearing just weeks after Guernica had been razed, the book offered a blow by blow deconstruction – and destruction – of the insurgency's claim to legitimacy. The book also contained one of the first full reproductions of the Basque priest Onaindia's letter to Gomá, his eyewitness corroboration of the destruction now reproduced and circulated amongst an international audience.<sup>111</sup> Gripping French audiences, the book's focus on the obliteration of the historic market town of Guernica resonated with their own fears of aerial bombardment.

With a relatively small print run quickly exhausted by the French public, the author and Catholic intellectual François Mauriac agreed to provide a foreword to a much-anticipated second edition. With a Republican pavilion also already under construction at the important *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, opening in Paris in May 1937, the book's timing – and indeed the involvement of Mauriac – dealt a further hammer blow to rebel efforts to sell the narrative of crusade to the European public.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, the destruction of Guernica brought a level of condemnation of the rebel war effort that had not been seen before from Catholic communities. With Catholics now siding with the Republic to a greater extent than had been popularly understood before, the Republic's credentials as a modern European state with an ideological commitment to progressive liberal, humanist politics appeared to be reconfirmed. The book also performed a valuable role in refocusing public attention – it was this that the Popular Front government was

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<sup>109</sup> See for instance the pamphlet *Guernica*, published by Republican authorities in Basque, English, French and Spanish and distributed in Britain, France and Spain via local propaganda offices.

<sup>110</sup> Victor Montserrat, *Le drame d'un peuple incompris. La guerre au Pays Basque*, (Paris: H.G. Peyre, 1937)

<sup>111</sup> Montserrat, *Le drame*, pp. 70-5

<sup>112</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!* p. 153

counting on to support its vital ongoing diplomatic efforts to break the Republic's international isolation.

The book's publication was of immense concern to the ecclesiastical hierarchy in rebel-occupied Spain. Correspondence between Cardinal Gomá and rebel political authorities continued, with the ecclesiast soon speaking again of Tarragó's 'antics' and 'dangerous excesses', embarrassed that the Catalan thorn had once been their guest. So too Onaindia was targeted, labelled an 'imposter' guilty of 'unworthy and scandalous conduct.'<sup>113</sup> Later, in the months leading up to the publication of the book's second edition, there were circulating rumours that repeated attempts had been made by the insurgency's Oficina de Prensa y Propaganda in Paris to pay off the publishing house in the hope of preventing the book's re-release.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, the second edition – including Mauriac's preface, which had also appeared as a stand-alone article in *Le Figaro* in July 1937 – was released to a solid public reception. For months Gomá had continued to receive correspondence on an almost daily basis concerning the priest and, on the anniversary of the fall of Bilbao almost a year after the book had first appeared, Ramón Serrano Suñer used the occasion an opportunity to attack Tarragó further. Referring to Tarragó as a 'monster' who had 'stained the honour of Spain' wearing the 'costume of a Spanish priest,' the vitriol with which Serrano Suñer spoke reconfirmed that the events surrounding Tarragó were an embarrassment to the ecclesiastical authorities which reverberated long after.<sup>115</sup> But despite the best efforts of the rebel authorities and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, they remained unable to silence these critical Catholic voices in practice. Joining the pro-Republican Catholic minority which had developed before 1936, these newer dissenters posed problems for the rebels that were being exacerbated to a greater extent than ever before. Domestically they remained small in number, but in the

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<sup>113</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!* p. 147; according to the Basque journal *Euzko Deya*, authorities in Valladolid had even tried to claim that Onaindia himself was a propaganda fabrication

<sup>114</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-34

<sup>115</sup> *ABC* (Sevilla), 21 June 1938; *Labor*, 23 June 1938. The drama continued to reach an international audience, where in January 1939 the *Catholic Herald* published an article concerning a recent speech made by 'the extremist Italian fascist leader', Roberto Farinacci, who condemned the 'so-called religious Victor Montserrat' and *La Croix* for its 'partisan' (anti-Francoist) attitude to the war; See *The Catholic Herald*, 7 January 1939

international eye, they threatened the prestige afforded to the crusade which remained of such crucial value to the rebels.

It was as a direct consequence of growing international discomfort at the rebel war effort – the controversy and outrage over the destruction of Guernica dramatically accelerating such processes – that on 1 July 1937 the Spanish Episcopate published their collective pastoral letter to the world. If it was not already evident, the pastoral indicated officially, and to an international audience, that the Church had consecrated the rebellion as a defence of Catholic values. Composed by Cardinal Gomá, and with some alterations by the Salamancan ecclesiast Plá y Deniel, the letter argued that the rebels had taken up arms to ‘save religious principles’ from those set on the ‘elimination of Catholicism in Spain’ and the ‘extermination of the Catholic clergy.’<sup>116</sup> It was far from a measured response from the ecclesiastical hierarchy to the anticlerical violence that had occurred in Republican territory during the first months of the war. The document subverted the very nature of the civil war as a socioeconomic conflict, exaggerating the parameters of anticlerical violence and returning to the ideas that also lay behind suggestions of a ‘Jewish-Masonic-Bolshevik’ conspiracy in Spain, popularly held amongst those social constituencies lined up behind the rebel war effort.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, this was part of a deep-rooted and shared political culture in which the ecclesiastical hierarchy had long played a dominant role, and whilst the letter was ‘undertaken on Franco’s initiative, intended for foreign bishops and directed, through them, at international Catholic opinion’, its content was firmly believed by Gomá and its signatories.<sup>118</sup> As explained by the priest and historian Hilari Ragner, the letter was targeted centrally at combating hostility to the rebel war effort from the international press. Addressed to ecclesiastical hierarchies across the world, and through them their faithful – with pastoral letters intended to guide the consciences of the laity – the letter built upon earlier discussions amongst the Spanish hierarchy regarding the ‘fruitfulness’ of such a letter, now

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<sup>116</sup> Gomá, *Por Dios y Por España*, pp. 564-9

<sup>117</sup> Herbert R. Southworth, *Conspiracy and the Spanish Civil War; the Brainwashing of Francisco Franco*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 24-5

<sup>118</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 109

directed from above by Franco and with the Church having fully ‘subordinated itself to the propaganda of the insurgents.’<sup>119</sup>

The letter was signed by almost all of Spain’s bishops, with only five signatures absent.<sup>120</sup> It was a response indicative of the long-standing, conservative political protagonism of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Mateo Múgica, the Bishop of Vitoria and Vidal i Barraquer, the Cardinal Archbishop of Tarragona, both abstained. Múgica refused to sign as a result of his horror at the execution of priests by the rebels.<sup>121</sup> Vidal i Barraquer, part of a historically liberal, progressive Catalan Church, refused to sign the letter, believing that much it contained could be understood as a ‘political interpretation’ of the war that could endanger the safety of Catholics in the ‘uncertain conditions’ of the Republican zone.<sup>122</sup> Far from ‘illuminating the consciences of Spanish Catholics’, the letter officially confirmed the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s support for the ‘crusade’ – though it did not refer to such a term explicitly.

Cardinal Gomá found plenty of receptive listeners in his insistence that ‘clear-sighted observers have been able to write these words about the war: “it is a race of speed between Bolshevism and Christian civilisation.”’<sup>123</sup> For among conservative sectors across Europe, old fears of revolution were since 1917 deeply ingrained and the Second Republic’s reforming agenda and social egalitarianism was now seen through the revolutionary wave of – especially anticlerical – violence. Thus the letter ignored the complicated reality of the war, reducing the vast social and political conflicts being played out into a religious war, within a framework concerned only with the ‘salvation of Catholic Spain’. Making use of many ideas that permeated the traditional thought of the Catholic right in Spain to legitimise the Francoist war effort, the letter itself stated that ‘whilst we condemn in the name of justice and Christian charity all the excesses that might have been committed, whether by mistake or by people of lower rank, and from which reports have been spread about in exaggerated form abroad, we state here that such stories bear no relation to the truth.’ In some ways even milder in tone – given its international audience – than the individual

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<sup>119</sup> Raguer, *Gunpowder*, pp. 109-11

<sup>120</sup> Raguer, *Gunpowder*, pp. 110-13

<sup>121</sup> Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra*, p. 158; Múgica’s initial protest against those executions is also discussed earlier, pp. 102-3

<sup>122</sup> Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra*, pp. 157-8; Thomas, *Faith and the Fury*, thesis, p. 20

<sup>123</sup> ‘Carta colectiva de los obispos españoles’; Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra*, pp. 151-61

pastorals its signatories had produced over the last year, the letter went on to make the claim that ‘there exists an enormous and unbridgeable gulf’ between the principles and forms of justice ‘administered and applied in this war by one side and by the other.’<sup>124</sup>

On the one hand, the joint letter had an impact it was scarcely possible to surpass – it was perhaps the biggest propaganda victory thus far for the rebels. It was an achievement made considerably more important in the aftermath of the April 1937 bombing of the Basque towns of Durango and Guernica, attacks that had echoed with nightmarish resonance amongst a European population terrified of the prospective aerial bombardment of their own cities. It was made significantly worse for the Francoist cause that these were indisputably Catholic towns, and that priests and nuns numbered amongst the civilian dead.<sup>125</sup> When the letter was finally released to the press in mid-August, over five hundred bishops from across the world responded in positive terms. Catholic newspapers responded similarly, and with their distribution widespread amongst the Catholic faithful, support for the letter was commonplace.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, it had already become increasingly difficult to refer to anticlerical violence in the republican zone. Attacks upon the Church in the republican zone had become ever rarer from late 1936 as Republican authorities began to wrestle back control from libertarian revolutionary organisations, culminating in the breaking of the POUM – and CNT – dominated ‘libertarian Barcelona’ earlier in May 1937.<sup>127</sup>

Wide-ranging assaults on the collective letter came immediately from Catholics across the Republican polity. Joan Vilar i Costa, the priest behind the Republic’s religious *Boletíns de Información*, anonymously wrote and published a precise and damning condemnation of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in a three-hundred-page book. Rebuking the ‘supposed pious side’ in the conflict for not only ‘killing

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<sup>124</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 116

<sup>125</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 434

<sup>126</sup> Flint, “‘Must God Go Fascist?’”, p. 369. The Archbishop of Westminster, Arthur Hinsley, declared in response to criticisms of the letter’s sentiments that ‘the comparison of the conditions prevailing in Government and Nationalist Spain is more than sufficient excuse for the present attitude of many Catholics in this country’

<sup>127</sup> Helen Graham, “‘Against the state’: a genealogy of the Barcelona May Days (1937)”, *European History Quarterly*, 29(4), 1999, pp. 485-542. With this achieved, the political coalition under the new prime minister Juan Negrín would be able to begin the reconstruction of the Republic as a modern, liberal nation-state

thousands of workers,’ but for ‘shoot[ing] the priests who do not surrender to fascism,’ the book dismantled the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s letter argument by argument whilst at the same time putting forward clear and reasoned arguments for Catholic loyalty to the Republic.<sup>128</sup> Vilar’s book was published and released in Republican Spain, and his religious bulletins increasingly found receptive domestic audiences – in Alicante, for example, the Catholic politician Franklin Albricias Goetz received a number of copies of the bulletins, discussing their content regularly with local priests and religious communities.<sup>129</sup> But with the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s collective pastoral directed at an international audience, efforts to challenge the document had to be directed abroad too. That those efforts would be channelled through British and French networks also served to illustrate the continued impact – and the tireless efforts to lift – the Non-Intervention embargo.

Leocadio Lobo, the Madrid priest and Republican propagandist, returned to comments that he had made earlier in April in his pamphlet *Primate and Priest*, now widely distributed and translated into several languages. His words resonating loudly in light of the collective letter, Lobo condemned the ecclesiastical hierarchy for ‘confusing politics and religion, they have written and spoken, and permitted at the doors of their Churches the sale of newspapers and reviews directed against the [Republican] regime.’ Correctly pointing out that it was not possible to speak of the martyrdom of priests without first recalling that there also had been clerical victims in rebel-held territory, he went on to suggest that ‘if, instead of political activity in defence of anti-Christian capitalism, we had carried out a social program, approved and blessed by our hierarchy, the fate of Spain today would have been very different.’<sup>130</sup> If the Church’s growing involvement within a radicalising, right-wing political nexus had alienated Lobo before the war, his response to the collective letter was a final, searing assault on those who believed this was anything more than a ‘human, political and social war’.

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<sup>128</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 68. The book’s title referenced the Benedictine abbey Santa Maria de Montserrat; it was intended to inspire ideas of tranquillity and peaceful religious tolerance, as the abbey had become a safe refuge in the heart of Catalonia during the revolution. See Josep Massot i Muntaner, *Església i societat a la Catalunya contemporània*, (Barcelona: Publicacions de l’Abadía de Montserrat, 2003), pp. 505-6

<sup>129</sup> CDMH, PS-Alicante, 146-2

<sup>130</sup> Lobo, *Primate and Priest*, p. 10



If for the ecclesiastical hierarchy it was seemingly axiomatic that religion and politics were barely separable, the response of Catholics within the Republic in response to the collective letter specifically targeted that linkage. Lobo's *Primate and Priest* was an eloquent example of a much wider discursive assault being constructed as the Republic's propagandists rapidly set about producing new pamphlets and reprinting existing articles in Spain and abroad.<sup>131</sup> Domestically, linkages were made between the 'persecution of religion in Germany' and the subservience of the Church to a fascist war effort in Spain.<sup>132</sup> In Paris, the Republic's propaganda office reprinted and translated many English language pamphlets condemning the Church's long involvement in politics, including one that sought to remind readers of the history of the Spanish Republic: one such example commented dryly that 'while [the Church hierarchy] accepted the elections of 1933 when their own friends won, when the Popular Front was successful in 1936, they regarded this as 'autocracy.'<sup>133</sup>

Similar discursive themes permeated the pamphlet *Christ or Franco? An answer to the Collective Letter which the Spanish Episcopate issued to the Bishops of the World*. Written by an anonymous group of Spanish priests in response to the collective pastoral, the pamphlet condemned the ecclesiastical hierarchy at length for 'allud[ing] timidly to the authentic doctrine of Christ, and instead of deducing from all this the logical consequences, they end by declaring themselves staunch supporters of the rebel Franco.'<sup>134</sup> Similar in the scope of its argument to Lobo's *Primate and Priest*, this thirty-six page 'answer to the collective letter' sought to dismantle the arguments put forward in the joint pastoral edited by Gomá. With the central theme of 'the people' permeating *Christ or Franco?* the authors built upon discursive strategies and mentalities that were already established, understanding the Collective Letter as yet more evidence that the ecclesiastical hierarchy 'are with the rich, the evil rich whom the Gospel has anathematised.'<sup>135</sup> The Church's repeated failings towards the

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<sup>131</sup> Domestically, pamphlets and broadcasts were supplemented by challenges to the collective pastoral across the existing media landscape; *La Libertad*, 3 August 1937; *La Voz*, 4 September 1937; Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, p. 231

<sup>132</sup> *La Libertad*, 3 August 1937

<sup>133</sup> H.R.G. Greaves and David Thomson, *The Truth about Spain*, (London, 1938), p. 47; correspondences received by Cardinal Gomá also indicate that rebel authorities were keen to record the diffusion of such attacks; Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VII*, 7-510 – 7-521

<sup>134</sup> *Christ or Franco?: an answer to the Collective Letter which the Spanish Episcopate issued to the Bishops of the World*, (London: Friends of Spain, 1937), p. 5

<sup>135</sup> *Christ or Franco?*, p. 11

poor, the sick and destitute workers were laid out with immediacy over pages of wrenching examples. Condemning violence on all sides, and again seeking to address the issue of rebel atrocities against priests and other social constituencies, not without a hint of irony the authors asked ‘can Catholics remain with the people, faithful to the Government, or ought they to join the rebellion?’<sup>136</sup>

In a propaganda war in which the political and social realities of the war were being contested on all sides, these efforts of Catholics to challenge the narrative of the conflict laid out in the collective pastoral was aided immeasurably by photographic material that seemed to anchor their own understanding of the conflict in objective truth. The publication, therefore, of a photograph within the *Christ or Franco?* pamphlet depicting several bishops and military officers giving the fascist salute from the portico of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela rapidly became a powerful political tool in this confrontation. The photograph of the undated event at the Cathedral was a dramatic spectacle, its intermingling of military ceremony and Catholic liturgy at once confirming the politico-religious nexus at the heart of the ‘crusade’.<sup>137</sup> It illustrated starkly, vividly, what those Catholic priests working in the Republican media from July 1936 and before had desperately sought to make clear: that far from a confrontation between ‘good versus evil’, the Republic was (and had been) an arena of social change in which debates around religion and the place of the institutional Church had become the lens through which larger political, social, and cultural clashes played out. In this struggle, the institutional Church and its ecclesiastical hierarchy had clearly – and publicly – sided with fascism.

To an international audience the resonances with photographs from Germany depicting Nazi officials and Church leaders were striking, providing a common language amongst Catholic antifascists.<sup>138</sup> And despite the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s insistence, even long after the war, that the priests were merely ‘blessing’ assembled

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<sup>136</sup> *Christ or Franco?*, p. 33

<sup>137</sup> Though undated, the photograph was most likely taken during the Easter celebrations held at the Cathedral in March 1937

<sup>138</sup> *Christ or Franco?*, p. 3. If the impact of propaganda is generally greatest when directed at the ‘already partially converted’, such images required an audience already familiar with the relevant discourse to be correctly understood – here the image of priests offering fascist salutes echoed with great force. See David Welch ‘Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People’s Community’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39(2), 2004, pp. 213-38

soldiers – in any case, all of them military rebels, many of them fascist volunteers – the image would come to be used repeatedly in Republican propaganda from mid-1937.<sup>139</sup> It was precisely these denials that made photographs such as this so powerful – their emotive power abiding even as the propaganda battles of the civil war would continue to prove that such images were not always inviolable. In the aftermath of the bombing of Guernica, which rebel propagandists and their supporters across Europe had gone to great lengths to frame as the work of Basque forces, one contemporary opinion reminded European observers that ‘all sorts of things could be denied, but a photograph was evidence you could not twist around so easily.’<sup>140</sup>

As true in civil war as it had been in peacetime, these Catholics understood clearly the existence of the Church’s ‘crusade’ as an indicator of widespread political unrest, part of a specific crisis of Catholic conservatism, struggling to cope with the challenges of mass politics. In its very existence, that specific crisis also explained why other sectors of the Catholic world now rallied behind the Republic were able to see Catholic identity and culture as naturally compatible with republican, socialist and communist political options. From that understanding, the anonymous clerical authors of *Christ or Franco?* posed a question to their audience alongside that photograph of the priests and rebel soldiers at the Cathedral. They asked, ‘at this moment, when the Government of Valencia is firmly entering upon a path of freedom of worship and is authorising priests to say Mass, why must the bishops answer this attempt at religious pacification with their aggressive letter?’<sup>141</sup>

It was a question that many Catholics already knew the answer to – that despite being framed in the language of the faith, the pastoral letter was, above all else, a political document. Although it resonated loudly in Spain, it was intended for international consumption. But across Europe, progressive Catholic constituencies willing to engage with democratic and pluralistic ideas – most identifiably those

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<sup>139</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 182 notes the early proliferation of priests making fascist salutes. Photographs also emerged of other priests making such gestures, including the Bishop of Malaga, in Espinosa Maestre and García Márques, *Por la iglesia*, p. 72. Here, see also Richards, “‘Presenting Arms to the Blessed Sacrament’”, pp. 212-3, p. 219

<sup>140</sup> Rudolf Stumberger, ‘AIZ and the German Worker Photographers’ in Jorge Ribalta (ed.) *The Worker Photography Movement, 1926-1939*, (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte, Reina Sofia, 2011), p. 86

<sup>141</sup> *Christ or Franco?*, p. 26

gathered around Jacques Maritain, François Mauriac and Emmanuel Mounier in France – joined the Republic’s Catholic voices already active in their refutation of the letter.<sup>142</sup> In an article that appeared first in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, before later being expanded into an introductory essay for a book condemning the rebel cause written by the exiled Spanish Catholic Alfred Mendizábal, Maritain acknowledged that the ‘crusade’ targeted Catholics too, and wrote that ‘the holy war hates the believers who do not serve it more ardently than the infidel.’<sup>143</sup>

The reactions to the collective letter emergent from these strands of French Catholic intellectuals remain the most visible examples of Catholic support not only for the Republic in wartime but, much more widely, a ‘modern’ Catholic championing of progressive social reform. Whilst this is certainly the case, this embracing of modern, progressive thought is, given this focus on French Catholicisms, represented as something extraneous from Spanish Catholicism, seemingly torn only by the false choice between the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s ultraconservatism – and with it the total rejection of modernity – and the necessity of adaptation in spite of the faith. But as challenges to the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s collective pastoral showed, not only were some sectors of Spanish and French Catholicism born from the same progressive understanding of religion and modernity, they were also communicating and developing together.<sup>144</sup>

Many of those networks had been made accessible by the war itself. As Jacques Maritain met and engaged with pro-Republican Catholics in exile, not least the politicians of the UDC and the rapidly expanding Basque community in Paris, individual clergymen like the Catalan archbishop Vidal i Barraquer were working with their French counterparts towards mediation, fostering links with Vatican

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<sup>142</sup> Maritain’s introduction to Alfred Mendizábal, *The Martyrdom of Spain; origins of a civil war*, (London: G. Bles, 1938) stands as one of the most widespread examples of this boom in pro-Republican Catholic discourse in the aftermath of the Collective Letter. The introduction was a revised version of a text that had appeared in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 1 July 1937, with some editorial changes; Jacques Maritain, *Jacques Maritain, Emmanuel Mounier (1929-1939), [Correspondance]*, (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1973), p. 134, 157; *Figaro*, 17 June 1937

<sup>143</sup> *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 1 July 1937

<sup>144</sup> See Wing, *The Dialectics of Faith*, p. 33, fn. 17. Wing stresses that the links between those behind *Cruz y Raya* in Spain and the French periodical *Esprit* deserve much more attention; Jacques Maritain and Raïssa Maritain, *Oeuvres complètes*, VI, (Paris : Editions Universitaires ; Éditions Saint-Paul, 1984-2008), p. 1123

officials in the hope of resolving the conflict.<sup>145</sup> Earlier in 1937, a group of French and Spanish Catholics had met in Paris to discuss the formation of a committee that would attempt to bring foreign mediation and humanitarian intervention to bear on the conflict, in the hope of finding a peaceful end to the war. Presided over by Alfred Mendizábal, who was working closely with Jacques Maritain, and with the UDC politician and devout Catholic Joan Roca i Caball as its secretary, the Comité pour la paix civile en Espagne also included Josep María Tarragó upon his return to France.<sup>146</sup> Roca i Caball was also able to found sister committees in Britain and Switzerland, working with local groups of pro-Republican Catholics. In Britain their efforts were aided by Luigi Sturzo, the exiled Italian priest and founder of the Partito Popolare, the Italian democratic party inspired by Catholic values and that had, in turn, inspired those Spanish Catholics behind the ill-fated PSP of the 1920s.<sup>147</sup> Sturzo continued also to play a functioning role in building relationships between liberal and progressive Catholic thinkers across Western Europe; retaining close links with UDC party members in exile in Paris and writing for *L'Aube* and *La Vie Intellectuelle*, working in and amongst the central intellectual circles of progressive French Catholicism.<sup>148</sup>

It was clear that expanding intellectual links were being fostered between Catholics throughout the European democracies, constructing an environment in which progressive priests, lay Catholics, politicians and thinkers could not only find comradeship and comfort (particularly in exile), but could hope to locate themselves in a political and cultural environment inexorably reshaped by the circumstances of war in which such links were being consolidated. In this, they could unite over a Republican project that was beginning to find its feet after revolutionary 1936 and was, in doing so, also finding steadily growing support amongst cosmopolitan and reformist Catholics in Spain and abroad. If this found its most visible public form in the introductory essays provided by Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier to books written by pro-Republican Spanish Catholics, and in the wide-ranging responses to the Collective Letter, it also permeated the fabric of popular cultural

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<sup>145</sup> Ragner, *La Unió*, pp. 393-5, 436-40; Such efforts were reported at length to Gomá, Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá*, VI, 6-357

<sup>146</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, pp. 216-7 for a list of committee personnel.

<sup>147</sup> David Wingeate Pike, *France Divided: The French and the Civil War in Spain*, (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), pp. 127-8

<sup>148</sup> For instance *L'Aube*, 19 March 1938; Ragner, *La Unió*, p. 435

production. One example of this popular participation in cultural production came with the growing scope of the magazine *Euzko-Deya*, a Basque-led initiative founded in Paris in November 1936. As the Basque refugee population in the French capital grew, the magazine switched from monthly to weekly print runs and was soon published in French and Spanish, in addition to the original Basque language format.<sup>149</sup> And with extensive non-Basque input, as Spanish and French Catholic authors and intellectuals contributed to the magazine in greater numbers, increasingly congruent ideas emerged about the confusion of Christianity with fascism, denying the war as a ‘crusade’.<sup>150</sup> By the same token, the permeation of Christian humanist ideas championed by Jacques Maritain, which urged active support of democracy and social justice, was increasingly proven to be shared – to a French domestic audience at least – by Spanish Catholics.

Those intellectual strands were indicated further by the work of a parallel committee including Maritain, Francois Mauriac, Emmanuel Mounier, Monsignor Beaupin (the auxiliary bishop of Paris) and the Catholic syndicalist and JOC member Paul Vignaux.<sup>151</sup> Maritain was engaged with increasing numbers of Basque and Spanish Catholics in exile, and Mounier was increasingly in dialogue with José María Tarragó as they finalised the introductory essay to Tarragó’s *Le Drame...* However, it was perhaps Vignaux’s Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens, founded in 1934, which underlines the intellectual links between these progressive French and Spanish Catholics in real terms.<sup>152</sup> Based on Church social doctrine and taking inspiration from Cardijn’s JOC amongst others, the CFTC was a French equivalent of what progressive Spanish Catholics had attempted to establish during the peacetime years of the Republic, not least in Catalonia through the FJCC and UTCC. Taking advantage of a unique revivalist movement in French Christianity after the horrors of 1914-18, the CFTC was, in many ways, everything that the progressive Catholic priests of the Catalan unions had hoped their organisations would be.

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<sup>149</sup> Wingeate Pike, *France Divided*, p. 299. A smaller-scale, twice monthly English language edition was also produced in London from 1938

<sup>150</sup> *Euzko Deya*, 2 May 1937 and 9 May 1937; *La Vanguardia*, 27 July 1937

<sup>151</sup> See also Wingeate Pike, *France Divided*, pp. 123-4 for the manifestos signed by these individuals

<sup>152</sup> For the CFTC, see Jacques Tessier, *La CFTC, comment fut maintenu le syndicalisme chrétien*, (Paris: Fayard, 1987)

It was not hard then, to see shared Catholic thought behind the concern of the Comité français pour la paix civile et religieuse en Espagne, primarily with establishing a religious peace as an essential precondition of a civil peace.<sup>153</sup> Founded in March 1937, this committee was primarily made up of French Catholics, in part to focus on its ‘humanitarian’ aspects rather than involving Spanish Republicans in the face of increasing rebel propaganda against them and the charges of ‘politicisation’ that hampered many aid efforts.<sup>154</sup> However, the committee was formed in part because of requests for assistance by Spanish Catholics living in exile in France.<sup>155</sup> Further, it was clear that the personal, political and intellectual links between this and other Catholic initiatives, increasingly emergent through the late spring of 1937, could not be separated.<sup>156</sup> Their common denominator was a conviction that fascism represented a mortal threat to pluralism and humanist values, to social justice and human welfare. It was with this central goal in mind that this committee, although born of a particularly Catholic initiative, was open to ‘all those whose beliefs, or at least whose respect for the liberty of conscience, make them give a particular importance to religious freedom, which is an essential element of civil peace.’<sup>157</sup>

As the second part of this thesis will seek to demonstrate, those strands of Catholic thought would soon becoming increasingly harnessed by the Republic itself. If in February of 1937 many of those individuals had understood the war from disparate perspectives, their relationships with each other and with the Republican government were beginning to move closer together, inexorably shaped by the circumstances of war. And although the multiplicities of Catholic thought evident here could never truly be homogenous, regardless of their intentions and political aspirations, their condemnation of the collective letter ensured that those Catholics were perceived in precisely such a static form by the rebel political leadership and Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy. Over a year later, on the anniversary of the fall of Bilbao in June 1938, Ramón Serrano Suñer targeted those Catholic constituencies who

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<sup>153</sup> Michel Bressolette, ‘Jacques Maritain et la guerre civile en Espagne’, *Cahiers Jacques Maritain*, 9, 1984, pp. 33-42

<sup>154</sup> This did not stop the committee from drawing the attention of Francoist and ecclesiastical authorities in Spain, Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá*, VI, 6-357

<sup>155</sup> Maritain and Maritain, *Oeuvres complètes*, VI, p. 1123

<sup>156</sup> Paul Vignaux, *Manuel de Irujo: ministre de la République dans la guerre d’Espagne, 1936-1939*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986), pp. 477-9

<sup>157</sup> Originally appearing in early June 1937, the committee’s appeal was reprinted consistently over the next year of war; see *La paix civile (Boletín del Comité)*, 1, December 1937

rejected had the Francoist cause. Calling Maritain a Jew, Serrano Suñer also mocked the ‘clowning around of that self-styled government of Euskadi’ and condemned both the French Catholic daily *La Croix* for ‘defending the hordes of assassins [in Barcelona]’ and Tarragó personally, declaring to his audience that *La Croix* had ignored ‘all disciplinary and canonical rules’, accepting in its own columns the work of a ‘monstrous Spaniard who wears the clothes of a priest, but to whom the holy bishop of Barcelona denied licences?’<sup>158</sup>

Thus the paradox of the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s collective letter was that it revealed to the world not only the support of the ecclesiastical hierarchy for the military rebellion against the Republic, but also the existence of Catholics who had, and continued to, remain loyal to the Republic. If Cardinal Gomá had now consecrated the union ‘between cross and sword’, the pastoral confirmed that the sword was being wielded in defence of an authoritarian Catholic political world, and not in the name of religion itself. Rejecting furiously the document and its contents, groups of Catholics in Spain and across Europe, increasingly working together and taking inspiration from each other as they had done before the war, constructed responses that echoed the belief that Catholicism could be reconciled with an active life in the Republic. Engaging with the war from a religious perspective, but through the lenses of new forms of Catholic thought, they were joined by others for whom the conduct of the rebel ‘crusade’ had alienated them, long before the collective pastoral emerged. Despite the very real challenges inherent in such sympathies, over the next two years of war, Catholics across the Republic would recognise and respond to Republican government efforts to reciprocate those ideas, engaging and taking part in their own initiatives as they continued to forge their own places in the Republican polity, playing an active – and often welcome – role in the Republic’s fight for survival.

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<sup>158</sup> *ABC* (Sevilla), 21 June 1938; other newspapers included additional commentary, such as *Labor*, 23 June 1938, which focused on Maritain as a ‘converted Jew’



## **Chapter Four: Beginning to breathe again? Negrín's normalisation of life amidst total war**

*'6 – The Spanish state shall guarantee all citizens rights in civil and social life, liberty of conscience and the free exercise of religious belief and practice.'*<sup>1</sup>

*The Thirteen Points for which Spain is Fighting, 1 May 1938*

Although fighting and dying remained the most visible incarnation of the relationship between the Republic and its citizens on the battlefields, military resistance could only conceivably be sustained through the continuation of a popular desire to fight. That popular will depended above all on the ability of the Republican government to demonstrate its fulfilment of a social contract with its population; in return for the sacrifices of its citizens, the Republic had to demonstrate the ability to care for its entire population, not only against rebel military force but in terms of the basic social needs of food, housing, medical care and education.

This chapter focuses on those efforts in the wartime Republic from late 1937 until the winter of 1938 through two different (and increasingly interlinked) processes. Within those processes is an evolving government policy from May 1937, driven by the Negrín premiership but with earlier attenuated antecedents, which had both international and domestic dimensions. Beneath the pressures of increasingly fraught wartime experiences, different parts of the evolving Republican political coalition built upon experiences of the first years of the war to utilise Catholics and the place of Catholicism within the Republic as a unifying, mobilising tool. Though this would have an important role to play in the international arena ever more crucial to the Republic's survival, it was also intended for domestic use, as a genuine appeal to

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<sup>1</sup> The Thirteen Points of the Negrín government were published in many places and in a number of European languages; see Juan Negrín, *Aims of the Spanish Republic: the 13 Points of Dr. Negrin's government*, (London: United Editorial Limited, 1938); *Les 13 points pour lesquels combat l'Espagne; déclaration faite par le président Negrin le 30 avril 1938*, (Barcelona: Ed. Espagnoles, 1938)

those Catholics in a reconstructed liberal-democratic polity. Explored symbiotically is a set of more subtle and gradual developments and changes inside the Republican zone, emergent in part as a result of this policy and in part through the continued existence, growth and consolidation of support for the Republic amongst Catholics within its territory. These efforts were part of the ideal of the Republic itself, reciprocated by Catholic politicians, lay people and priests before the war and now during it.

The lived experiences of Catholic individuals whose personal trajectories evolved in the course of the conflict indicate the dynamics of these processes, illustrating the extent to which Catholics across the Republic acknowledged government initiatives and responded, often by taking part in those efforts as they were implemented or by building, contributing and consolidating grassroots initiatives. Forging their own places in the Republican polity, their contributions to the ongoing war against the Francoist threat would reach beyond the reciprocation of government efforts. Some priests and lay Catholics took on publicly visible and important roles within the Republic as it sought to repair, reconstruct and consolidate its image as a modernising liberal-democracy and to translate that image into reality for its entire citizenry.

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By late 1937, for the Negrín government, its main goal of procuring the lifting of Non-Intervention had become increasingly urgent. If Axis naval aggression across the Mediterranean had left the French border as the only real supply route for the Republic, this was intermittent and the supplies variable in quantity and quality, ensuring that the arms embargo continued to impact Republican stabilisation dramatically.<sup>2</sup> Wartime survival was certainly not able to be prolonged indefinitely, and here the international diplomatic front was at least as crucial as the military and home fronts. As Paul Preston makes clear, ‘the war had been prolonged in accordance with Negrín’s hope of seeing the democracies wake up to the Axis’s aggressive

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<sup>2</sup> Ricardo Miralles, ‘Juan Negrín: al frente de la política exterior de la República (1937-1939)’, *Historia Contemporánea*, 15, 1996, pp. 151-2, 159; Gerald Howson, *Arms for Spain: The Untold Story of the Spanish Civil War*, (London: Murray, 1998) pp. 233-50

ambitions', but that in turn meant survival actually demanded converting such hope into a workable and sustainable reality.<sup>3</sup> In the desperate bid to break the European democracies' sustained commitment to Non-Intervention, the Republic needed to repair a flaw: the continued absence of religious liberties within its own territory which undermined its claim to recognition as a constitutional polity. The restoration of those civil liberties and freedoms would make it much harder for the French and, above all, the British government to insist on the easy and simplistic assumptions they made about the war, to the detriment of the Republic. The intention of the Republican leadership was thus the reduction of the alibi for British aloofness.<sup>4</sup> Based on its not unreasonable calculation at the time that the worsening international situation could bring Britain to act as broker in any future negotiations in Spain, the Republican authorities also sought to increase pressure on the French government (and society), given their own growing domestic concerns about fascist expansionism.<sup>5</sup>

It was clear by the summer of 1937 that the full weight of the Republic's diplomatic offensive to end the Non-Intervention embargo was focused on France.<sup>6</sup> A crucial aspect of a wide ranging diplomatic and propaganda offensive, the Republic's pro-Catholic propaganda efforts were also directed there, and whilst the publication in July 1937 of the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy's Collective Letter drew immediate attention, this focus on France in particular was a policy decision discussed as early as December 1936.<sup>7</sup> Whilst the British political establishment always remained in focus, efforts soon began to be directed at France more clearly.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the Republic's Ambassador in London, Pablo de Azcárate wrote to Republican President Manuel Azaña in Spain, perceiving a greater receptivity to the Republic's cause in France.<sup>9</sup> Negrín too recognised that the domestic efforts of his government to restore the Republic to a liberal democratic polity had to be transmitted to this international

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<sup>3</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 463

<sup>4</sup> Enrique Moradiellos, *La perfidia de Albión. El gobierno británico y la guerra civil española*, (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1996), pp. 40-72

<sup>5</sup> Wingeate Pike, *France Divided*, pp. 182-207; Arthur Koestler, *The Invisible Writing: The Second Volume Of An Autobiography, 1932-40*, (London: Collins, 1954), pp. 355-65

<sup>6</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 319-20

<sup>7</sup> González Gullón, 'Leocadio Lobo,' p. 281; de Azcárate, *Mi embajada*, p. 339

<sup>8</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 124-6, pp. 316-8. Propaganda efforts, including religious material, would always remain tied to the Republic's need to lift Non-Intervention. See also Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Civil War; Revolution and Counterrevolution*, (New York: HarvesterWheatseaf/ University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 180-8

<sup>9</sup> de Azcárate, *Mi embajada*, p. 339; Azaña, *Obras completas*, IV, (Madrid: Ediciones Giner, 1990), p. 749

audience, carried forward by changes within the Republic's propaganda machinery in Paris, which by mid-1937 had become a crucial centre of Republican propaganda activities in Europe.<sup>10</sup> It was with this shared goal in mind that from London, Republican ambassador Azcárate encouraged his superiors in Spain to further focus their efforts – creatively, logistically and financially – on the Paris office. Azcárate's 'impression was that we would most effectively focus our efforts on the French government', not only because of its greater perceived receptivity, but also because he was convinced French pressure would still be enough to influence the intransigent British government.<sup>11</sup>

It was also clear that despite the efforts of many within the Embassy to improve British perceptions of religious life in the Republic, their ambitious propaganda efforts were being curtailed not only by the domination of a pro-Francoist conservative, patrician elite in the highest echelons of political power, but also by the similar intransigence of Britain's Catholic Church hierarchy.<sup>12</sup> In many respects, and in spite of Azcárate's assertion that the work of his propagandists – particularly of the Oxford academic Enrique Moreno – was 'solid' and 'persistent', Azcárate's letters in July 1937 to Azaña represented the tacit acceptance of a project positioned at an oblique angle to the political establishment in Britain and unlikely to engender tangible benefits on a scale sufficient to warrant the use of the Republic's strained financial and material resources.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Azcárate's letter was part of a long-standing recognition of the need to engage on a mass scale with the French government and the country's population more widely.

Consequently, a small former tourist office on the Boulevard de la Madeleine rapidly came to centre stage in the Republic's international propaganda efforts.<sup>14</sup> Until

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<sup>10</sup> Ana Moreno Garrido, 'L'Office de Tourisme Espagnol de Paris (1929-1939)', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 29, 2007, pp. 214-5

<sup>11</sup> de Azcárate, *Mi embajada*, p. 339

<sup>12</sup> See for instance *Catholic Herald*, 7 January 1939. The newspaper published numerous articles condemning Catholic support for the Republic, targeting in particular newspapers including *La Croix*, and 'there is not only *La Croix*. The other papers from *L'Aube* to *Temps Present* have no other cause to defend than that of Marxists who are rebelling against the Papal Encyclicals.'

<sup>13</sup> Hugo García, *The Truth About Spain!: Mobilizing British Public Opinion, 1936-1939*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), p. 81

<sup>14</sup> Moreno Garrido, 'L'Office de Tourisme', p. 216. Vicéns was joined by a plethora of the Republic's most prominent young artists and intellectuals, including the cinematographers Luis Buñuel and Eduardo Ugarte

this point the Republic had been content to operate a joint venture in Paris with the Soviet Union, which contributed a significant amount of funding to these early efforts.<sup>15</sup> Under the direction of the communist activist and founder of the Workers International Relief organisation Willi Münzenberg, the Republic there had been some successes, particularly in mobilising relief aid and organising mass rallies (particularly in France), although such efforts were conducted almost entirely through Comintern-affiliated networks.<sup>16</sup> Reliance on the Comintern in this regard was explicable because the Republic had been, in the autumn of 1936 and under the unwieldy Largo Caballero government, first of all concerned with legitimising the Republic in the eyes of the proletarian forces that had led the immediate defence against the rebels.<sup>17</sup> Luis Araquistáin and Álvarez del Vayo continued for some time to back Münzenberg's efforts, aware that, in the medium term, the Republican government would have to limit that reliance on the Comintern and begin to engage more comprehensively in the battle to win over broader opinion in Britain and France.

Juan Vicéns, the PCE member, former librarian and new head of the Paris office from the summer of 1937, was firmly behind Negrín's plans to procure the lifting of Non-Intervention.<sup>18</sup> Vicéns had already been earmarked for a role in Republican propaganda activities and, having already been active in the Pedagogical Missions from 1931, he well understood the requirements of his new role.<sup>19</sup> In a letter to the secretary of the Paris Embassy, he was forceful in demanding that the Republic's propaganda efforts must 'come out of the era of the militias,' and rapidly followed up that letter with a fifteen page report sent to Negrín's government in Valencia.<sup>20</sup> Detailing the current state of Republican propaganda efforts, Vicéns

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<sup>15</sup> Róman Gubern and Paul Hammond, *Luis Buñuel, The Red Years, 1929–1939*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pp. 254-8, p. 272

<sup>16</sup> Bolloren, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 139, p. 789 fn. 14; Preston, *We Saw Spain Die*, pp. 278-9 for Münzenberg's continuing influence

<sup>17</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 128-30

<sup>18</sup> Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 303; Garcia, *The Truth About Spain!*, p. 86, p. 255n. For Vicéns' work before Paris, see Ramón Salaberría, 'Las bibliotecas populares en la correspondencia de Juan Vicéns a Lulu Jourdain y Hernando Viñes (1933-1936)', *Anales de documentación*, 5, 2002, pp. 309-32

<sup>19</sup> Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 303

<sup>20</sup> Archivo General de la Administración (AGA), AE, 54/11065, 6324, Vicéns to Juan Guixé, 4 September 1937

outlined three key areas needing to be addressed immediately, promising a complete reorganisation and reorientation of the Republic's propaganda efforts.<sup>21</sup>

First, Vicéns urged the targeting of a much wider cross section of Spanish and European society than had previously been addressed. Retaining the attention given to working class sectors (and some middle class groups) that had already been well targeted, Vicéns stressed the need to engage more fully with middle class and also explicitly conservative constituencies. Second, Vicéns stressed that in addition to targeting broader social strata, Republican efforts needed to encompass a much broader geographical spread internationally. Eager to branch out beyond those constituencies already favourable to the Republican cause, the letter advised the continuation of direct efforts towards the European democracies but also an extension of those efforts to countries supporting the rebels.<sup>22</sup> Third, and according to Vicéns and his advisors the most crucial, was the need for a rapid escalation in propaganda focused on the 'religious question.'<sup>23</sup> Perceiving – quite correctly – that the religious landscape of the war was one of the key areas in which the Republic's battle for European opinion could still be decisively won or lost, Vicéns – committed to the *mano tendida* policy at the heart of PCE Popular Frontism – demanded the Republic do much more to emphasise the plurality and tolerance inherent within its democratic project.<sup>24</sup>

In this regard, the unfaltering activism of the liberal Catholic career politician Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo, who had arrived as the Republic's ambassador to France at the end of May 1937, was seen by Republican authorities as a great hope in aiding Vicéns (and Negrín) significantly in those efforts.<sup>25</sup> In reality, Ossorio's position in Paris initially caused a number of issues for Vicéns' expansive new propaganda efforts. So much of the propaganda delegation's limited budget was directed toward financing the translation of pre-existing books and pamphlets that Vicéns felt it

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<sup>21</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto para la propaganda católica*

<sup>22</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*

<sup>23</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Informe sobre la organización y actividades de la Delegación de Propaganda en París y de sus principales secciones de trabajo*

<sup>24</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*

<sup>25</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, 6324, Letters from Vicéns to Ossorio, 8 September 1937 and 30 October 1937; Gubern and Hammond also note that Ossorio's 'time in office may have been hit and miss in terms of internal organization and diplomatic finesse but was nevertheless marked by an unflagging activism', *Luis Buñuel*, p. 267

necessary to write to Ossorio by October 1937 to warn he was quickly in danger of paralyzing the rest of the office's propaganda efforts.<sup>26</sup> It was clear from their correspondence that whilst Vicéns recognised the value of those publications, the continued focus on the 'horrors of repression, the bombings...' was likely to be counterproductive, encouraging Parisians to 'end up thinking that all the Spanish are savages.'<sup>27</sup> Although Vicéns did acknowledge that atrocity reporting was vitally important, he also advocated the increased production of constructive material that would both promote the Republic on its own terms and foster links between progressive Catholics across Europe.<sup>28</sup>

The timing of Vicéns' report to the Negrín government in Valencia vindicated his demand for a greater focus on the war's religious dimension, coinciding as it did with the publication of the Spanish episcopate's collective letter. Given this was, as the previous chapter indicated, written by Spain's Cardinal Primate and signed by most of the Church hierarchy, the letter threatened to derail further the Republic's attempts at restoring positive international opinion. In calling the war an 'armed plebiscite,' the letter allowed no space for ambiguities, ignoring the existence of increasing numbers of Catholics' positive and practical relationships with the Republic.<sup>29</sup>

Forcing the Republic's propagandists to redouble their efforts in order to refute the claims of the document, the publication of the pastoral was met with criticism from Spanish and European Catholics committed to the Republican cause.<sup>30</sup> Many of those grassroots opinions were explored in chapters two and three and, harnessing those opinions, Vicéns' office quickly set about producing new pamphlets and reprinting existing articles that sought to place the collective pastoral in a much wider narrative of the Church's involvement in politics.<sup>31</sup> If the publication of the Collective Letter posed serious issues for the Republic, the cumulative impact of the acceleration

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<sup>26</sup> Moreno Garrido, 'L'Office de Tourisme', pp. 215-6

<sup>27</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, 6324, Vicéns to Ossorio, 8 September 1937

<sup>28</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, 6324, Letters from Vicéns to Ossorio, 8 September 1937 and 30 October 1937

<sup>29</sup> Joint Letter of the Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the Whole World Concerning the War in Spain (1 July 1937)

<sup>30</sup> *Christ or Franco?*; Lobo, *Primate and Priest*; Gallegos Rocafull, *Crusade or Class War?*; Mendizábal, *The Martyrdom of Spain*; Greaves and Thomson, *The Truth about Spain*

<sup>31</sup> Moreno Garrido, 'L'Office de Tourisme', p. 216

of Republican propaganda efforts ensured Vicéns soon had much of the diverse propaganda elements he had previously demanded in place to combat the pastoral letter and build a constructive picture of the Republic. Utilising the printed press, radio and cinema, now led by the cinematographic talents of Luis Buñuel (who was also an old friend of Vicéns), the Paris office embarked on a propaganda campaign targeted especially at Catholic circles across Europe.<sup>32</sup> Deploying a wide range of modern techniques and materials drawn from the talents of the office's staff, the efforts of the Paris office were marked by imaginative and versatile campaigns. Although directed toward an international audience, the religion-focused efforts of the Republican propagandists in Paris were based on discursive narratives broadly similar to those utilised by Catholics working domestically in the Republic. It is clear the Paris propaganda office was making significant constructive steps in an uphill struggle to represent the Spanish Republic abroad as a legitimate liberal-democratic polity, and that the religious question was seen as a fundamental part of this.<sup>33</sup>

Of central importance were notions of citizenship in a Republic 'by and for the people', with Negrín's new justice minister, the Basque Nationalist leader Manuel Irujo, hopeful the opinion of French Catholics could 'continue to evolve in favour of the Spanish people' through the expansion and production of material that stressed the Republic's respect of the rights of all religious bodies to practice and express their faith and to participate in democratic politics.<sup>34</sup> Irujo considered such efforts eminently achievable through two considered strategies. First, that efforts should be made to encourage 'any Spanish prelate' to make a statement 'separating religion from politics.' Second, that the Republic must make concerted and visible efforts toward restoring worship, giving assurances that religious bodies and gatherings would not be threatened.<sup>35</sup> Emphasising that the government of the Republic was not intent on the persecution of Catholicism, foreign dignitaries from across Europe were invited to a mass held on 15 August 1937 in Madrid, in the old parish Church of San Ginés.<sup>36</sup> Officiated by the Madrid parish priest and Republican propagandist Leocadio

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<sup>32</sup> Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 305

<sup>33</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, 6324, Vicéns to Ossorio, 24 October 1937

<sup>34</sup> Manuel de Irujo, *Un vasco en el ministerio de Justicia, Memorias*, I, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Vasca Ekin, 1976-9), pp. 136-7 and *Un vasco*, II, p. 166; Irujo's brother Andrés María de Irujo was also working in the government alongside him at this juncture, Bolloten, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 642

<sup>35</sup> Irujo, *Un vasco*, II, p. 166

<sup>36</sup> *New York Times*, 16 August 1937



Lobo, who was recognised increasingly not only by a domestic audience but by onlookers in France and Belgium – a result of his extensive propaganda work from November 1936 – the mass was also filmed for later use in the Republic’s propaganda efforts.<sup>37</sup>

With the public mass in Madrid well received, favourably reported in the press and media outlets across Europe, Vicéns approached Jose Gallegos Rocafull, the priest, propagandist and friend of Lobo, who had journeyed with him to Brussels in the autumn of 1936. The goal was the establishment a dedicated Catholic propaganda programme and, with Gallegos Rocafull supportive of the idea, together the pair embarked on the establishment of an office in Paris dedicated solely to the ‘religious question,’ which in October 1937 became dedicated to Catholic propaganda.<sup>38</sup> In a letter sent to the ambassador Ossorio y Gallardo on 9 October 1937, the pair announced that their aim was to ‘inform Catholic opinion of the real situation in Spain’, where ‘so far the lack of sufficient information and the attitude of the Spanish bishops, who are with the rebels, have taken precedence in the Catholic media’s vision of the war.’<sup>39</sup> Combating the image of ‘assassinations and burnings that occurred in the early days of the war’, Vicéns intended to build upon the ‘recent facts’ emerging from the rebel zone that have ‘made many suspect that perhaps the religiosity’ of the rebel cause to be ‘a great mystification.’<sup>40</sup> Not least here was the continued imprisonment and execution of Catholic priests and prominent lay Catholic politicians in rebel-occupied Spain, the realities of which had begun to appear more frequently from the beginning of the year.<sup>41</sup>

Intending to counteract rebel propaganda, the work of the office was also envisaged as presenting the Republic as a religiously tolerant regime on its own terms. With the assistance of Ossorio, Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull embarked on a diverse and comprehensive propaganda programme, intended to engage in operations across a number of key areas.<sup>42</sup> Thematically, their intention was to draw attention toward the doctrinal position of the Catholic Church against fascism, to illustrate the persecution

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<sup>37</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 33-4

<sup>38</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá*, VI, p. 273 f. 309

<sup>39</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*

<sup>40</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*

<sup>41</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!*, pp. 139-41

<sup>42</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*; Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 138-9

of the Church under fascist regimes, and to provide evidence that the Republican government did not persecute religious orders. Practically, Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull intended to collect and refute rebel propaganda concerning the place of Catholicism within the Republic, and to promote international friendships with the Republic based on ideas of freedom and toleration of religion. Their most ambitious goal was to contact, access and foster links between pre-existing groups of Catholic antifascists, generating an embryonic pro-Republican network encompassing a broad array of political and social positions, the common denominators of which were to be Catholicism and antifascism.<sup>43</sup>

Replicating the strategies and techniques already being deployed more widely across the Republic, the work of this Catholic propaganda office illustrates that Paris was more than just a relay station for propaganda produced inside Republican Spain.<sup>44</sup> If that policy reflected the Republican government's drive combined with the *mano tendida* of the PCE at home, it was also evidence of Vicéns' own input as a PCE member and as a government official alongside his Catholic colleagues in Paris. The office was thus a crucial site for the production of new, imaginative, pro-Republic, and specifically Catholic-orientated material. Crucially the work of the Paris office, in expanding the targeted audience for this material, also altered the production techniques and discourses used with a clear and identifiable move toward positive representations of the Republic's religious life, away from the early focus on refutations of the insurgent 'crusade.'

Thus, with Vicéns at the helm of a team of increasingly productive and experienced propagandists, the religious propaganda produced and distributed in Paris moved away from atrocity reporting alone. Those conceptual themes were grounded in wartime reality but resonated widely: Republican liberties were contrasted against Francoist slaughters and the Republic as a state voted for by the people – including Catholics – was drawn in stark contrast to an illegal military coup, and there was also a focus on cultural magazines, tours and informative pamphlets about the restoration of religious life in Spain.<sup>45</sup> The work of the Paris propaganda office was distinctly

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<sup>43</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*

<sup>44</sup> Moreno Garrido, 'L'Office de Tourisme', p. 216

<sup>45</sup> Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, pp. 303-5

modern in its forms and functions – a modernity perhaps represented above all by Luis Buñuel’s documentary propaganda films, which merged the surrealist director’s own style of documentary cinema with cinematic propaganda styles taken from the Soviet Union and American documentary techniques to appeal to progressive European audiences. It was perhaps likely that not all of the initiatives would work. Among those which failed spectacularly was the effort to drop Catholic propaganda material designed by the vehemently atheist Buñuel behind rebel lines: according to internal evaluations made by Vicéns’ staff, both the techniques used and the results obtained were of a standard much lower than expected.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear some of the most modern and important initiatives within the Republic’s Catholic propaganda campaign were conceived in the French capital.<sup>47</sup>

This engagement with modernity – rather than its rejection – was evident throughout the work of the Catholic staff of the Paris office and their appeals to Catholics across Europe. Contrasting heavily with the propaganda emerging from rebel territory, dominated by themes and images of martyrdom, Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull embraced the Republic’s artistic and cultural prowess. Publishing a continuous stream of propaganda material that emphasised themes of openness, liberty and freedom in comparison to the rigidly hierarchical, repressive Francoist world, Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull outlined a number of other specific projects they had in mind.<sup>48</sup>

With an initial budget of 30,000 francs a month from July 1937, soon increased to 50,000 francs per month, which formed a full one-fifth of the propaganda delegation’s total budget, the pair set quickly embarked on a programme of diverse and expansive initiatives.<sup>49</sup> Several of these initiatives had, in their forms and function, emerged domestically in embryonic form from the autumn of 1936 onwards.

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<sup>46</sup> Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 55. After the war Buñuel recalled that ‘I’ve always been impressed by the famous photograph of those ecclesiastical dignitaries standing in front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in full sacerdotal garb, their arms raised in the Fascist salute...god and country are an unbeatable team: they break all records for oppression and bloodshed’; Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 170

<sup>47</sup> García, *The Truth About Spain!*, p. 79

<sup>48</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*

<sup>49</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*; Hugo García suggests the Paris office was receiving around £7,000 (740,000 francs) a month altogether – a figure much greater than the budget provided to the British embassy; García, *Truth About Spain!*, p. 85. Moreno Garrido indicates that Vicéns was likely receiving only one third of this figure to use towards his own initiatives, ‘L’Office de Tourisme’, p. 215

The Paris office organised a series of conferences at which some of Europe's most prominent Catholics were booked to speak about the situation in Spain, a strategy that had met with some success throughout the first year of the war and would continue to do so.<sup>50</sup> Their efforts also encompassed an ambitious scheme to hire broadcasting slots from Radio Toulouse during which they intended to broadcast pro-Catholic items.<sup>51</sup> It was hoped those networks would also eventually work to provide aid, assistance and consolation to an increasing number of Spanish Catholic refugees, particularly in France but increasingly across the world.

Rather than simply adapting domestic material and extending its distribution to a wider European population, the Catholic propaganda office developed a dedicated pragmatic and proactive strategy, based principally on a multitude of interactive relationships, established with diverse strands of progressive European Catholicism. These networks encompassed Catholic priests, intellectuals, grassroots lay organisations and newspapers such as *La Croix*, the *Libre Belgique*, *Sept*, *Cité Chretienne*, *Terre Walone*, *Blackfriars*, *Social Forum* and *l'Aube*.<sup>52</sup> Republican efforts here were aided substantially in this regard by pre-existing, grassroots links between many of those French and Spanish liberal Catholic constituencies. Early in February 1937, a group of French and Spanish Catholics had met in Paris to discuss the formation of a committee that would attempt to bring foreign mediation and humanitarian intervention to bear on the conflict, in the hope of finding a peaceful end to the war.<sup>53</sup>

Presided over by Alfred Mendizábal and with the Catalan, Catholic UDC politician Joan Roca i Caball as its secretary, the Comité pour la paix civile en Espagne also included the propaganda-priest Josep María Tarragó, who had returned horrified from his *La Croix* assignment in rebel territory. The committee leadership had also been working closely over some months with a parallel committee, the

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<sup>50</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 33-4. Leocadio Lobo was due to speak at one event in London in April 1937, but was detained by police at Croydon aerodrome, The University of Kent, Hewlett Johnson Papers, UKC-JOH-COR.1-167

<sup>51</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*

<sup>52</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*. Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull's plan listed a number of key pro-Republican, Catholic figures that they believed would form the core of their efforts, amongst others 'Dr Bower, Victor Montserrat in *La Croix*...and also Martin Chauffier, Madaule, Maritain, Bidault, Vignaux...'

<sup>53</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, pp. 216-7

Comité français por la paix civile et religieuse en Espagne, made up almost entirely of French Catholics, the members of which had already contributed significantly during the 1930s to knitting together progressive Catholic thought with the endorsement of liberal democracy. Of particular importance here was Jacques Maritain, whose position as one of the world's foremost representatives of progressive Catholic thought and his defence of workers' rights and democracy because of, rather than in spite of, his understanding of the Catholic tradition, represented a significant achievement for the Republic.<sup>54</sup>

With Maritain's involvement adding an extra air of publicity, those links between the two committees in the French capital (and indeed a growing relationship with the office led by Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull) not only indicated again, publicly – through their *Appel espagnol* – that there existed Catholics hostile to the crusade, but also provided networks and communications channels vital to the Republican war effort.<sup>55</sup> In this, Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull were provided with an embryonic base from which to pursue their construction of a broad antifascist Catholic network.

In a world of mass mobilisation and mass politics, Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull well recognised that identifying and mobilising larger groups of 'antifascist' Catholics was a crucial step in influencing public opinion. Their strategy was thus one of concretising opinions and ideas, forming visible networks that could be consolidated and utilised in the Republican war effort.<sup>56</sup> In many ways this was a litmus test of popular Catholic support for the Republic; these groups of antifascist, anti-Francoist Catholics could not just be created by policy initiatives, but rather had to be accessed organically and, vitally, at the grassroots level. With this task in mind, Gallegos Rocafull soon began to establish networks of Catholic contacts across Europe, his efforts quickly expanding to cover influential Catholics in Latin America too. It seems Gallegos Rocafull's efforts were received moderately well by those he contacted: by the end of October 1937 he had collected over six and a half thousand

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<sup>54</sup> Bernard Doering, 'Jacques Maritain and the Spanish Civil War', *The Review of Politics*, 44(4), 1982, p. 491

<sup>55</sup> This *Appel espagnol* was first published in April 1937 and reproduced again in *La paix civile (Boletín del Comité)*, 1, December 1937

<sup>56</sup> Mass mobilisation always remained the key to the Republic's ongoing war effort, see Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 324-5

names and addresses of European and American Catholic personalities to be added to the Republic's cause.<sup>57</sup> And, as Negrín's domestic efforts involved championing the Republic as a state for all, Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull in turn focused their attentions upon mass production and mass appeal. This included in the first instance the printing of almost 35,000 copies of a booklet by Gallegos Rocafull himself in response to the Collective Letter.<sup>58</sup> With a further 17,000 copies in French translation, that pamphlet was distributed directly, amongst others, to many of the individuals and groups on Gallegos Rocafull's rapidly assembled lists of antifascist Catholics.

Though Gallegos Rocafull's efforts were directed outwards, this was part of a much wider series of processes at work in the Republic itself, behind which lay attempts explicitly to include Catholics in Negrín's nation building programme. In this, the work of the Republic's propagandists abroad was indivisible conceptually from domestic enterprises, regardless of their imaginative and sometimes unique campaigns. In Spain, politicians and lay Catholics remained in contact with several UDC politicians working energetically in their anti-Francoist efforts from Paris. So too, Gallegos Rocafull had worked closely with Leocadio Lobo before journeying to Paris, whilst Lobo remained in Madrid, worked busily tying together disparate Catholic constituencies across the capital. The challenge for Vicéns and Gallegos Rocafull was thus to access those groups and consolidate various efforts – and indeed, political perspectives – and attempt to form their initiatives toward a singular direction. Different audiences were targeted, but these were simultaneous efforts towards the same final goals. In Spain itself, these attempts at (re)integrating Catholics into Republican society and the home front were apparent not only in the discursive repertoire of the propaganda material used, but at all levels in this changing policy: in increased Catholic work in the construction and dissemination of those narratives, backed by a growing emphasis on the role Catholics had to play in the Republic more widely.

Although from the outbreak of war there had been disparate Catholic voices on the streets of the Republic's big cities and in the pages of its newspapers, the first real

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<sup>57</sup> AGA, AE, 54/11065, *Proyecto*; Gallegos Rocafull discusses his work in Paris from May-October 1937 in *La pequeña grey*, pp. 117-23, 133-44

<sup>58</sup> José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull, *La Carta colectiva de los obispos facciosos: réplica por José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull*, (Madrid and Valencia: Editorial Españolas, 1937)

signs of the prospective, large-scale, reincorporation of Catholics into the life of the Republic came in early August 1937. Since the outbreak of the war, churches in the Republican zone had remained closed, and no public acts of religious worship had taken place, although in Madrid alone there were more than one hundred clandestine altars, hidden in houses and apartments, where Catholics gathered for worship.<sup>59</sup> Despite the ever increasing threat of fifth column activities, pro-Republican religious personnel and lay Catholics were also part of this clandestine reality. This complex and variegated political environment would pose difficulties for all those who sought to restore public worship in the capital, not least Leocadio Lobo, who in August was recalled from his European tour and appointed by Irujo as *Jefe de la Sección de Confesiones y Congregaciones religiosas*.<sup>60</sup> Lobo's role was always underlined by the reconstruction of vital state-citizen relationships, in providing real and tangible assistance and reassurance to priests and lay Catholics that the Republic was working to reopen worship, and often more simply, to provide a regular point of contact in the dislocations of war. As groups of Republican supporters and sympathisers gathered to pray and receive communion from priests, many of those priests were, from August, in contact with Lobo and increasingly with each other.<sup>61</sup> As Lobo sought to garner the support of these social constituencies for the Republic's plans to reopen public worship, these priests sometimes met, shared ideas and relayed those thoughts to their flocks.<sup>62</sup>

The government was well aware of the existence of many of these masses, and indeed the (explicitly anti-Republican) nature of some of them, but generally did not take action to remove them.<sup>63</sup> Lobo's role as interlocutor was vital as Manuel Irujo, in his capacity as Justice Minister and backed by Negrín, worked to provide the necessary legal framework for these acts of worship, securing verbal authorisation in the summer of 1937 for the re-establishment of privately celebrated acts of Catholic worship, which allowed the opening of a few chapels.<sup>64</sup> Although Irujo faced

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<sup>59</sup> González Gúllon, 'Leocadio Lobo', p. 736

<sup>60</sup> Irujo, *Un vasco*, II, p. 32

<sup>61</sup> Raguer, *La Unió*, p. 480

<sup>62</sup> Lobo hints at these processes in an 'Open Letter to the Editor of the *Times*,' June 1938, (unpublished in newspaper) in LSE, Coll Misc 0091/38. They would later be evidence concretely as a group of priests in the capital wrote directly to Manuel Irujo discussing their situation; see also Arasa, *La federació*, pp. 204-7

<sup>63</sup> González Gúllon, 'Leocadio Lobo', p. 736

<sup>64</sup> *Gaceta de la República*, 8 August 1937; Irujo, *Un vasco*, II, pp. 125-7, 205-7

opposition from other government ministers and officials, in part his efforts were justified by growing grassroots support for the reopening of public worship.<sup>65</sup> Impelled centrally by the obstacles facing Irujo, Leocadio Lobo, in his new governmental role and backed by Irujo, had met with priests in Madrid throughout August and September 1937, attempting to secure their signatures on a declaration of acceptance of the government in exchange for permission to celebrate Mass privately. Lobo obtained only fifteen signatures; not because of a lack of support, but rather because many of the priests had wanted much more, demanding he obtain the ecclesiastical authorisation of Eijo Garay, the Bishop of Madrid-Alcalá, for more publicly accessible and open worship, with access that extended beyond a few chapels.<sup>66</sup>

Although obtaining limited signatures, those efforts indicate some extent of the dynamics of the capital's religious life. It was clear that, solely from the limited number of individuals who came into direct contact with Lobo, there were significantly in excess of fifteen priests giving masses in one hundred locations across the city, to communities keen for the reopening of worship in some manner.<sup>67</sup> With the priests acting as the voice of their flocks, it was also clear their efforts were tied intrinsically to the wishes and hopes of those faithful. Also clearly apparent was that efforts to restore worship were to be hindered not by the political choices of those social constituencies but of their desire to remain within the foundational structures of ecclesiastical life with, at the very least, the tacit approval of their efforts from the Vatican.

Nevertheless, during the summer months of 1937, efforts to reintroduce Catholicism into the landscape of the wartime Republic continued apace, building

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<sup>65</sup> Irujo, *Un vasco*, II, pp. 30-2, for Irujo's efforts to begin the process of re-opening places of worship before Negrín's appointment. Such continued opposition from government ministers was partly responsible for Irujo's departure from the Justice Ministry in December 1937, which was impelled centrally by shortcomings here – including his disagreement with Negrín over how far war justified the curtailment of constitutional guarantees for defendants.

<sup>66</sup> Irujo, *Un vasco*, II, p. 32; González Gúllon, 'Leocadio Lobo', p. 736

<sup>67</sup> See for instance the later *Carta enviada por seis sacerdotes antifascistas a Manuel de Irujo, ofreciéndole un Cristo de marfil en agradecimiento por su defensa de la religión católica*, 9 November 1937, Archivo General del Ministerio de Justicia (AGMJ), Fondo Irujo, J, Caja. 21, Exp. 1 [available via euskomedia.org/fondo/1793, last accessed 31 May 2015] and comments made by Lobo (above) about the difficulties he faced in encouraging priests in the capital to sign documentation, despite their support for the restoration of public worship



upon organisational work often already in place. Ongoing – and accelerating – efforts from a variety of political organisations made clear that grassroots constituencies and political leaderships alike were engaged in their own processes of incorporating the Republic’s Catholics into the war effort.<sup>68</sup> One conference in November 1936 had brought together representatives from youth organisations across the political spectrum, including speakers from the Alianza Internacional de Intelectuales Antifascistas and former contributors to the Catholic journal *Cruz y Raya*.<sup>69</sup> And, from the start of 1937, the newspapers of various political youth organisations had declared their support for the establishment of alliances between their respective organisations and crucially, with Catholic groups too.

At the Congress of Valencia in late March 1937, the JSU had declared its intention to organise the fusion of antifascist youth groups, inclusive of any Catholic organisations and groups committed to the antifascist struggle.<sup>70</sup> The socialist youth leader Santiago Carrillo emphasised that the nature of the new organisation was that of a mass youth movement constructed around a nebulous antifascism.<sup>71</sup> It was principally the amorphous nature of this antifascism that would appeal to such wide sectors of Republican polity, including Catholics. Indeed, the final objective of the new line, the Alianza Juvenil Nacional, was ‘an umbrella organisation for all the youth organisations in the republican zone’, including Catholics, in order to ‘achieve the unity of the youth of all nations and all political tendencies.’<sup>72</sup> Carrillo went on to declare that ‘we want unity, we want it with the young republicans, young anarchists and young Catholics who are fighting for liberty...we know that such unity cannot be based on Marxist principles.’<sup>73</sup> And though for many socialists this seemed to be the diluting nature of Popular Frontism, prompting further problems for those intent on restoring the fabric of the Republic as a liberal-democratic state, within the JSU it was clear that at all levels there were activists more than willing to cooperate with the

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<sup>68</sup> Souto, *Paso a la juventud*, p. 391, 201n. See also Helen Graham, *Socialism and War: The Spanish Socialist Party in Power and Crisis, 1936-1939*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 69-73

<sup>69</sup> *Crónica*, 1 November 1936. A manifesto signed by the attendees was reproduced in *El Sol*, 14 November 1936

<sup>70</sup> *Ahora*, 27 March 1937 and 16 April 1937; for the reciprocation of the JSU appeal, see amongst others CDMH, PS-Barcelona, 769, Exp. 11 CDMH, PS-Extremadura, 3, Exp. 7

<sup>71</sup> Graham, *Socialism*, p. 69

<sup>72</sup> Graham, *Socialism*, p. 70

<sup>73</sup> Graham, *Socialism*, p. 268 f. 6

Catholic youth – after all, one female activist affirmed, ‘Christ had been the first socialist in the world.’<sup>74</sup>

The JSU policy was, in specific terms, a policy inside the JSU to make it a mass organisation, but in some ways this was an extension of the broader Popular Front line and especially, in this regard, that of a *mano tendida* towards Catholics.<sup>75</sup> If eventually this would lead to conflict within the JSU as some old guard JSU cadres felt the new policy was destroying the youth movement as a politically conscious organisation, Carrillo was heavily critical of the lack of understanding of what he was trying to achieve in wartime, recognising the proposal for the Alianza Juvenil Nacional ‘still’ was not understood by ‘some’ of the militants in the same JSU.<sup>76</sup> For his own part, Carrillo continued to defend the prospective alliance with the Republic’s loyal Catholics. Pointing to the case of those Basque Catholic organisations that had helped in the defence of Bilbao, ‘one of the places where they today play out the fate of the Republic’, Carrillo continued in a speech reprinted in *Ahora* that whilst in ‘the rest of the country there are no Catholic organisations’ to speak of that remained functioning and capable, all ‘young believers’ who wished to defend the Republic could collaborate with the JSU in its efforts.<sup>77</sup>

The JSU relationship with Catholicism and Catholic youth constituencies was developed along clear lines that reflected wider communist-influenced policy in the wartime Republic. Emphasised was that neither the JSU, nor the PCE (and by extension communism in general) were enemies of Christianity, but rather defenders of its freedom and defenders of freedom from fascism. Further, that Christianity was

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<sup>74</sup> *El Popular*, 12 January 1937. In regards to the internal impact of the conference on the JSU, as Helen Graham makes clear, the conference itself was far removed from the internal democratic traditions of socialism – ‘all policy directives had been pre-arranged, there was little real discussion and no voting took place...the PCE...flooded the conference with telegrams of goodwill from Spain and international sympathisers. The overall impression created was that the PCE constituted the vital heart of the JSU.’ Graham, *Socialism*, p. 69

<sup>75</sup> The policy was first announced at the January 1937 JSU youth conference in Valencia; Souto, *Paso a la juventud*, p. 124

<sup>76</sup> CDMH, PS-Extremadura, Caja. 3, Exp. 7, Conferencia Nacional de la Juventud; *Ahora*, 20 May 1937; Santiago Carrillo, *En marcha hacia la victoria: discurso pronunciado en la Conferencia Nacional de juventudes, 1937*, (Valencia: Editorial Obrera Guerri, 1937), pp. 49-52. For criticisms of Carrillo’s policy, see Souto, *Paso a la juventud*, p. 145: the Valencian JSU cadre Juan Tundidor called Carrillo’s slogan of ‘unity with the Catholic youth’ an ‘unfortunate blasphemy’ by ‘the voice responsible for the JSU in the national picture’, and also rejected the very idea of a ‘democratic republic? That is to give power to the bourgeoisie!’

<sup>77</sup> *Ahora*, 19 May 1937 and 20 May 1937

in general a positive historical force: a discursive repertoire that again built bridges between religious ideals of social justice and left-wing political ideals of social equality. Now well utilised, the symbolic bond of ‘Jesus as the first socialist’ mediated that message in recognisable language, fostering the fundamental conditions for it to be engaged, assimilated and acted upon. This JSU narrative stressed that most Catholics in the Republic were good people, with nothing in common with the Franco regime and its abuses.<sup>78</sup> Intrinsicly tied into that was a final point: that Franco and his supporters were in the service of ‘anti-Catholic Nazism’, supported by Church leaders who had betrayed the truth of Jesus Christ.

The offering of the *mano tendida* as a point of contact for all ensured that Catholics could reciprocate the ideas being put forward by the JSU and understand the links being forged between seemingly disparate ideas about the future of the Republic. Given the public comments made by some of Madrid’s priests – sometimes made separately and sometimes far removed from *mano tendida* initiatives (whether PCE or JSU) – in which they had stressed the similarity between communist social efforts and the ideas of social justice found in the gospel, there were increasing points of contact available in this regard. It was also likely that those Church leaders encouraged similar beliefs in the private masses they conducted around the capital. The place was thus clearly open for Catholic youth as part of cross-party antifascist war effort whether through the JSU or otherwise. As Sandra Souto makes clear, ‘throughout the war the executive of the JSU continued to present itself as the *defensora a ultranza* of the Popular Front and the government,’ but it in turn had to access and attempt to direct grassroots constituencies mobilising often on their own terms.<sup>79</sup>

It was through utilising the burgeoning mass organisations of the war effort in this way that the Republican population had mobilised for war and through which that mobilisation was being maintained.<sup>80</sup> Both Carrillo and Negrín understood that finding policies to hold together different constituencies of the Republican base was crucial to political and indeed military survival. For Negrín, it was a point of principle, of his core political belief in the constitutional idea that Republican politics had to be

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<sup>78</sup> Carrillo made repeated references to Catholics fighting for the Republic against the rebels, enmeshed within which were elements of these thematic strands, Souto, *Paso a la juventud*, pp. 147-8

<sup>79</sup> Souto, *Paso a la juventud*, p. 134

<sup>80</sup> Graham, *Casado’s Ghosts*, pp. 261-2; *Spanish Republic*, p. 324

constructed to appeal simultaneously to many different social and political constituencies.<sup>81</sup> It seemed evident, and not only to Negrín, that an increased focus on the inclusion of Catholics must form not only part of the war effort, but an integral and intrinsic part of Republican society. Tentative, but growing, steps were being taken to transform those hopes and dreams into reality. As the work of government officials at home and abroad, and political organisations inside and outside the structures of Republican power showed, not only were Catholics being used as evidence of Republican legitimacy as a liberal-democratic polity at war, but they were also playing efficacious roles in a debilitating war effort.

But if political leaders in the Republic had intended to create a broad antifascist alliance, this mass mobilisation was guiding the dynamics of that policy. Those organisations were becoming the mechanisms through which previously fearful, dislocated sectors of the population began to engage in the war effort, and through which the ‘national and political fabric of the Republic was being made’ and remade.<sup>82</sup> That summer, an edition of the illustrated Catalan magazine *L’Esquella de la Torratxa* dedicated entirely to Catholicism illustrated that cogently. It showed ‘that when the Socialists and Communists governed after May 1937 the... Catholics began to breathe again.’<sup>83</sup> It followed a long editorial in the daily *La Libertad* in March that had commented on the celebration of Holy Week in the Basque Provinces, extending the discussion of those celebrations into a wider piece about the welcome place of Catholicism within the Republic.<sup>84</sup>

Such developments indicated that the Popular Front strategies pursued by the Negrín government (and the PCE’s *mano tendida*) interlocked with real changes on the ground amongst various Catholic constituencies in the Republic. Those changes were crucially articulated by the continued, visible role being played by a growing number of clergy and ordinary Catholics across the Republic, not least the now publicly well-recognised priest Régulo Martínez Sánchez. Working in Madrid for Izquierda Republicana, Martínez Sánchez was well aware of the need to translate words and ideas into actions – of the need not only to talk about an open future, but to

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<sup>81</sup> See also p. 185 of this chapter, fn. 127

<sup>82</sup> Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts’, p. 260

<sup>83</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 257

<sup>84</sup> *La Libertad*, 27 March 1937

look after the psychological welfare and the physical wellbeing of the capital's populace.<sup>85</sup> In the face of the ever growing handicaps to the Republican war effort, the priest began to organise the distribution of food and aid parcels in what had become, by mid-1937, a hunger-struck capital, under the auspices of Izquierda Republicana. Tangible aid and assistance thus gave real meaning to aspirational future goals.<sup>86</sup>

Physical aid was matched by psychological support: regular public demonstrations in favour of the Popular Front were organised by Martínez Sánchez which, although centred on the capital, retained a prominent reference point in the Republican media.<sup>87</sup> Such visible appearances by a Catholic priest, urging loyalty to the Republic and mobilisation behind its war effort close to the frontlines encouraged and inspired the city's embattled population, including its many Catholic citizens: they had also been acutely necessary ever since the government's flight from the city six months earlier in the war.<sup>88</sup> Martínez Sánchez would later speak of the failure of the former prime minister José Giral to understand – from the safety of first Valencia, and then Barcelona – that from the first days of resistance, the capital had survived not through the strategies being pursued by the Republican government nor the PCE's *mano tendida*, but through a shared effort, wrought at a brutally destructive cost, borne by the citizens of Madrid and their suffering.<sup>89</sup>

In Barcelona, the former Jesuit librarian turned propagandist Joan Vilar i Costa was also articulating developments on the ground, leading the publication of the Catalan based, government funded *Boletín de Información Religiosa* and *Boletín de Información Católica*.<sup>90</sup> By the time of the arrival of the Republican central government in October 1937, Vilar had begun to focus increasingly on the radio programme – broadcast to a domestic audience from 1936 – that accompanied his printed bulletins. Having long been in contact with the Catalan premier, Lluís

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<sup>85</sup> Régulo Martínez Sánchez, *Conferencia pronunciada por D. Régulo Martínez en el grupo femenino de Izquierda Republicana el día 7 de mayo de 1938*, (Madrid, Tipografía Comercial, 1938)

<sup>86</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Conferencia*, pp. 11-3

<sup>87</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Conferencia; La Libertad*, 21 April 1938

<sup>88</sup> *La Libertad*, 21 April 1938 and 5 July 1938

<sup>89</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 270

<sup>90</sup> Joan Vilar i Costa, *El meu gra d'arena y plec de ràdiodifusions dominicals (juny 1937-juliol 1938)*, (Barcelona: unpublished manuscript, 1938). Vilar would eventually flee in the *retirada*; interned in Le Vernet, the priest was freed by the intervention of the Bishop of Toulouse; see Vilar i Costa, *Als Catalans*, (Tolosa del Llenguadoc: S.e, 1944)

Companys, with a view to becoming involved in efforts to restore public masses, Vilar utilised these programmes and bulletins to make clear the realities of the situation in Catalonia. Well aware that conservative elements of the Catalan ecclesiastical hierarchy represented a difficult challenge to the restoration of worship, in the 23 January 1938 edition of his bulletin, Vilar went so far as to cast political doubt on anyone who did not openly support the Republic, in a bid to force through the opening of private worships to public masses.<sup>91</sup> Increasingly in these weekly broadcasts and publications, attention was drawn to the intransigence of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, with Vilar equally scathing of lay Catholics who were ‘claiming to be neutral, those who refused to go to the front’, or those who excused themselves in other ways from contributing to the Republic’s war effort.<sup>92</sup>

Preferring to concentrate his efforts on this editorial work, Vilar dedicated himself towards the production of the religious information bulletin. Engaging in almost daily conversations with Jaume Miravittles, with whom he was working hand in hand on these initiatives, Vilar encouraged his superior to petition for similar initiatives to be established and nationalised, and for copies of his work to be sent to Paris.<sup>93</sup> As the work of Martínez Sánchez in Madrid indicated, the vast disparities in individual experiences of war across Republican territory certainly made this a complicated issue. But Vilar’s point was that Catholics across the Republic would be able, if given the opportunity, to access his bulletins and make sense of their own lives in response, understanding that their experiences, hopes and fears were shared across Spain, regardless of regional difference and the multitude pressures of wartime. It is arguable that this offered more than a tentative vehicle that could work not only to unite Catholics in a shared experience, but also to point the way towards a shared future.

In this, his work struck an obvious resonance with other efforts, not least the Negrín government’s efforts towards the pursuit of nationalising policies based on presenting some real and tangible benefits for Republican citizens. But as the criticisms permeating Vilar’s bulletins indicated, Negrín’s domestic policies were

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<sup>91</sup> *Boletín de Información Religiosa*, 23 January 1938

<sup>92</sup> *Boletín de Información Religiosa*, 23 January 1938; see also Vilar, *Montserrat*, pp. 328-34

<sup>93</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, pp. 264-70, 336

certainly not instant and overriding successes.<sup>94</sup> Those efforts remained buffeted by the ‘policy tightrope’ that Negrín faced – the need to keep in the international mind that the ecclesiastical hierarchy had delegitimised itself by backing Franco (and thus Hitler), but without fanning anticlerical sentiment popularly inside the Republican zone. More generally, political and economic mobilisation of the home front remained constrained by internal material shortages and military defeats combined with almost complete international isolation. Whilst Negrín sought both to stiffen Republican resistance and to engage the attention of Britain and France further in the fight to end Non-Intervention, the prime minister’s game plan was no longer a battlefield victory over Franco.<sup>95</sup>

The reality of the arms embargo underlying Non-Intervention meant that when the northern front finally collapsed in October 1937, the impact of the Republic’s heavy industry losses in the Basque Country and Asturias was devastating.<sup>96</sup> Both military resistance and the pursuit of a diplomatic breakthrough were thus aimed at forcing a mediated and guaranteed peace. In an attempt to divert Franco from an all-out offensive on Madrid in December 1937 the Republic had launched the Teruel offensive and with the advantage of surprise were successful in capturing the city, until the rebels rushed reinforcements from the Madrid zone.<sup>97</sup> But by the middle of February, material superiority again proved decisive. Teruel was recaptured by the rebels against what was an increasingly bleak European backdrop. The conservative Chautemps government had reclosed the French border, desiring the continued appeasement of Germany and a hopeful continuation of pyrite imports for the French arms industry from the recently Francoist-occupied north of Spain.<sup>98</sup> That body blow was quickly followed by the German annexation of Austria, ensuring Republic resistance continued to be hampered even in spite of the brief reopening of the French border until June 1938 under Léon Blum’s reconstituted Popular Front government.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> For the internal divisions that hindered these efforts, see Helen Graham, ‘The Spanish Socialist Party in Power and the Government of Juan Negrín, 1937-9’, *European Historical Quarterly*, 18, 1988, pp. 175-206

<sup>95</sup> Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts’, p. 256

<sup>96</sup> Enrique Moradiellos, *Don Juan Negrín*, (Barcelona: Ediciones Peninsula, 2006), pp. 302-4

<sup>97</sup> Moradiellos, *Negrín*, pp. 308-9

<sup>98</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 367-8

<sup>99</sup> Moradiellos, *Negrín*, pp. 324-9

With the Republic's international war effort focused on a diplomatic breakthrough, appeals to the populations of the European democracies retained centre stage. In those efforts, the propaganda offices in Paris functioned crucially as a conduit through which the construction of the new national political and social fabric was transmitted and communicated.<sup>100</sup> Of importance was the Catholic writer and Sofía Blasco, who had spent much of the previous year interviewing Republican combatants in Spain, laying the foundations for a book that would be published later in the war. Already working under the pseudonym 'Madrecita', Blasco was a regular speaker at rallies held by the antifascist internationalist women's organisation, the Comité Mundial de Mujeres contra la Guerra y el Fascismo.<sup>101</sup> Blasco was brought in to work directly with Vicéns and Gallegos Rocaful's office in late 1937, as the pair stepped up efforts to engage previously unmobilised social constituencies.<sup>102</sup> Her involvement was welcomed and deemed a success, with the French ambassador Ossorio y Gallardo enthusiastically writing to Leonardo Martín Echeverría, sub-secretary of propaganda in Carlos Esplá's ministry, stressing Blasco's 'excellent work' as a public orator and as 'one of the most effective elements of our propaganda in this country.'<sup>103</sup> Indeed, in two months alone touring the Rhône valley (a tour which also later included visits to Switzerland and Luxembourg) audiences of over four thousand people gathered and raised almost 80,000 French francs for the Republic, demonstrating Blasco's remarkable oratory – and fundraising – abilities.<sup>104</sup> With her mainly middle-class, often Catholic, audiences far removed from the left-wing rallies organised in support of the Republic in 1936, Blasco's work represented something of a vindication of efforts to reorganise and reshape the state of the Republic's propaganda efforts, not least those aimed at Catholics.

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<sup>100</sup> Important here is the production from Paris of (for instance) the pamphlets *Les calumnies nazis* and *La religion dans l'Espagne de Franco*, with a translated German version too, referred to also in Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 335

<sup>101</sup> Évelyne Morin-Rotureau (ed.), *Combats de femmes, 1939-1945*, (Autrement: Paris, 2001), pp. 23-31; Encarnación Fuyola, *Mujeres antifascistas: su trabajo y su organización*, (Valencia: Ediciones de las Mujeres Antifascistas, 1936)

<sup>102</sup> AGA, 11063, 6349, Personal File of Sofía Blasco; Sofía Blasco, *Peuple D'Espagne; Journal De Guerre de la "Madrecita"*, trans. Henrietta Sauret, (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1938)

<sup>103</sup> AGA, 54/11063, 6349, Ossorio to Martín Echeverría, 27 December 1937

<sup>104</sup> For newspaper reports of Blasco's conference speeches in France, see amongst others *L'Humanite*, 27 January 1937, *Rouge-Midi*, 19 November 1937, *La Sentinelle*, 6 May 1938 Although Blasco was not a communist party member nor, it would seem, particularly enthusiastic about radical left politics, the French communist publication *Rouge-Midi* nevertheless urged readers to attend a 21 November 1937 rally at which the 'great Catholic writer [Blasco]' was to speak



It was clear that such initiatives were beginning to resonate more than ever with certain sectors of the European public. In January 1938 Ossorio y Gallardo received a letter from the French antifascist activist Étienne Bénichou, who along with a number of colleagues was organising a ‘Centre Cervantes des Amis de l’Espagne’.<sup>105</sup> Bénichou informed Ossorio that the proposed centre, a grassroots initiative which was to be opened in early February, had already booked a plethora of speakers for its first conferences – including several staff members of the Paris office. At one event, Gallegos Rocafull was to speak with José Bergamín and the French Catholic intellectual François Mauriac on the issue of ‘Catholics and Spain.’ The group also planned to show Luis Buñuel’s pro-Republican propaganda film *Espagne ’37* with a live commentary from an as-yet-undecided member of the Republic’s propaganda office.<sup>106</sup> Public attention was also drawn to the announcement that Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso were lined up to attend another event organised by the centre. Involving themselves in the work of the Centre Cervantes in Paris, the Republic’s Catholic propagandists in Paris were actively engaging in grassroots initiatives, just as their counterparts were doing in Spain. Adapting to the interests of their increasing audiences, they were working within and outside the boundaries of government propaganda initiatives, subtly and regularly refocusing their efforts.

But despite those proactive efforts, the situation in France was swayed by a generally conservative political milieu, only momentarily disrupted by Hitler’s *Anschluss* in March 1938 and again giving way to the influence of social conservatives and appeasers hostile to the Spanish Republic.<sup>107</sup> Indeed this conservative ascendancy was not limited to France – in May the League of Nations rejected foreign minister Álvarez del Vayo’s appeal for an end to Non-Intervention, whilst concurrently, on 4 May 1938, the Vatican made the decision to appoint Monsignor Cicognani, the former nuncio to Vienna, as the new nuncio to the rebel government in Burgos.<sup>108</sup> It appeared that despite efforts by the Negrín government, the Basque delegation in Barcelona and a multitude of Spanish Catholics at home and

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<sup>105</sup> Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 329; Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 150-1

<sup>106</sup> Gubern and Hammond, *Luis Buñuel*, p. 329

<sup>107</sup> Ricardo Miralles, ‘El duro forcejeo de la diplomacia republicana en París. Francia y la guerra civil española’ in Angel Viñas (ed.), *Al servicio de la República: diplomáticos y Guerra Civil*, (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2010), pp. 139-54

<sup>108</sup> Raguer, *Gunpowder*, p. 193; Peter C. Kent, ‘The Vatican and the Spanish Civil War’, *European History Quarterly*, 16, 1986, p. 454-7

in exile, the Vatican had merely delayed its full recognition of the Francoist government.<sup>109</sup> The efforts to reconstruct a new national and political fabric that incorporated freedom for Catholics, significantly hampered by the realities of deprivations at home, were thus delivered successive blows on the international stage. That international situation worked to exacerbate increasingly worsening material and psychological conditions, pressing down on pre-existing internal fractures that would make the Republican war effort increasingly unviable. The physical division of Republican territory in April 1938 when Franco's armies broke through to the Mediterranean, cutting off Madrid and the centre-south zone from Catalonia and the land frontier with France, further shattered efforts to rebuild Republican life.<sup>110</sup> This intensified a feeling of separation from the Republic's political authorities, since both the government and the leaderships of the main parties and organisations offering it support had been located in Barcelona since October 1937, with the expressly centralising intention of exerting greater control over the Catalan war effort.<sup>111</sup>

These bitter blows on the military and political battlefields underlined the period immediately preceding the publication on 1 May 1938 of Negrín's famous 'Thirteen Points.' The Thirteen Points constituted a declaration of the Republic's political position in which Negrín stressed the need to maintain Spain's political and economic integrity, emphasising the Republic's continued commitment to pluralist, democratic values, and the rights of citizens to live freely according to the universal values of liberal democracy.<sup>112</sup> In this objective, the cabinet reshuffle of April 1938, increasing socialist and Republican representation, combined with the diminished cabinet presence of the PCE, worked further to consolidate the impact of the Thirteen Points, the supreme objective of which (as part of Negrín's wider strategy) was again to convince Britain and France of their own stake in the survival of the Republic as a sister democracy, and thus the necessity of ending Non-Intervention.<sup>113</sup> Thus the

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<sup>109</sup> Kent, 'The Vatican and the Spanish Civil War', p. 457; Emma Fattorini, *Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican: Pope Pius XI and the Speech That Was Never Made*, trans. Carl Ipsen, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), pp. 96-8

<sup>110</sup> Azaña, *Obras completas*, IV, 819-20, specifically his diary entry of 13 October 1937

<sup>111</sup> Helen Graham, "'Against the state": a genealogy of the Barcelona May Days (1937)', *European History Quarterly*, 29(4), 1999, pp. 529-31

<sup>112</sup> Negrín, *Les 13 points*; *El Socialista*, 6 April 1938; see also Zugazagoitia, *Guerra y vicissitudes*, pp. 430-2

<sup>113</sup> Negrín believed that Britain's support was the key to Republican survival despite British political hostility to the Republic from its very establishment in 1931, see Moradiellos, *La perfidia de Albión*, pp. 18-39

strategy of the Negrín premiership – echoing the efforts of a wide variety of organisations and individuals who had begun as early as 1936 – focused centrally on the restoration of a broad, ‘popular’ alliance between the disparate, and in some cases antagonistic, constituencies making up the still fractured Republican polity. Illustrative of a broadly liberal-democratic, national ideal that sought to appeal to the Republic’s conservative and Catholic constituencies as well as moderate and reformist sectors, the sixth point guaranteed further that ‘the fulfilment of rights for citizens in civic life and social life, freedom of conscience, and ensures the free exercise of religious beliefs and practices.’<sup>114</sup> *La Vanguardia* declared of this point that ‘in accordance with the laws of republican democracy, religious freedom is a fundamental part of the base and organic content of the state’.<sup>115</sup> Thus discourses of democracy, justice and equality were represented in language that appealed to a wide and heterogeneous audience at home and abroad.<sup>116</sup>

Though the Thirteen Points themselves were intended above all for consumption on the European diplomatic front and the continued campaign to lift Non-Intervention, as the Foreign Minister Álvarez del Vayo made a concerted effort at the League of Nations to stress the ‘free exercise of religious beliefs and practices’ in the Republic, those ideas also resonated with a domestic audience.<sup>117</sup> Negrín’s intention here was that the Thirteen Points were part of a full and wide-ranging domestic policy, confirming the Republic as a nation in which Spaniards of different classes, and with different ideas and goals could participate.<sup>118</sup> As ever, the spectre of criticism remained from revolutionary groups within the Republic, many of whom considered the Thirteen Points a ‘declaration contain[ing] much that is positive’, but nevertheless the ‘first step in the liquidation of revolution.’<sup>119</sup> But for the most part, Negrín’s domestic audience was already familiar with a consistent emphasis on the

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<sup>114</sup> Negrín, *Les 13 points*. For the military background to the division of Republican Spain into two zones and the declaration of the Thirteen Points, see Bolloten, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 570-3

<sup>115</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 27 May 1938

<sup>116</sup> The Republican government also produced posters with small illustrations of each of the points for domestic audiences

<sup>117</sup> Julio Álvarez del Vayo, *Deux discours prononcés par M. Alvarez del Vayo, Ministre des affaires étrangères d'Espagne, à la 101me session de la Société des Nations, suivis des 13 points du Gouvernement espagnol*, (Paris: Services d’information du rassemblement universel pour la paix, 1938), p. 15; *La Vanguardia*, 26 May 1938

<sup>118</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, p. 366; Negrín’s intention that this would be received domestically is also evident in José Díaz’s comments, *Frente Rojo*, 30 March 1938, reprinted in Díaz, *Tres años de lucha*, III, pp. 128-32

<sup>119</sup> Bolloten, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 647

entitlement to build a national polity in which all Spaniards, including Catholics, could participate.<sup>120</sup>

Support came from across the political spectrum and from grassroots constituencies alongside political organisations that advocated such a goal. This broadly included Carrillo's JSU, the PCE, the UDC and leading members of the PSOE and Izquierda Republicana.<sup>121</sup> They also included a number of prominent Catholic voices; indeed, in May 1938, at a conference organised by Izquierda Republicana's women's organisation, Régulo Martínez Sánchez urged national unity and declared to his audience that the 'Spanish Popular Front is not only the Popular Front of the left against the right; it is much more: the Popular Front is the only authentic Spain, in complete opposition to the "unpopular front", that which is the anti-Spain.'<sup>122</sup> In this he drew upon much wider discourses, now embedded within the Thirteen Points, that sought to unite together the entire Republican population behind the well-trodden narrative of 'the people' fighting a 'popular cause.'<sup>123</sup>

The Thirteen Points should have represented a reconfirmation of the Republic's principles of individual rights secured by constitutional process. However, from their very genesis this project was set against a reality of the increasing erosion of this constitutional fabric, driven by the pressures of maintaining resistance.<sup>124</sup> There was still no general opening of churches, which had closed in the aftermath of the 1936 anticlerical violence and remained so – not least as a vital issue of public order. Public gatherings remained of serious concern to Republican authorities, exacerbated by the major bombardments of densely crowded Republican cities, swelled with refugees.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, more critical to any such developments on the ground remained the refusal of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to permit the limited re-

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<sup>120</sup> In this see also Negrín, '¡España para los españoles!' 18 June 1938 and José Díaz, 'Unión Nacional de todos los españoles', *Frente Rojo*, 30 March 1938 and the article written in support of the Negrín government by the former parliamentary deputy and priest Jerónimo García Gallego in *La Vanguardia*, 27 May 1938

<sup>121</sup> See for instance, in general terms, Helen Graham, *Socialism*, pp. 69-73; Raguer, *Gunpowder*, pp. 257-9; Souto, *Paso a la juventud*, pp. 282-92

<sup>122</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Conferencia*, p. 13

<sup>123</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 267. That Régulo's comments echoed Santiago Carrillo's earlier words at the March 1937 JSU conference reinforced the picture of political organisations at all levels engaged in their own processes of incorporating the Republic's Catholics into those efforts

<sup>124</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 28 April 1938; Graham, *Spanish Republic*, p. 343

<sup>125</sup> *La Libertad*, 7 June 1938, 8 August 1938, 11 August 1938

introduction of public worship, and the continued intransigence of certain sectors of the population.

Commentaries hostile to the Republic suggested that this intended ‘normalisation’ of religious life was a calculated trap, yet more evidence of a Republic malevolent towards Catholicism.<sup>126</sup> Other observers implied that, in the most basic terms, such policy aims remained focused not on liberal freedoms for Catholics, but on the security of the home front, intended centrally to light up the dark corners of the Republic.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, expanding fifth column activities were posing an even greater threat to the Republic: with Francoist forces seemingly unerring in their external military advance, so fears and anxieties about a hidden enemy within produced ever increasing tensions in the Republic, underscored by the hunger and material lack that afflicted the zone.<sup>128</sup> Given the cultural-theological worldview of the Catholic Church in which the continuation of sacramental life was crucial, the existence of a clandestine church had offered a degree of religious normality crucial to the spiritual lives of many Catholics in the Republic. That a rumoured two thousand masses were being said daily in Barcelona alone certainly helped to portray the Republic as restoring religious life, but at the same time there was no doubt that many clandestine church meetings, private masses and worships across the Republic were often also a cover for fundraising for the pro-Francoist work of the solidarity organisation, Socorro Blanco, and for other fifth column activities.<sup>129</sup> The government (and with Lobo in his role at the Office of Religious Orders) had been aware of many of these for some time, but in a tense atmosphere stretched to breaking point, the hundreds of private masses being said daily in apartments and houses in Madrid – a city under siege and permeated by fifth columnists – represented a landscape far removed from the limited authorised masses being said in Barcelona.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Vilar notes that graffiti appeared on some of the walls around chapels where masses were prospectively being organised, warning ‘Catholics! True believers! Do not trust this tolerance!’, *Montserrat*, p. 276

<sup>127</sup> Carcel Ortí, *Caidos*, p. 286; Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia*, II, p. 332. Graham notes more widely that of the Republic’s policies and constitutional practices even many historical commentators ‘broadly sympathetic to the Republic implicitly apply to it standards that no extant democracy has yet attained in wartime’, *Republic*, p. 343, p. 341 fn. 89

<sup>128</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, p. 343

<sup>129</sup> *New York Times*, 12 March 1938

<sup>130</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 275

This clandestine activity was close to home too – the mother of one Republican artillery commissar frequently allowed masses to be held in her house and from there delivered messages and care parcels to a number of rebel inmates in Republican gaols.<sup>131</sup> That such ‘operations’ were able to occur from close to the Republican military and political leadership only increased fears of infiltration and the capture of military intelligence. By 1938, fifth column activities (real and imagined) posed a greater threat to the Republic than ever before, magnifying social and political tensions on the home front.<sup>132</sup> In this tangible sense of siege, Catholic priests freed from prison, where they had been kept in part for their own safety by Republican authorities, were inevitably prime targets for later investigation by the same authorities and to accusations from other Republican citizens.<sup>133</sup>

And the Republic, like other democratic societies at war faced with an existential threat, increasingly adopted undemocratic norms such as censorship, internment without trial, suspension of civil liberties, strike bans in essential industries and conscription.<sup>134</sup> To root out fifth-column networks and to acquire confessions, from May 1938 the S.I.M, the Republic’s military intelligence service, carried out illegal detentions.<sup>135</sup> This would, in turn, continue to pose difficult questions throughout the war, not least for those involved in the attempted re-establishment of Catholic worship in Catalonia at the end of that year: the anxious denunciation of ‘enemies within’ and that panic that would infuse Republican security forces and civilians alike almost inevitably drew attentions back toward still-often clandestine Catholic celebrations, which provided easy, tangible targets for those fears of the unknown.<sup>136</sup>

In terms of ensuring Republican governmental control, allowing the reopening of churches was a substantial mechanism in countering ‘private’ religious gatherings.

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<sup>131</sup> Rafael del Romero, *Memorias de un joven católico de derechas, soldado de la República, (1915-1944)*, (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2012), p. 151, 172-4

<sup>132</sup> Javier Cervera, *Madrid en guerra: La ciudad clandestino, 1936-1939*, (Madrid: Alianza, 1998), pp. 284-90

<sup>133</sup> From his appointment as Minister of Justice, Irujo had begun to release as many imprisoned priests as he could, Irujo, *Un Vasco*, I, p. 14, 125-7

<sup>134</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 350-4

<sup>135</sup> Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 375-7

<sup>136</sup> See in particular Rial’s diary entry dated 11 January 1939, reprinted in Ragner, *Salvador Rial*, p. 142. Irujo, *Un vasco*, I, pp. 89-91, 250-73 for Irujo’s reaction to accusations of the torturing of suspects by the S.I.M.

But this highlights genuine efforts – including Negrín’s – to restore public worship as a measure of democratic life, and as freedoms that the Republic had represented for those who had voted it into existence and now continued to support it in war. Towards these goals, Manuel Irujo had created the Office of Religious Orders and worked tirelessly until he succeeded in arranging for public Masses to be held in the buildings of the Basque delegation in Valencia, and for the first chapel to be reopened in Barcelona as early as August 1937.<sup>137</sup> Progress was slow, but over the next months a number of chapels in central Barcelona were opened – authorised by Irujo’s efforts – including a chapel close to the Basque government offices on the Passeig de Gràcia, another nearby alongside the Rambla de Catalunya, and another in the district [barrio] of Guinardó close to the Hospital Evangèlic.<sup>138</sup> The largest of the authorised locations was the Basque chapel on the calle del Pino, its secluded entrance on a narrow street disguising a huge building that could accommodate several hundred people across a number of interconnected reception rooms.

Here, by early 1938 two masses were being held mid-week and four more on Sundays and from the popularity of sermons here alone (and from the number of Basques in the city), it was clear that many Barcelona locals also took advantage of this small semblance of free religious life.<sup>139</sup> But from the outset, the fifth column tried to undermine the initiative (as did the CNT and some other radical left groups) by spreading the rumour that the Basque chapel was deconsecrated and anyone who attended Mass there would be excommunicated.<sup>140</sup> Rebel supporters and fifth columnists realised that, with the churches open, they would lose one of their principal propaganda weapons against the government.<sup>141</sup> That churches remained closed and priests loyal to the Republican had been suspended were propaganda weapons already well utilised by Francoist officials and the ecclesiastical hierarchy – Cardinal Gomá

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<sup>137</sup> *Decreto autorizando el culto privado de 7 de agosto 1937*; *Gaceta de la República*, 8 August 1938. Jesús de Galíndez, who had helped to save the lives of large numbers of priests, nuns and right-wing supporters in 1936, and who now worked in the Office of Religious Orders, served as an altar boy at that first Mass, held on 15 August 1937. See also Irujo, *Un vasco*, II, pp. 205-7

<sup>138</sup> CDMH, PS-Barcelona, 359, Exp. 7, letter dated 18 March 1938

<sup>139</sup> CDMH, PS-Barcelona, 359, Exp. 7, letter dated 13 April 1938. See also Joan Bada, ‘L’església catòlica davant la guerra civil’, in Pelai Pagès (ed.), *La Guerra Civil als Països Catalans (1936-1939)*, (València: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2007), p. 316; Ragner, *La Unió*, p. 498

<sup>140</sup> Radical left-wing critics declared that ‘one of the most dangerous kind of enemies of the revolution and of socialism are those Catholics described as “Christians of progressive spirit and free from prejudice,”’ *Spartacus*, September 1938

<sup>141</sup> Galíndez, *Los vascos en el Madrid sitiado*, pp. 32-3; Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 276; Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra*, pp. 322-4, 328-9

had circulated reports around the Francoist zone and to propaganda officials declaring that both García Morales and Lobo were under suspension and, on the anniversary of the fall of Bilbao, Ramon Serrano Suñer referred in his celebratory address to the ‘villainous pedantries’ of the ‘one-worlders on the rights of peoples’, declaring Josep María Tarragó, the priest turned-reporter, a ‘monster’. He went on to declare that Tarragó too had been suspended by the Bishop of Barcelona (Irurita), having ‘stained the honour’ of Spain.<sup>142</sup>

The Republic responded quickly, as Irujo reaffirmed publicly that there was ‘no decree or law against Catholic worship; on the contrary, the authorities have declared full freedom of conscience and worship, whose realisation is guaranteed as the environment allows.’<sup>143</sup> Commenting further that private masses were in fact being held regularly, the minister rightly acknowledged that it had not been possible to extend those into public events. Irujo emphasised however that the reason for this was not the ‘intransigence of the masses’ or the weaknesses of Republican power structures, nor indeed the ‘godlessness’ attributed to them by Francoist propaganda. Rather, Irujo blamed the increasing and sustained actions of fifth columnists who sought to undermine such measures and encourage suspicions that Republican normalisation measures were a trap.<sup>144</sup> The bold accusation that the re-establishment of public worship was a plot to root out Catholic and socially conservative constituencies, from a group calling itself the ‘Brothers of Christian Charity’, declared that Irujo ‘is with the reds and cannot be trusted.’<sup>145</sup>

But an increasingly war-weary population was attributing vastly different meanings to this attempted rearticulating of liberal democratic privileges. There were political leaders and activists within the Republic who from early 1938 began to understand the policy of increased religious toleration as serving as some kind of

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<sup>142</sup> This version of the speech is available via the Fundación Serrano Suñer, [http://www.xn--forofundacionserranosuer-mlc.es/documentos/discursos/7discursos\\_03.pdf](http://www.xn--forofundacionserranosuer-mlc.es/documentos/discursos/7discursos_03.pdf) and is partly reproduced in Ragner, *La Unió*, pp. 449-50. Widespread accusations of priests being ‘suspended’ was typical of Francoist strategy – see González Gullón, ‘Leocadio Lobo’, p. 742; correspondence between Cardinal Gomá and military authorities, Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, VII*, 7-144, 7-218

<sup>143</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 276; *La Libertad*, 19 June 1938

<sup>144</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 276. Francoist propaganda sought to display these measures within the narrative of an ‘anticlerical Republic’, suggesting that these efforts were in fact subversive attempts to publicly identify Catholics, *El Día de Palencia*, 28 March 1938

<sup>145</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, p. 276



negotiating strategy in a situation of total military victory by Franco. That Pere Tarrés, the doctor and pre-war vice-president of the FJCC, would later call Republican efforts towards religious worship a ‘pantomime’ suggests that similar understandings would eventually permeate some sectors of the population.<sup>146</sup> Certainly, Negrín’s policy aims had by now shifted to a negotiated peace with guarantees rather than outright military victory, but often lost in the analysis of political decision making here is the existence of, and aspirations towards, restoring and strengthening the social contract between the Republic and citizens. Having a strategic plan to mobilise totally for war certainly did not obviate also having a transcendental principle behind that war effort.<sup>147</sup> Indeed, a year earlier President Azaña had noted that Negrín had displayed significant disgust against the atrocities that marked the start of the war; not least the August 1936 events at the Model Prison and, with Negrín’s only brother Heriberto a monk, the violence against the clergy. Azaña went so far as to suggest that they made Negrín ashamed to be Spanish.<sup>148</sup> It is this that underlines the efforts of Negrín’s government to restore religious worship: a desire to restore normality to the landscape of religious beliefs and toleration of plural ideas, because that is what they believed the Republic stood for.

The Republican judiciary, restored to some semblances of normality under Irujo before his resignation in December 1937 – though of course always within the constrained environment of a state engaged in civil war – had a crucial role to play in ensuring that the Republic acted mainly within the boundaries of a liberal-democratic polity and ended such extrajudicial violence. On 18 October 1938 one court in Extremadura witnessed the case of a priest accused of clandestine fifth columnist activities and treason.<sup>149</sup> The trial stood as a larger indication of the distance the Republic had come since 1936: concluding that the priest and those acting in his defence had ‘demonstrated that the accusation [against the defendant] was completely false,’ the judiciary’s upholding of the clergy’s civil rights by constitutional and legislative process was a far cry from the private intercessions that alone had saved the

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<sup>146</sup> Raguer, *Gunpowder*, p. 281

<sup>147</sup> Graham indicates succinctly that ‘at heart, Negrín was motivated by conviction here rather than political expediency’, *Spanish Republic*, p. 340

<sup>148</sup> Manuel Azaña, *Apuntes de memoria inéditos y cartas 1938–1939–1940*, (Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1990), p. 166

<sup>149</sup> *La Libertad*, 19 October 1938

lives of priests in the summer of 1936.<sup>150</sup> Those individual actions and the limited, dislocated mechanisms of government had been, by the end of 1938, replaced by an increasingly functioning constitutional order. The case was reported in *La Libertad* occupying a column adjacent to reports of the seizure of the possessions of religious congregations by fascist paramilitaries in Austria.<sup>151</sup> The juxtaposition was striking as the Republic again sought to emphasise its toleration of religion in contrast to the radical incompatibility of fascism and Catholicism.

What was clear was that people were coming into contact with Republican authorities in new ways, and beginning to think differently about their places as citizens too. Far from policy directives at the highest level alone, the real and practical ways in which ordinary Catholics encountered the Republican authorities in everyday life were beginning to change – not least through government programmes intended to offer increased safety and security to citizens including bomb shelters; medical and civil defence services; food canteens and aid distribution, even where they were organised in coalition with charitable organisations.<sup>152</sup> And, although public worship, however limited, was nowhere near a reality in Madrid, letters received by political figures and officials encouraged them to persevere, cogently illustrating that ordinary Catholics were beginning to recognise government initiatives and support them in increasing numbers. In one letter to Irujo, a group of six Catholic priests in Madrid wrote that they remained ‘grateful to the Minister for his constant concern for the Catholic religion and for those priests uncontaminated by the fascist heresy.’<sup>153</sup> The letter illustrated two key points. Firstly, despite even recent claims from historians that Leocadio Lobo was ‘the only priest living in Madrid that supported the Republican government’, this is simply not the case.<sup>154</sup> As his work throughout the war had demonstrated, from 1936 Lobo had worked tirelessly and closely with a large number

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<sup>150</sup> *La Libertad*, 19 October 1938

<sup>151</sup> *La Libertad*, 19 October 1938

<sup>152</sup> Such government aid efforts, and the significant obstacles facing such programmes, are discussed in Graham, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 155-9, pp. 352-3. For contemporary reports of such programmes, see as examples *Solidaridad Obrera*, 15 May 1938 and 5 July 1938 (the pioneering of blood banks, especially in Barcelona); *La Libertad*, 5 September 1938 (air-raid shelter constructions); Martínez Sánchez, *Conferencia pronunciada por D. Régulo Martínez*, pp. 11-4 (food parcels and aid distribution)

<sup>153</sup> AGMJ, Fondo Irujo, J, Caja. 21, Exp. 1 [available via euskomedia.org/fondo/1793, last accessed 31 May 2015]

<sup>154</sup> González Gullón, ‘Leocadio Lobo’, p. 267. Although this is not the case, it is true to say that a lack of public presence amongst other priests in contact with Lobo has ensured that they have remained buried beneath decades of accumulated myth

of the city's priests. Although he acted as a publicly visible intermediary and figurehead in Republican propaganda efforts, he was – even in 1938, as this letter indicates – without question part of a much larger constituency of priests and other Catholics in the city that supported the Republican government. The six signatories of the letter came from across Madrid, the daily contact between some of them before and during the war being certainly minimal. Even now, in 1938, they spoke for their own flocks and their own wartime communities. Secondly, the letter gives an indication of how the Republic's normalisation measures were being received. The response of the six signatories, each from different parts of the city and experiencing their 'own' war on a daily basis, suggests clearly that the Republic's normalising measures were also permeating the fabric of life in Madrid, reconstructing a bond with – and that was reciprocated by – its Catholic citizens, even in spite of the very real threat of the fifth column in the city.<sup>155</sup>

Although it is difficult to say with any quantitative basis how far their sentiments were replicated by larger communities, from their work as priests, community leaders and on behalf of the Republic, Lobo and others had acted as representatives of multitude constituencies, gathering together their flocks, learning about their wartime experiences, providing spiritual and practical assistance and rebuilding communities as best they could. At the same time, whether through networks that had existed long before the war, or new channels reformed in wartime, those priests functioned as communicative conduits through which the Republic could access and engage with these much broader Catholic constituencies. And, as Catholics across the Republic were increasingly reciprocating such efforts, it was clear that real changes in understanding state-citizen relationships were accelerating. Indicative of this was that those priests in the capital, accessed through Lobo by the government, now utilised their 'spokesman' to thank Irujo – offering their 'continued humble prayers', this group of Madrid priests, with the blessing of their flocks, expressed their thanks by presenting him with an ornately crafted ivory crucifix.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> AGMJ, Fondo Irujo, J, Caja. 21, Exp. 1 [available via [euskomedia.org/fondo/1793](http://euskomedia.org/fondo/1793), last accessed 31 May 2015]

<sup>156</sup> AGMJ, Fondo Irujo, J, Caja. 21, Exp. 1 [available via [euskomedia.org/fondo/1793](http://euskomedia.org/fondo/1793), last accessed 31 May 2015]

Understanding these initiatives from such a position also makes clearer the concerted efforts of the Negrín government to ensure that the religious normalisation they intended to re-establish was beneficial to the Republic's faithful citizens. There were other changes afoot, too. From its inception almost a year earlier until the publication of Negrín's Thirteen Points, the former Jesuit librarian Joan Vilar's religious bulletins had formed a crucial hub for anti-Francoist Catholics. The production and distribution of these publications and radio broadcasts had allowed priests and lay Catholics to discuss and exchange ideas, but in the physical activity of meeting together to produce the bulletins, those individuals were given an immediate and physically tangible environment in which to share hopes, ideas and experiences, as well as their fears. But if there was no immediate impact on the work of Vilar and those around him, which continued apace, over the late summer of 1938 things continued to change on the ground in Republican Spain. By August, Vilar's printed bulletins had ceased production, their international scope subsumed into the much wider aims of the Thirteen Points.<sup>157</sup>

Crucially, the radio programmes that had supplemented the printed religious bulletins continued, aimed directly at the Republic's domestic audience. It seemed perhaps that with the end of the printed publications – the message continued across other media outlets – priests involved in Vilar's project were able to devote more time to 'tangible' goals, not least increasingly in the Republic's efforts to reopen public worship from August 1938. If that hinted at the resonances of the Thirteen Points as consonant with the goals of a domestic Catholic audience, an open letter to the director of *L'Osservatore Romano* printed in the Catalan publication *La Publicitat* made those links more explicit.<sup>158</sup>

But this was not just about opening buildings for worship: Negrín's government also made significant efforts to cater for the specific daily needs of the Republic's Catholic constituencies. Earlier in the year, the priest Josep de Besalú, an acquaintance of the UDC politician Josep Maria Trias Peitx, had received a letter from government officials asking for his assistance in the location and appointment of

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<sup>157</sup> Vilar, *Montserrat*, pp. 335. Nevertheless, in a letter dated 29 August 1938, Salvador Rial noted the continuing efforts of Vilar to produce material emphasising Republican tolerance, Riquer, *Salvador Rial*, p. 297

<sup>158</sup> *La Publicitat*, 1 November 1938

Basque-speaking priests to deal with the huge influx of Basque refugees, arriving in Catalonia after the fall of the North in late 1937.<sup>159</sup> The priest was informed that the government had made efforts to ensure that ‘some Catalan priests have been applied to the task’ of providing religious support, but that linguistic difficulties between the priests and many of those seeking help and spiritual advice were vast and posing significant problems. From February 1938, de Besalú was tasked with doing ‘everything possible’ to ensure ‘authorisation be given to certain religious Basque exiles in France’ to return to Spain and continue their ‘apostolic work.’<sup>160</sup> That work continued amongst Basque and Catalan churchmen and the Republic’s politicians, even as the reality of war was brought brutally home.

In the midst of continued attacks on the Republic’s civilian population, sustained bombing raids on Barcelona over the nights of 16-18 March 1938 left nearly one thousand dead and three thousand injured.<sup>161</sup> The working-class districts where countless refugees were confined to the narrow streets were especially badly hit, the objective simply to terrorise the civilian population. The efforts of de Besalú and others were thus hampered further by the existence of large numbers of private chapels within that target range – the destruction of the chapels themselves posed one problem, but the psychological impact on people who were now afraid to gather in those areas could only have had significant repercussions. Nevertheless, in June the Basque publication *Emakume Abertzale Batza (Associó de Dones Patriotes Basques)* printed a list of thirteen Catalan priests offering daily services in the Basque chapels of Barcelona, suggesting that de Besalú had made at least some progress, despite the problems he faced.<sup>162</sup>

Again it was clear that whilst the Republican government was well aware its most valuable tool in the war remained its citizenry, those citizens were also driving the war effort at a grassroots level. That included the renegotiation of Republican civic life, a dynamic process that had first begun in the aftermath of the revolutionary

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<sup>159</sup> Solé and Caballer, ‘Aproximació a la biografia’, p. 170

<sup>160</sup> Biblioteca del Pavelló de la República, Universitat de Barcelona (BPR), FP(Trias) 1(1)dII, Letter from Trias Peix to Josep de Besalú, 9 February 1938 in Solé and Caballer, ‘Aproximació a la biografia’, pp. 170-1

<sup>161</sup> Joan Villarroya i Font, *Els bombardeigs de Barcelona durant la guerra civil (1936–1939)*, (Barcelona: Publicacions de l’Abadía de Montserrat, 1999) pp. 79-100

<sup>162</sup> A full list of those priests appears in Ragner, *La Unió*, p. 498

summer of 1936 and was now, almost two years later, continuing apace. Grassroots initiatives worked both in advance of government policies and influenced, responded to and took new directions from those policies as they were constructed. And so, from mid-1938, readers of *La Vanguardia* were greeted with a new, regular feature entitled ‘Vida Religiosa’. It was arguably the next logical step in those symbiotic dynamics, keeping interested readers up to date with the latest developments in the Republic’s ongoing efforts to restore religious normality. It also kept a keen eye on the work and public lives of those priests that had so far played a prominent role in encouraging Catholics to support the Republic. On 19 July 1938, coverage was given to a conference organised by the Ateneo profesional de periodistas in Barcelona, where both Leocadio Lobo and Salvador de Híjar were to speak.<sup>163</sup> In his speech, Lobo explored the war in a framework he had utilised on many occasions previously: that rebel ideas of the *patria* and the nation did not conform ‘to the universality of Christianity’ and that, in the last analysis, ‘Christianity is life, light and love [vida, luz y amor], whilst the rebels stand only for extermination and death [exterminio y muerte].’<sup>164</sup>

The output of *La Vanguardia*, filtering through news of ‘Catholic events’ to a broadening audience, was replicated in other newspapers, some of which had, from the first days of the war, continued to report positively on the place of Catholics within Republican life. This included *La Libertad*, the Madrid daily that had consistently featured columns written by priests loyal to the Republic from 1931. From June 1938, *La Libertad* also featured the ‘anticlerical priest’ García Morales, following a somewhat surprising reappearance. He had been almost completely absent from the public landscape of the Republic for over a year, with rumours that he had disappeared close to a coastal village near to Valencia. But García Morales quickly re-entered the fray: this new article was followed by a guest appearance at a conference organised in Valencia by Socorro Rojo, to an audience that packed out the city’s Gran Teatro.<sup>165</sup> And just as the newspaper had done in September 1936, when the priest spoke from Madrid’s War Ministry, *Solidaridad Obrera* again discussed the place of

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<sup>163</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 19 July 1938

<sup>164</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 19 July 1938. Vilar would also use this formulation in exile long after the war, as he continued to offer sermons and religious messages to other exiled Catholics, see Vilar, *Luz y Vida: Boletín mensual para los españoles residentes en Francia*, (Toulouse, Día del Corpus, 1950)

<sup>165</sup> *La Libertad*, 11 June 1938

Catholicism in the Republic in positive terms: just a week after García Morales' speech, the newspaper vocally supported further government policy aimed at restoring religious normality in the Republic.<sup>166</sup> It was clear that different groups across the Republic – politically and geographically – were again converging on the same policy, aware of the need to appear as a liberal democratic polity to a wider European audience and to domestic readers.

However this process had started and whatever the different levels of commitment by different political groups in the Republic, the net effect was, as these individuals and their work continued to demonstrate, a changing of the political culture in Republican Spain. That had a broader and lasting effect, irrespective of the political calculations that had at least in part informed those policies. The fact too that they had something to build on, and found sufficient interlocutors, also suggests the existence of changes in the broader social environment since the early stages of the war. As if to demonstrate the lengths of that impact, on 24 July 1938 *La Vanguardia* printed a series of pictures of Barcelona cathedrals destroyed by rebel bombing. In what formed an iconic refutation of earlier rebel propaganda showing the 'anti-God' sacking of the city's churches, the photographs offered much more than a piece of opportunistic propaganda.<sup>167</sup> The bombing of Guernica had thrown wide open the challenges to the rebel narrative of a Catholic 'crusade' and now evidence of the destruction of Barcelona's cathedrals had the potential to place further doubt in the minds of many Catholics across Europe about the rebel narrative of 'crusade'. So too the photographs indicated that cathedrals in the city had hitherto survived – reconfirming indirectly that the Republic was committed to the reopening of public worship, its efforts hampered by the cumulative impact of the war itself – not least the increasing destructiveness of rebel air bombardments.

The concern of Republican authorities in this regard was such that correspondence was established with the Vatican, in the hope that papal pressure could limit the bombing of civilian targets. One letter from the Republic urged this action against 'destructive and deadly bombings' that have 'become as frequent as to

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<sup>166</sup> *Solidaridad Obrera*, 26 June 1938

<sup>167</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 24 July 1938

provoke the condemnation of the civilised world.<sup>168</sup> The report indicated that such indiscriminate bombings were leading to ‘the biggest massacre of civilian hostages, and of priests and monks’, a situation preventing the Republic from restoring religious normality and that, at worst, may lead to a ‘resumption of civil and religious persecution.’<sup>169</sup> Whilst the Vatican remained committed only to fostering negotiations that would halt such bombings on all sides, the Republic and its supporters continued to agitate for international intervention, consistently placing rebel atrocities as a singular cause preventing further Republican progress in the restoration of civil and religious liberties.

That emphasis on Republican progress was reinforced across the media, transmitted to citizens with increasing regularity. Some newspapers were printing visibly longer and more detailed articles about Catholics, whilst one edition of the periodical *España Democrática* was dedicated to the place of Catholicism within the Republic.<sup>170</sup> Its pages were filled with diverse news articles and interest pieces, including a double-page spread with a lengthy article by José Bergamín, and an editorial piece from the French Catholic author Georges Bernanos, part of which was an analysis of his book *Les Grands Cimetières sous la Lune*. A conservative Catholic voice, Bernanos’ rejection of the rebel cause war illustrated how the war itself was impacting upon identities in new ways. The war’s particular dynamics of hope and despair were transmitted through *Les Grands Cimetières*, and though the book itself was not published in translation in the wartime Republic, exploring the themes of the book in articles like these and others provided markers of shifting identities and changing support from those who related to, identified with and responded to what they were reading.

The newspaper also contained reports of a recent speech given in Paris by another Catholic, Clara Candiani. In that speech Candiani, who was linked to Catholic social efforts in her native France and increasingly during the war with UDC politicians working in Paris, denounced the ‘horrors of the fascist zone’ and focused

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<sup>168</sup> Karl J. Trybus, *The Rosary, The Republic and the Right, Spain and the Vatican Hierarchy, 1931-1939*, (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), p. 169

<sup>169</sup> Trybus, *The Rosary*, p. 170

<sup>170</sup> *España Democrática: Órgano del Comité Nacional. Pro Defensa de la República*, II, 77, 7 November 1938



on the fragilities of the rebel discourse of crusade.<sup>171</sup> Candiani was one voice amongst many more who were beginning to make ever more frequent appearances in the Republican press. Foreign opinion was permeating domestic news, transmitting the overarching idea that the Republic represented the power of progressive European thought, and that (perhaps in spite of the political reality of Non-Intervention) they were not alone in their struggle. Indeed, that ‘struggle of Ossorio and Bergamín’ against the ‘falsehoods of the church’ and its temporal alliance with ‘antichristian totalitarianism’ was tied again explicitly to the progressive French Catholicism championed by Jacques Maritain and others.<sup>172</sup> The effect was to invert Francoist propaganda, informing readers that it was the Church in Spain had abandoned Christ, whilst ‘the Basque clergy and other priests, isolated from the maelstrom of Francoism, faithful to the Republic, faithful to moral religious principles, have already known a huge martyrdom.’<sup>173</sup> Employment of such imagery again illustrated a subversion of Francoist rhetoric and the appropriation of its power by Republican elements, making new discourses that confirmed the place of Catholicism within the Republic accessible to a widening audience.

These efforts represented a culmination of governmental and official efforts – supported and replicated by emergent and growing Catholic constituencies within the Republican zone – to restore the semblances of the democratic, pluralist fabric of the Republican project. At the same time, that reality represented an ideal opportunity to reinforce publicly the unity of the Republic’s citizenry behind the war effort. As the Republican coalition lurched through the summer of 1938 towards an organisational rift between the communists and the socialists (including over the feasibility of continued military resistance), Catholic citizens could play a role in tying together the increasingly frayed knots of resistance.<sup>174</sup>

Although Negrín was not looking for an organised lobby of social democratic Catholics to offer him political support – and he was astute enough to realise the almost impossible nature of such a task – the more general rallying of liberal Catholic

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<sup>171</sup> *España Democrática*, 7 November 1938; For Candiani’s links to the UDC see BPR, FP (Trias), 1f(p), 1.1.A in Solé and Caballer, ‘Aproximació a la biografia’, pp. 175, 177-8

<sup>172</sup> *España Democrática*, 7 November 1938

<sup>173</sup> *España Democrática*, 7 November 1938

<sup>174</sup> For that organisational rift, see Graham, *Casado’s Ghosts*, pp. 262-3

opinion inside Republican Spain behind his government, and in the international eye, was a much more achievable aim. In September 1938 again, Irujo urged the reopening of Churches across the Republic to this effect, whilst an open letter, reprinted across the press and signed by Ossorio, José María Semprun Gurrea, the priests Lobo, Gallegos Rocafull, Jeronimo García Gallego and the visible public personalities of José Bergamín and Eugenio Imaz, indicated support for the Negrín government's ambitions and, indeed, the plurality of that support.<sup>175</sup> Standing as beacons in a Republic previously darkened to Catholics, these lives encouraged and inspired belief in the widespread support of Republican values. Though such statements would later provide a roll call for Francoist reprisals, those signatories played a vital role in the Republican state at war, ascribing their fidelity to the Negrín government and to the Republic.

The signatories of the open letter, 'Christians from different social states, separated perhaps by different political views, united by the natural bond of the same faith in God's commandments', also emphasised productive diversity in the midst of political infighting, once again warning readers of the need to remain united in the face of the rebel advance.<sup>176</sup> And although the PCE had portrayed itself as the 'party of victory', in Madrid the priest Martínez Sánchez felt able to declare to an audience, at an event organised by the PCE, that it 'was not the communists but the people who were fighting.'<sup>177</sup> Again, Martínez Sánchez demonstrated that public rallies organised by the communist party and other political organisations in the city could be utilised as points of contact regardless of political affiliation, offering spaces within which Catholics in the capital (and indeed all *madrileños*) could mobilise together in defence of the Republic.

Beyond the PCE's continued *mano tendida* efforts, discourses emphasising the nature of the war as a defence of *el pueblo* as both nation and people – in which Catholics could play a prominent role – continued apace and, as Martínez Sánchez's

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<sup>175</sup> For Irujo's appeal, see José M. Margenat Peralta, 'Manuel de Irujo: la política religiosa de los gobiernos de la República en la guerra civil (1936-1939)', *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea*, 4, 1983, p. 182. Appearing in the November edition of *España Democrática*, a similar letter had first emerged shortly after Negrín's appointment, reprinted in the pamphlet, *El catolicismo en la España leal y en la zona facciosa* (Madrid and Valencia: Servicio Español de Información, 1937)

<sup>176</sup> *España Democrática*, 7 November 1938

<sup>177</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 267

speech showed, were acknowledged positively by many of the Republic's supporters. On 23 July 1938, *La Vanguardia* had printed a lengthy speech from the priest and former left-republican parliamentary deputy Jeronimo García Gallego. Referring again to the war as the 'defence of the *pueblo español*' García Gallego urged on the struggle, believing that 'the attitude of heroic resistance is now the only possible attitude to the conscience of the nation, before the world and before history.' The commitment to resistance *a ultranza* – Negrín's or otherwise – was clear in the priest's words: 'There is no other.'<sup>178</sup>

Newspaper articles espousing progressive change and Republican solidarity were one thing, but as the efforts to restore public worship indicated, people needed real evidence of those commitments on the ground. Here, the idea of Catholics as part of the fight 'for the people' was given real expression through the public focus on inspirational lives, national 'heroes' and 'martyrs' – the importance of which has been thoroughly observed and analysed across the twentieth century.<sup>179</sup> In a democratic society such as the Republic, this required significant nuancing – necessitating the participation of a variety of citizens in this process rather than a small political elite alone. Enlisting in the immediate aftermath of the July 1936 coup, the Basque Catholic citizen-soldier Vicente de Eguía Sagarduy represented an ideal military hero for the Republic, his death on 15 October 1938 during the colossal offensive across the Ebro river transformed into a heroic, publicly celebrated, sacrifice.<sup>180</sup> It was a symbolism enhanced by the transcendental meaning of the Ebro battle itself, which 'was to send a powerful message internationally that the Republic's military viability was open-ended if Franco could not be persuaded to make a peace with guarantees.'<sup>181</sup>

On 18 October, an article written by Negrín's press secretary Francisco Aguirre appeared in *El Diá Grafico*, informing readers of 'the Catholic funeral held yesterday afternoon [that] provided the international military personnel overseeing the withdrawal of foreign combatants with a moving spectacle. The respect that was shown to them will enable them, when their stay here is over, to take away with them

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<sup>178</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 23 July 1938

<sup>179</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 2006); George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 70-106

<sup>180</sup> *Hoja oficial del lunes de Barcelona*, 17 October 1938

<sup>181</sup> Graham, 'Casado's Ghosts', p. 263

a totally different impression of Spain...the funeral of the Basque hero Vicente de Eguía Sagarduy was a political event of enormous proportion.<sup>182</sup> On the streets of Barcelona, people turned out to see the funeral procession down the wide, open boulevard of the Passeig de Gràcia, led by a priest in full clerical garb behind an acolyte carrying a huge crucifix, closely followed by Álvarez del Vayo, Irujo and a host of other Republican ministers and political leaders.<sup>183</sup> Newspaper reports ensured that this highly visible Catholic funeral resonated far beyond the streets of Barcelona, deliberately emphasising Sagarduy as a devout Catholic, a volunteer in the ‘cause for freedom’ and a national hero.<sup>184</sup>

If the extensive reportage of the funeral represented clearly Negrín’s efforts to portray the Republic as a tolerant environment to an international audience, it was also evident that this message of religious toleration was directed at home too.<sup>185</sup> Aguirre’s article in *El Día Grafico* continued: ‘the Catholics who are fighting on the side of the Republic know that their right to express their religious beliefs enjoys today, as never before, not only the protection of the government but the respect of all citizens.’<sup>186</sup> The event was moulded into a highly visible public act in which Basque, Catholic and Republican identities were portrayed as intrinsically linked and inseparable. Consequently, this was an event that resonated throughout the Republic and appealed in a multiplicity of ways: for Basque citizens it was the celebrated burial of a nationalist, Catholic hero; for Republican politicians and supporters it represented another step on the road to the restitution of normality; and for Catholics across the Republic it offered hope for an openness and freedom to worship not seen since before July 1936.<sup>187</sup> As with many of the public displays of Catholicism that would take place during wartime, Sagarduy’s burial attracted ‘every kind of comment and censure’ from Francoists and their supporters, who dismissed the funeral variously as

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<sup>182</sup> *El Día Grafico*, 18 October 1938

<sup>183</sup> Riquer, *La Unió*, pp. 500-1; *La Vanguardia*, 23 October 1938; Julio Álvarez del Vayo, *La guerra empezó en España*, (Mexico: Ed. Séneca, 1940), pp. 264-5

<sup>184</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 23 October 1938; *Hoja oficial del lunes de Barcelona*, 17 October 1938

<sup>185</sup> The same visibility is also evident in the domestic reporting of guided tours for foreign clergy, for instance *El Sol*, 22 April 1937; *La Voz*, 25 May 1937 and 3 December 1937; *La Vanguardia*, 16 September 1938

<sup>186</sup> *El Día Grafico*, 18 October 1938

<sup>187</sup> That emphasis also had an international dimension, with *La Vanguardia*, 8 November 1938 publishing an editorial piece that sought to reinforce the existence of Catholic alliances with socialism across Europe, reprinting a speech from the Belgian socialist party about the inherent compatibility of the two creeds

a staged event; with an actor posing as a priest; an opportunistic gambit on behalf of the government and as ‘another’ example of ‘Marxist propaganda’.<sup>188</sup> Nevertheless, it was clearly not an isolated incident.

Overwhelmingly by the time of Sagarduy’s funeral, these efforts were taking place in and around Barcelona. With the Republic’s political authorities located in the city since the autumn of 1937, the political gravity of the war had become more focused on Catalonia than almost anywhere else. A local religious context marked at the start of the war by often extremely violent anticlericalism was now replaced with a relatively calm atmosphere distant from the front (the acute shortages of wartime notwithstanding), offering emergent public freedoms to considerable sectors of progressive Catholicism. This was perhaps easier in Catalonia than elsewhere in the wartime Republic given the region’s history of progressive political and social Catholic options discussed earlier in this thesis. Now combined with a vast influx of refugees, many of them Basque Catholics, and the arrival of the Republican government, there was a considerable shared emphasis on the rebuilding of religious life.<sup>189</sup> As public freedom of worship continued to be the goal sought by Catholics, similar initiatives continued on a smaller scale in Madrid and Valencia, constrained both by the proximity of fighting and the growing distance of the government.<sup>190</sup> But despite the desire of many within the Republic’s political leadership – and at the same time from committed grassroots constituencies – to restore public worship and to translate ideas of freedom and plurality into tangible daily experiences, it was clear that navigating a path to greater freedoms had to overcome significant issues emergent from the reality of war itself.

The cumulative impact of the war meant that physical and psychological pressures bore down heavily on such efforts – and not least in the restrictions imposed upon the daily lives of Republican citizens. With large-scale conscription in force from the summer of 1937, the Republican authorities had made additional efforts to

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<sup>188</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 275. For further reactions to the event see Carlos Morla Lynch, *España sufre: diarios de guerra en el Madrid republicano, 1936-1939*, (Renacimiento: Sevilla, 2008), p. 618; *Occident*, 10 January 1939

<sup>189</sup> The Basque exile magazine *Euzko Deya* kept these developments in keen focus as Basque refugees, including large numbers of priests, flooded into Catalonia over the winter of 1937-8

<sup>190</sup> This would remain the case throughout the war, see for instance *ABC* (Madrid), 8 December 1938; *La Publicitat*, 10 January 1939; Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, pp. 113-7, 267-71, 400-2

implement changes that would lessen such a blow – not least for priests and religious personnel.<sup>191</sup> In real terms, the best that many of the Republic’s priests could hope for – as men capable of fighting –was that they would be conscripted into the army’s medical corps rather than avoiding the draft. It was understood that they would be permitted to ‘tend the souls as well as the bodies of Republican soldiers’, a decision marked by an order in June 1938, ‘consistent with the requirements of war and the needs of the campaign’ declaring that all ‘heads of units of land, sea and air grant all possible facilities to those who request it, to receive spiritual assistance’ from appropriately authorised ministers.<sup>192</sup> Such policy changes also indicated that, even amidst the pressures of war, and perhaps more significantly (given the ‘international’ nature of the document) the bitter blow of a lack of real international response to the Thirteen Points, the Republican government was continuing apace with its overarching project, and with it the normalisation of religious life.<sup>193</sup>

Despite occasional lapses, the military order appears to have been generally upheld. But in the constraints of wartime, there remained issues.<sup>194</sup> One letter received by *La Libertad* in November 1938 revealed that questions remained about the role Catholic priests had to play in a Republic feeling the political and military pressures of war. Not least was the potential distance between Republican policy-making and its subsequent application into any workable reality, which could only feasibly come from genuine grassroots reciprocation of any such policies. *La Libertad* reported an exchange between an unnamed priest and Manuel Molina Conejero, the socialist civil governor of Valencia.<sup>195</sup> Molina had received a letter in which a priest posed several questions regarding the possibility of allowing Catholic worship without hindrance, an issue that still remained an aspiration rather than reality. The governor replied that in order ‘for Catholics to congregate for the purpose of worship ...assisted by a priest, [they must] simply request permission to meet in the manner determined by the law.’<sup>196</sup> Molina also declared that the officiating priest must ‘conclusively and

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<sup>191</sup> Matthews, *Reluctant Warriors*, p. 26 for changes to conscription

<sup>192</sup> *Gaceta de la República*, 26 June 1938; *La Libertad*, 29 June 1938

<sup>193</sup> Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts’, pp. 263-4

<sup>194</sup> Not least was the ability of the Republic to guarantee the safety of those priests that did find themselves embedded in Republican army units, such as was the case of Jeronimo Fabregas, discussed in the following chapter; AHN, FC-Causa General, 1449, Pieza 1, Exp. 14, p. 27 (Tarragona)

<sup>195</sup> *La Libertad*, 25 November 1938

<sup>196</sup> *La Libertad*, 25 November 1938

explicitly' condemn the complicity of the Catholic Church in the military rebellion and reject the 1937 collective pastoral. Though we can only speculate as to whether this was intended to be a public pronouncement, Molina reiterated that 'this condition is essential' and, with the governor's reply placing the onus on priests, the Republic's position – earlier made explicit by Irujo – was reinforced and with perhaps some sense of irony, the issue was now 'reduced to a matter of conscience.'<sup>197</sup> Whether the Republic had been successful in translating 'top-down' efforts into embedded beliefs in its project was, in the life of this priest in particular, still to be seen.

Nevertheless, these attempts to return to a highly visible religious life spoke centrally of the Republic's continued efforts to construct a national community that embodied democratic and pluralist principles in contrast to the exclusivity of the insurgency.<sup>198</sup> Communicating that in real terms meant demonstrating that the daily practices of sacramental Catholic religious life were not seen as superstitions at odds with Republican modernity, but rather a public act that could function as an integral part of visible daily life. It was with that goal in mind that in late October 1938, the progressive Catholic politicians Trias Peitx and Maurici Serrahima of the UDC met to discuss the establishment of a commissariat for worship, an idea proposed first by Irujo and then by Negrín.<sup>199</sup> The plan represented an opportunity for the UDC men too – to reform the Church, and for the renewal of an evangelical element of Christianity unfettered by the claustrophobic conditions imposed by the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy and its long held allegiance to the repressive culture and politics of the Restoration Monarchy.<sup>200</sup> Of course this had its political correlation for the UDC too, in terms of the defeat of traditional Catholic political – as much as spiritual – thought. In this, Trias and Serrahima, like many of their colleagues in the UDC, saw correctly that the war was about the future of Spain and, however understood, that meant the future of Catholicism too.

So together, and with the support of the left-of-centre Acció Nacionalista Vasca (ANV) now in Barcelona, the UDC pair put forward suggestions for the

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<sup>197</sup> *La Libertad*, 25 November 1938

<sup>198</sup> See for instance *La Vanguardia*, 27 May 1938; for the rebels 'religion is nothing more than a system of government and repression.'

<sup>199</sup> Solé and Caballer, 'Aproximació a la biografia', pp. 166-9. Trias Peitx was one of Irujo's choices to lead any such commissariat, Sánchez, *Religious Tragedy*, p. 137

<sup>200</sup> Solé and Caballer, 'Aproximació a la biografia', p. 163 fn. 3, 165-8

reopening of public worship in a small number of locations under heavy police guard.<sup>201</sup> Though increasingly isolated in Madrid from these initiatives, with communication between the two zones extremely difficult, Leocadio Lobo also continued to make plans for the reopening of public worship in the capital. In December a reporter from *ABC* (Madrid) interviewed him at his home. A move that indicated Lobo was working beyond his remit as a government official, the priest showed the reporter the private oratory in which he celebrated Mass every Sunday. Lobo also indicated that he was prepared and willing to open three more churches.<sup>202</sup> Nevertheless, the tentative progress made by the UDC pair in Barcelona and Lobo in Madrid was indicative of the context in which they worked – all three well recognised that public worship could not just be restored as if nothing had happened, and they were also well aware such decisions could not just be imposed from above.<sup>203</sup>

Lobo once again took to the capital's radio waves, airing publicly his commitment to opening more places of worship and urging on the freedom of worship on behalf of large numbers of priests in the city.<sup>204</sup> As ever, Lobo contrasted those ideas of freedom against the 'brutality' of fascism, whilst *La Vanguardia* referred to that 'liberty of conscience' in the Republic as the antithesis of the 'monstrous practice of collective [forced] communion' demonstrated in rebel prisons. *La Vanguardia's* reporter, himself a Catholic, referred to the rebel treatment of Catholicism as a 'sacrilege', 'laying cold in our consciences.'<sup>205</sup>

Efforts to re-establish publicly acknowledged worship reached their next logical step with the creation of a Comisariado General de Cultos in December 1938 which, alongside the continued development and presentation of a multitude of vivid acts of public religiosity, formed concretising examples of a changing landscape – there were even newspaper reports that claimed bibles were being sold in the streets of Barcelona.<sup>206</sup> Again, those efforts came hand in hand with material aid, as the Comisariado's leadership acknowledged the very real need to support the physical wellbeing of the Republic's Catholic citizens as well as tending to their spiritual

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<sup>201</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, pp. 279-80

<sup>202</sup> *ABC* (Madrid), 8 December 1938

<sup>203</sup> Manent and Raventós, *L'Església clandestina*, pp. 150-2, 226-9; Ragner, *Gunpowder*, pp. 280-1

<sup>204</sup> *El Liberal*, 11 December 1938

<sup>205</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 5 November 1938

<sup>206</sup> *The Tablet*, 17 October 1938



needs. As such, they also sought to provide material aid through the Catholic Committee for Civilian Aid [Comitè Catòlic d'Ajut a la Població Civil].<sup>207</sup> Established in Catalonia under the patronage (as a humanitarian organisation) of Salvador Rial, now the Apostolic Administrator of Lérida and the Vicar General of Tarragona, the committee included both Trias Peitx and the former FJCC secretary Ferran Ruiz Hébrard as its president.<sup>208</sup> It worked to provide food, shelter and spiritual comfort for countless refugees in and around Barcelona. In its very existence, the committee indicated the continued commitment of Catholic groups within the Republic to work towards the war effort, with the limited involvement of the ecclesiastical hierarchy where humanitarian aid was concerned.<sup>209</sup>

In many ways, the existence of that committee and its ever expanding work also gave more tangible evidence that the war was now lost. But even with the goal a negotiated end to the war supervised by international powers rather than a military victory, Negrín and others remained committed to pluralist democratic reconstruction. It was in this environment that the Comisariado de Cultos emerged, led by the devout Catholic professor of physiology and friend of Negrín, Jesús María Bellido i Golferichs, and with the collaboration of the UDC.<sup>210</sup> Bellido was politically liberal; before the war he had been a member of Acció Catalana, a small Catalan nationalist organisation. And whilst Bellido had voiced his opposition to the dissolution of the Jesuit order, the professor had, with his party, voted in favour of the controversial article twenty-six of the Republican constitution, furthering the separation of Church and State.<sup>211</sup>

The decree announcing the establishment of the Comisariado first appeared in the 9 December 1938 edition of the *Gaceta de la República*.<sup>212</sup> That same day *La Vanguardia* carried an editorial dedicated to Bellido, who himself made it clear that he had taken the role to 'fulfil a Catholic duty' – a crucially worded statement

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<sup>207</sup> Ragner, *La Unió*, pp. 503-5; Ragner, *Salvador Rial*, pp. 300-1

<sup>208</sup> Manent and Raventós, *L'Església clandestina*, p. 213; *Catholic Herald*, 30 December 1938; Solé and Caballer, 'Aproximació a la biografia política', p. 174

<sup>209</sup> Manent and Raventós, *L'Església clandestina*, pp. 213-4; Ragner, *Salvador Rial*, pp. 300-1

<sup>210</sup> Manent and Raventós, *L'Església clandestina*, pp. 226-9. For Negrín and Bellido before the war, Moradiellos, *Negrín*, pp. 63-4, 74-5

<sup>211</sup> Ragner, *Gunpowder*, pp. 280-1

<sup>212</sup> *Gaceta de la República*, 8 December 1938; Ragner, *La Unió*, especially chapter 12 for the role of the UDC; Manent and Raventós, *L'Església clandestina*, pp. 226-33

demonstrative of an intrinsic relationship between Catholicism and Republican citizenry: though those duties remained consonant with liberal-democracy in general, Bellido was specific in his motivations, making it explicit that these were actions and a commitment driven by religious conviction.<sup>213</sup>

Supported by the many of those behind Negrín's project, the communist deputy Antonio Mije stated that the decree establishing the commissariat was another crucial step in the life of the Republic – a fundamental aspect of the hoped for restoration of liberal democratic values for all Spaniards and laying the basis for any future normalisation.<sup>214</sup> *La Vanguardia* too was clear in its interpretation of the project. Dedicating a noticeably large space to their support, across three consecutive days the newspaper ran a combined total of four full pages dedicated to the establishment of the Comisariado.<sup>215</sup> Precisely because of the overwhelming stranglehold of the war, there were neither the resources nor popular energy to extend social reform on a mass scale, making it deeply problematic to pose questions about the success or failure of the Comisariado in any empirical sense: the newspaper referred to the project in the first instance as the 'effective expression' of the sixth of the Thirteen Points, a 'fulfilment of one of the purposes set out in a solemn declaration made by the Government of National Unity.'<sup>216</sup> It was at once a 'statement of respect for the conscience of Catholic citizens,' and at the same time retained evidence of its wartime birth, functioning to prevent gatherings under the guise of religious worship being 'used by the enemies of the people and of Spain.'<sup>217</sup>

As messages of support for the project came from across the Republican landscape, it was clear that throughout the territory still remaining in Government hands, individuals and organisations were backing not only Negrín, but the

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<sup>213</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 9 December 1938 and 25 December 1938. For Bellido's postwar thoughts on that idea, see also Bellido's article written from exile, 'La qüestió religiosa a Catalunya' in *Quaderns d'Estudis politics, economics i socials*, 7, 1945

<sup>214</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 1 May 1938, 16 December 1938 and 25 December 1938, in which the newspaper refers to the Comisariado as 'for the people of Spain'. See also *Frente Rojo*, 16 December 1938 for positive communist comments about the Comisariado

<sup>215</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 15 December 1938; 16 December 1938; 17 December 1938

<sup>216</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 15 December 1938

<sup>217</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 15 December 1938

reconstruction of the social fabric of the state.<sup>218</sup> The Thirteen Points continued to be received by domestic constituencies, the message of the project replicated and returned. As *La Vanguardia* featured a full page article by one of its Catholic contributors on 16 December, expressing the newspaper's support of religious toleration as 'part of a European consciousness', that sentiment was echoed by Catholics across Republican society.<sup>219</sup> Bellido's embryonic Comisariado soon received letters from priests professing their support and requesting to take part in its efforts.<sup>220</sup> From Paris, Gallegos Rocafull sent his approval.<sup>221</sup> The priest Salvador de Híjar called the project the 'the bright flowering of the spirit of religious tolerance and freedom of conscience of this sublime Spanish people.'<sup>222</sup> He was echoed by Marín Cervera, the Catholic syndicalist, who believed the efforts 'spoke of respect for all and to all,' and Amaro del Rosal of the UGT, who saw the Comisariado as a faithful incarnation of the Thirteen Points.<sup>223</sup>

But despite broad support, it was clear that the project was too little too late in the Republic's efforts to resurrect any widespread, functioning, religious life. Correspondence between Manuel Irujo, Bellido and the Basque Government in Catalonia revealed the daunting task facing the Comisariado.<sup>224</sup> In one typical telegram, Bellido spoke of the desire of a large number of Catalan Catholics to establish a chapel in their locality – in this instance in the diocese of Gerona, where they had established a local grassroots organisation dedicated to the task – and despite already having found two local priests willing to perform mass, they were struggling amidst the tangled bureaucratic and political web of actually opening a chapel.<sup>225</sup> The situation was the same in the small coastal municipality of L'Armentera, where local Catholics also sought to hold a regular mass.<sup>226</sup> Likewise, Irujo remarked of the

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<sup>218</sup> Catàleg Collectiu de les Universitats de Catalunya, (CCUC), Recull – 20, Comisario General de Cultos D. Jesús Bellido Golferichs (1938-1939), .b57205723, 15; 16; 17, all dated 22 December 1938

<sup>219</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 16 December 1938

<sup>220</sup> CCUC, Recull – 20, Comisario General de Cultos, .b57205723, 16, Letter from the priest M. Romero, 22 December 1938; 19, Letter from the priest Francisco Tejedor García, 27 December 1938

<sup>221</sup> Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, pp. 190-2

<sup>222</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 16 December 1938

<sup>223</sup> Cervera in *La Vanguardia*, 16 December 1938: Cervera was good friends with the Catholic politician Fernando Valera Aparicio; del Rosal in *La Vanguardia*, 15 December 1938

<sup>224</sup> CDMH, PS-Madrid, 475, 22

<sup>225</sup> CDMH, PS-Madrid, 475, 22, Letter from Bellido to the Basque Government in Barcelona, 9 January 1939

<sup>226</sup> CCUC, Recull – 20, Comisario General de Cultos, .b57205723, 11, 20 December 1938

‘enormous job’ he faced and the reality of ‘drowning in a sea of [ecclesiastical] immutability’, whilst in another telegram he made the observation that Bellido too had quickly come to realise that the major difficulty facing his efforts to open chapels in the centre of Barcelona was coming from the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>227</sup>

The matter was further complicated by disagreements between those involved in the efforts, not least as the Basque constituencies in Barcelona struggled to understand why their Catalan counterparts hadn’t simply opened the city’s churches again, without ecclesiastical authority.<sup>228</sup> It seemed that there were increasing frustrations from those Catholics waiting for such bureaucratic struggles to be resolved: one letter to the Comisariado in December suggested that a group of Catholics in Barcelona had decided to hold their own midnight mass in advance of the Comisariado’s approval.<sup>229</sup> But as the UDC men involved in the project continued to advocate ecclesiastical approval, so too the ecclesiasts they remained in contact with sought higher Church authority: Father Torrent insisted on deferring decisions to the Holy See, whilst Rial, the Vicar General of Tarragona, would only act after heavy consultation with the now-exiled Vidal i Barraquer.<sup>230</sup>

Those complications were added to by the desperate climate of fear developing in the Republic. Faced with an imposing threat to its very existence, the Republic had been forced – like other democratic societies at war – to adopt undemocratic practices including censorship, imprisonment without trial, and the wider suspension of civil liberties. The battle of the Ebro too had raged for months, intensifying the militarisation of society. Control of the rearguard became ever more implacable against those suspected of sabotage or espionage, provoking severe discomfort for

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<sup>227</sup> CDMH, PS-Madrid, 475, 22; undated letters, January 1939; CDMH PS-Barcelona, 359, Exp. 7 for the Basque Delegation’s earlier instructions for priests to read out Torrent’s open letter in masses. See also Morla Lynch, *España sufre*, pp. 631-9, diary entries of 9 December, 10 December and 21 December 1938

<sup>228</sup> Throughout, Republican authorities remained determined to normalise the religious situation with acceptance, if not outright agreement or support, from the Vatican and relevant ecclesiastical authorities; Ragner, *Gunpowder*, pp. 279-80; Margenat Peralta, ‘Manuel de Irujo’, pp. 175-93. Instructive too is the work of Rial who, according to one informant working for the Francoist authorities, had journeyed to Paris and Rome in order to ‘demonstrate that the Republican Government respected, indeed set store by, the Catholic religion and worship’, with the expressed aim of Vatican approval for any such reopening of places of worship, Ragner, *Gunpowder*, p. 269 and *La Unió*, p. 500

<sup>229</sup> CCUC, Recull – 20, Comisario General de Cultos, .b57205723, 13, 21 December 1938

<sup>230</sup> Ragner, *Salvador Rial*, pp. 288-9, 296-9; *La Unió*, pp. 504-5; Sánchez, *Religious Tragedy*, pp. 136-41

those who were involved in efforts to restore, as the communist deputy Antonio Mije put it, liberal democratic values for ‘all Spaniards’.<sup>231</sup> Those concerns were evident too in the diary entries of Rial, who remarked of the ‘panic that had infused the S.I.M’ and the impact that had in hampering the efforts of those behind the commissariat for worship, notwithstanding the much wider problems raised by that panic and fear.<sup>232</sup> The continued, anxious, denunciation of ‘enemies within’ and the search for a tangible target for those fears led to many violent incidents, not least the killing of the vehemently pro-rebel Bishop of Teruel, Anselmo Polanco, who had been in Republican custody since early 1938.<sup>233</sup> Though the killing of Polanco alongside forty-one others was a result of a fear-induced mentality developed over three years of bitter warfare rather than the product of popular anticlericalism, the Republic could little afford those inevitable accusations of anticlerical violence.

Despite the tense atmosphere, as head of the commissariat Bellido continued to communicate with the Republican political leadership in the hope of re-establishing public worship. Though Torrent’s intransigence in Barcelona had forced the focus to turn to Tarragona, despite the proximity of Francoist forces who by now were only miles from the city, Bellido continued to make efforts towards the possibility of a public mass alongside Julio Jauregui, who from January 1938 had been general secretary of the Basque government in Catalonia.<sup>234</sup> Their tireless activism in the struggle to secure the necessary dispensations, permits and authorisations, with much needed assistance from Vidal i Barraquer and Rial, and the combined forces of Serrahima and Trias Peitx of the UDC, ensured that by 12 February the Republic was at last ready to celebrate a public mass in Tarragona.<sup>235</sup> But Franco’s forces were already at the city gates and, occupying the city on 15 January, attentions turned to staying alive for those that had helped to arrange that long hoped for public mass. The

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<sup>231</sup> *La Vanguardia*, 16 December 1938

<sup>232</sup> See Rial’s diary entry of 11 January 1939 in Raguier, *Salvador Rial*, p. 142. It was also noted by contemporary observers that before this point, the S.I.M had gone to great lengths to protect priests in Barcelona, *New York Times*, 23 March 1938

<sup>233</sup> Raguier, *Gunpowder*, pp. 178-80; Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 426

<sup>234</sup> For Torrent’s earlier intransigence, see Irujo, *Un Vasco*, II, p. 40

<sup>235</sup> CDMH, PS-Barcelona, 359, Exp. 7 passim, for correspondence between Basque and Catalan politicians with a view to restoring public worship, August to December 1938

next public mass to be celebrated in the city was to the glory of the Francoist ‘crusade’, in a city deserted by thousands of refugees.<sup>236</sup>

The collapse of Catalonia and the mass exodus across the border into France – sweeping up many of those Catholics involved in efforts to restore religious normality in Catalonia, alongside countless thousands of others – brought an end to the Negrín government’s efforts to reconstruct that democratic fabric. It was clear that from Negrín’s appointment in 1937 and, building upon earlier antecedents both within government and from grassroots action, Negrín and others had made continued, concerted attempts to reconstruct the ethical and social contract that underlay the fabric of the Republic’s democracy, even in spite of the desperately worsening material and psychological realities of the war by 1938. Always concerned with mobilising the population behind a gargantuan total war effort in horrendous conditions, this was never separated from a much larger transcendental principle behind that war effort – that of the need to fight for the survival of liberal-democracy in Spain. Only through this shared ethic, even in its broadest terms, can the efforts of Negrín’s government to restore religious worship and the decision of Catholic individuals at all levels of Republican society to partake in and support those efforts be understood.

As this chapter has indicated, throughout those efforts were constructed around dynamic state-citizen relationships. The Republican government under Negrín well recognised its most valuable wartime tool was its people, who were driving the war effort from below. It was clear that in the interaction between government, policy intentions on the ground, and the daily experiences of citizens across the Republic, identities were beginning to shift. Building upon a picture first explored in chapter two, growing numbers of Catholics were renegotiating their own ideas of what it meant to be a part of the Republic, urging on the war effort and taking an active role in the reconstruction of the fabric of the Republic itself. They responded to, and took

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<sup>236</sup> Ragner, *Salvador Rial*, pp. 141-3. For the repression in Tarragona and Catalonia more widely, see Conxita Mir, Carme Agusti and Josep Gelonch, (eds.), *Violència i repressió a Catalunya durant el franquisme: balanç historiogràfic i perspectives* (Lleida: Ediciones de l’Universitat de Lleida, 2001)

new directions from their wartime government, just as that government policy was influenced by their initial efforts.

But with the Republic hanging on a terrifying precipice following the collapse of Catalonia, what followed was an internal explosion of the centre-south zone of the Republic that shattered those dynamics. That internal collapse was sparked off in early March by the formation of an anti-Negrínista ‘National Defence Council’ intent on negotiating with Franco.<sup>237</sup> Led by Colonel Segismundo Casado along with the socialist intellectual Julián Besteiro, General Miaja and fiercely anti-communist political leaders, the ranks of their supporters also included the priest Martínez Sánchez. Perhaps the support for the junta from Martínez Sánchez above all illustrated that even for Catholics who had urged on the war effort against the rebels, warning – time and time again – of a catastrophic future under Franco, resistance often had limits.<sup>238</sup>

And as the next chapter will show, that detonation of resistance allowed for Franco’s rapid expansion and acceleration of a violent process of state building that rivalled the efforts of totalitarian states elsewhere in Europe. This remaking of Francoist society through the destruction of those who – recalling the words of General Mola in July 1936 – ‘do not think as we do’, necessarily targeted those social constituencies who represented deviations from the integrist brand of Catholicism demanded by the rebels. The stories of some of these Catholics, now defeated in war and their open futures closed down by the grip of Francoism, will be explored in the next chapter.

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<sup>237</sup> Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts’, pp. 267-8

<sup>238</sup> This was generally true of many of the groups who had come together as a wide ‘fringe’ of Republican wartime mobilisation, only then to turn on the PCE as the ‘party of war’ in early 1939, especially in the centre-south zone; Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts’, pp. 256-8

## Chapter Five: The monastery jail of Carmona, Franco's prison for priests

*Pasen y vean.  
Pasen y vean.  
esta cárcel de Carmona:  
curas distintos y variados;  
pero...todos sin corona.*

*Pasen y vean  
esta cárcel singular  
donde a los curas,  
la « España Grande »  
les ha traído a purgar.<sup>1</sup>*

Following the final collapse of Republican resistance, the vast programme of repression initiated by the military rebels and their supporters from the first days of the war could finally be implemented across the entirety of Spain's national territory. Hundreds of thousands of Republican supporters, ordinary civilians, political activists and soldiers were thus subjected to brutal violence unleashed by Francoism and its supporters. Those victims also included significant numbers of priests. In a letter home to his family, the Irish Catholic brigadier Jim Haughey, who had been captured at the Battle of the Ebro in 1938 and interned first in a prisoner of war camp at San Pedro de Cardeña before being moved to an unknown Francoist gaol, noted that in that prison 'there were some Basque and Asturian priests. In one part of this 200-year-old building there were some nuns prisoner also.'<sup>2</sup> Though during and after the war

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<sup>1</sup> Song prepared by the inmates of Carmona prison, Christmas Eve, 1940: Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 95

<sup>2</sup> Jim Haughey to his sister, 25 May, 1939, printed in *The Times*, 31 October 1943. A practising Catholic, Haughey reportedly asked prior to the Battle of the Ebro whether there was a Catholic priest available to minister to the International Brigades at the front. See also Letter from Manus O'Riordan to C. Geiser, 7 April 1993, Marx Memorial Library, IB Association Archive, Box D-3, File G/1. When Haughey later asked for a priest so that he could undertake confession in the San Pedro prison camp the authorities gave him a severe beating for apparently laughing at the Church. Haughey was originally believed to have been killed on Hill 481 (on the outskirts of Gandesa) in July or early August 1938, but in reality must only have been wounded. As far as is known, he was actually captured during the



Basque priests remained the most visible clerical constituency targeted by Francoist authorities, they were far from the only priests targeted. Exploring a number of indicative case studies of non-Basque priests reveals a much wider phenomenon – a ‘purifying’ reassertion of control launched by Francoist authorities from 1936, in which *all* Catholics who had remained loyal to the Republic were amongst those who needed to be ‘cleansed’, regardless of their geographical and cultural backgrounds. Thus priests from all over Spain were targeted for arrest, interrogation, internment and often execution too.

To understand what happened, and why, still requires us to excavate these processes from beneath the accumulation of powerful political narratives built up over decades of dictatorship and after. Their abiding power, even today, derives most crucially from the way in which these myths have provided individual and collective narratives of the war that have underlined *post-war* political goals and aims. First, and imposed most violently in these wars of representation, is the reductionist and homogenising myth concretised by Francoism and the Spanish Church hierarchy that situated Catholicism at the heart of their ‘crusade’. Within this narrative, the Francoist targeting of Basque Catholics was by way of their separatist nationalism rather than their alternative, often left-leaning, forms of Catholicism.<sup>3</sup> The Francoist regime could thus circumvent a fundamental flaw in their war narrative through the focus on ‘the reds’, as part of a wide-ranging anti-communist discourse, or on ‘anti-Spanish’ separatism, and the Catholic Church hierarchy could continue to deny the existence of pluralist forms of Catholicism that existed within Spain.<sup>4</sup> Such a narrative focus has been propped up further by the realities of post-world-war Europe, the Western European powers preoccupied centrally with cold war divisions and prepared to turn a blind eye to the realities of Francoism.<sup>5</sup>

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15<sup>th</sup> IB’s last action in Spain, just north of Corbera on 23 September 1938. Dublin volunteer, Bob Doyle, recounts seeing him at the Francoist PoW camp at San Pedro de Cardeña (near Burgos) in late 1938 or early 1939. However, for some reason, Haughey doesn’t appear in the IBA list of PoWs held by the Marx Memorial Library, (Box D-7 file A/6). My thanks to Richard Baxell for this information

<sup>3</sup> See for instance Casanova, *Iglesia*, pp. 140-1

<sup>4</sup> Pérez Ledesma, ‘Una dictadura “Por la Gracia de Dios”’, pp. 187-8. Though Pérez Ledesma does not pick up on the idea of dissident Catholics specifically, there are significant parallels with his discussion of Francoism as based on totalising, essentialist ideas that worked to close down heterogeneity

<sup>5</sup> Esenwein, ‘The Persistence of Politics’, pp. 115-35; Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 71, 89-93

As the 1953 Commission Internationale contre le régime concentrationnaire (*Livre Blanc sur le système pénitentiaire espagnol*) report on European concentration camps showed, with its intent focus in Spain on explicitly non-communist prisoners, the mass killing and repression inside the rest of Spain was all but ignored in return for Franco's crusading anti-communism.<sup>6</sup> In so doing, the realities of mass killing and repression conducted by the dictatorship were occluded in recognition of Franco's virulent anti-communism, a framework of meaning composed by Francoism itself and widely accepted by the Western European cold war order. This narrative has been shaped in other ways by Basque nationalism, re-emergent under the changing dictatorship and during the transition to democracy.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Basque clergy were targeted by Francoist persecution as they vigorously protested the silences surrounding the execution of Basque priests during the civil war.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, ETA's effective challenging of Franco's narrative of the civil war celebrated those same Basque clerical victims as revolutionary heroes, echoing a widespread sentiment in the Basque Country.<sup>9</sup> The effect has been to suggest a uniquely violent persecution, within which a singular focus on Basque priests has consequently found its own prominent place in today's bitter confrontations over the Vatican's continued beatification of clerical victims of violence in Republican territory during the war.<sup>10</sup> The continued polemic over the memory of the civil war well into the twenty-first century thus carries with it a politicisation of religious victimhood, embedded in the (problematic) conceptual application of martyrdom to wartime violence.

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Though the war on the battlefields had ended in 1939, the martial law declared in July 1936 was not rescinded until 1948 as Franco engaged in a brutal process of state-building that rivalled the efforts of totalitarian states elsewhere in Europe.<sup>11</sup> This continuation of the war far beyond the end of military hostilities is fundamentally

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<sup>6</sup> Commission Internationale, *Livre blanc sur le système pénitentiaire espagnol*, passim

<sup>7</sup> Dunstan, 'The Martyr Wars', pp. 93-7

<sup>8</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!*, pp. 308-9

<sup>9</sup> Espinosa Maestre, 'Sobre la represión', pp. 58-76 and Dunstan, 'The Martyr Wars', pp. 93-4

<sup>10</sup> *El País*, 19 April 2013; *The Guardian*, 29 October 2007 and 13 October 2013

<sup>11</sup> Only recently has the Francoist state-building project been placed alongside Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in comparative analysis; see Graham, *War and its Shadow*, chapter six; Mazower, *Dark Continent*, pp. 99-100

important in moving our perspective beyond the rigid temporal frontiers of 1 April 1939, between ‘war’ and ‘post-war’.<sup>12</sup> Dissolving these boundaries is crucially important because the parameters of the Francoist repression straddled this chronological divide and more importantly the repression conducted after April 1939 was the same in its aims and goals as that conducted from July 1936. It was, as Helen Graham argues, a ‘way of ‘killing change’ in particular by undoing the language of rights...intended to teach those who had believed in the Republic as a vehicle of change that their aspirations would always be bought at too high a price.’<sup>13</sup>

This repression was concretely based in the hatred and ideologically charged language of the Catholic ‘crusade’, urged on in a reciprocal relationship between the Francoist leadership and its grassroots supporters.<sup>14</sup> Franco’s end of year message in 1939 summed up everything the regime had done thus far and would continue to do: the battle for Spain would not end ‘in the manner of liberals, with their monstrous and suicidal amnesties’, but instead with ‘the redemption of sentences through work, with repentance and penance...no honourable Spaniard, no thinking being, could stand aside from the painful duty of punishment.’<sup>15</sup> This military-sanctioned process of lethal ‘social cleansing’, saw certain categories of people targeted, including many women, who, like the young mother Amparo Barayón, were extra-judicially killed for being independent, modern women and for ‘having ideas’ fundamentally at odds with Spain’s conservative society.<sup>16</sup> The parallels between the case of Barayón and other social constituencies who represented alternatives to the integrist brand of Catholicism demanded by the insurgency must also logically be extended to Catholic priests who

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<sup>12</sup> Santos Juliá, ‘Últimas noticias de la Guerra Civil’, *Revista de libros*, 81, 2003 for continuities across the dividing line of April 1939

<sup>13</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 50. The exterminatory nature of Francoist violence – and the relevance of the concept of genocide – is explored in Graham et al., ‘Paul Preston, The Spanish Holocaust’, *passim*

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, ‘In the Name of the Martyrs’, p. 366; Francisco Moreno, ‘La répression en la posguerra’, in Juliá, *Víctimas*, pp. 351-8

<sup>15</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 472; see also *ABC*, 1 January 1940

<sup>16</sup> Ramón Sender, *A Death in Zamora* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989); Graham, *War and its Shadow*, chapter three; Francisco Espinosa-Maestre, *Shoot the Messenger?: Spanish Democracy and the Crimes of Francoism: From the Pact of Silence to the Trial of Baltasar Garzón*. Translated by Richard Barker, (East Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2013). The Catholic Amparo Barayón was executed after trying to return home to what she had believed would be the safety net of her family in Zamora. In this conservative heartland, far removed from Republican Madrid where Amparo had become a modern woman, educating herself politically and culturally, living first independently and then with Ramón Sender, her life and experiences represented a cultural shift that challenged the stifling and static ideal demanded by Francoism. Arrested and imprisoned before her execution, Amparo’s Catholicism was far removed from that Catholicism handed out by her jailers

remained loyal to the Republic. The ultimate aim was to ‘rebuild’ a traditionally Catholic, rigidly hierarchised society by targeting what the emergent Francoist political community deemed *la anti-España*; principally those who represented the social and cultural changes blazed by the Republic.<sup>17</sup>

Underlying the repression was the notion that the defence of the Republic constituted a crime of ‘military rebellion’.<sup>18</sup> As the Francoist state embarked on the construction of a vast, nationwide judicial system that utilised both the ‘administrative machinery and the pseudo-legal framework developed throughout the war,’ this crime of military rebellion represented an all-encompassing homogenisation of guilt.<sup>19</sup> An increasingly diverse range of repressive mechanisms deployed by the regime and its supporters, mobilizing what Helen Graham refers to as a ‘social base of perpetrators, tens of thousands of them’, ensured that this systematic persecution would encompass many more Spaniards than had committed real crimes.<sup>20</sup>

Many of the ‘criminals’, whether civilians, soldiers or prisoners-of-war, were tried through a military justice system that offered the regime ‘an opportunity to present the repression to the court of world opinion as the administration of justice.’<sup>21</sup> This system often saw mass trials of up to a hundred defendants, with no hope of defending themselves, let alone calling witnesses, presenting evidence or even speaking to their ‘defence’ lawyer (appointed by the military).<sup>22</sup> Some of these lawyers did little more than make the case that the defendants were good Christians.<sup>23</sup> In no cases were the defendants allowed to appeal sentences that were delivered by means of denunciations, rumour or hearsay, or extrapolated without corroborating evidence merely from their ‘known’ left-wing political pasts – this extremely broadly

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<sup>17</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, passim

<sup>18</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 472-3; Anderson, *Francoist Military Trials*, p. 51

<sup>19</sup> Quotation is from Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 472. See also Anderson, *Francoist Military Trials*, pp. 51-9; Javier Rodrigo, *Cautivos. Campos de concentración en la España franquista, 1936-1947*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005), p. 6 and passim for the extensivity of concentration camps and those interred

<sup>20</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, pp. 107-8. See also Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 503

<sup>21</sup> Peter Anderson, ‘Scandal and Diplomacy: The Use of Military Tribunals to Keep the Francoist Repression Afloat During the Civil War’, in Peter Anderson and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco (eds.), *Mass Killings and Violence in Spain, 1936-1952: Grappling with the Past*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 73

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials*, pp. 53-5; Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 473-4

<sup>23</sup> Ramón de Galarza, *Diario de un gudari condenado a muerte*, (San Sebastián: Ediciones Vascas, 1977), p. 48

construed ‘military rebellion’ extended to all political activities on behalf of all left-wing parties, trade unions and a plethora of other associations, clubs and societies.<sup>24</sup>

This was not merely the product of post-war politics: as part of this process early in the war, Bernardo Blanco Gaztambide, a diocesan priest and professor of Latin at an institute in Astorga (León), had first been suspended from his priestly duties, then arrested in October 1936 and executed. Blanco’s ‘crime’ was that he had been known to associate with republicans and socialists in León – indeed he had helped to free from gaol Luis Curiel, a communist sympathiser and Professor of French Language and Literature at the Institute of Santander, and had also been reported to the authorities for having attended a number of local political meetings held by ‘enemies of the Church.’<sup>25</sup>

That Blanco’s arrest had come years before Franco’s final victory indicated that this was an ongoing nation-building process through exclusion that had begun much earlier in the battlefield war and was now being institutionalised across all of Spain. As part of this violent re-sculpting of society, priests were arrested and incarcerated where Francoist forces gained control. Motivations for rejecting the Francoist ‘crusade’ might have differed amongst these priests from all across Spain, with regional nationalist politics certainly playing a significant role in the Basque Country and Catalonia. However, although calculating the number of victims of the Francoist repression remains ongoing – even in general terms – we can observe that there were many more priests imprisoned than can be accounted for by Franco’s repression of all bearers of regional nationalism.<sup>26</sup>

Indicative of the homogenisation of this violence against priests was that the lived experiences of the Francoist prison universe took on broadly similar forms for priests incarcerated for a multitude of ‘crimes’, conditioned centrally by the pathological and religious discourses that permeated Francoism’s vast repressive

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<sup>24</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, pp. 104-6; Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, pp. 472-5; for contemporary acknowledgment of this wide-ranging ‘definition’ see Editorial España, *Lo que han hecho en Galicia: Episodios del terror blanco en las provincias gallegas*, (Editorial España: Paris, 1938), p. 196-8

<sup>25</sup> Arasa, *Católicos del bando rojo*, pp. 133-7; Alvarez Oblanca, *La guerra civil en León*; José Piñeiro, ‘La sublevación militar de julio de 1936 en el suroeste provincial y su incidencia en la defensa del orden público’, *Argutorio*, 28, 2012, p. 22; Ramon Carnicer, *Todas las Noches Amanece*, (Esplugas de Llobregat: Plaza and Janes, 1979)

<sup>26</sup> Graham discusses the tabulation of victims in *War and its Shadow*, pp. 128-9

system.<sup>27</sup> Together, these discourses provided a body of ‘knowledge’ focused around the project of the Francoist political community, and the physical characteristics and behaviours of those ‘normalised’ within that community. Correspondingly, a ‘pathologisation of difference’ emerged, ensuring that certain social and political behaviours were deemed healthy and natural, and others as diseased, unhealthy, unnatural, and in need of containment, stigmatisation, treatment, or elimination.<sup>28</sup> This process was combined with religious narratives that could be found in the idea of a ‘crusade’ even before its wartime transformation and, backed by the Catholic Church in its own war of representation, boundaries were clearly demarcated between those who were included or excluded from the Francoist political community.<sup>29</sup> There were, the brigadier Haughey explained in the letter to his sister, ‘several hundred priests and nuns in Franco’s prisons because they want to tell the truth about this “saviour of Christianity” who is merely the tool of Hitler.’<sup>30</sup> Over the course of their internment, a number of priests were transferred away from the general prison population into segregated areas of the prison universe, in what might be considered ‘showcase’ treatments for special prisoners. Although this was not a definitive process, it was part of wider efforts intended to isolate and quarantine specific groups of prisoners kept in sharp focus by Francoist authorities – military officers and soldiers who had not joined the rebellion, leading political figures from the Republic, and the ‘*curas rojas*’ [red priests] who had inflicted significant damage to Francoism’s claims to a ‘crusade’ for ‘God and for Spain’ during the war.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Richards, ‘Morality and Biology in the Spanish Civil War: Psychiatrists, Revolution and Women Prisoners in Málaga’, *Contemporary European History*, 10(3), 2001, p. 397

<sup>28</sup> For this process in a comparative European context see Edward Ross Dickinson, ‘Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about “Modernity”’, *Central European History*, 37(1), 2004, pp. 1-48

<sup>29</sup> This bio-political discourse was shared amongst the radical right across Europe – see Isabelle Rohr, *The Spanish Right and the Jews, 1898-1945: Antisemitism and Opportunism*, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007), pp. 49-58. Even before the war, the treatment of Jews in Catholic publications revealed the radical right’s obsession with purity and moral hygiene: throughout the year leading up to the military coup in July 1936, the newspaper *El Debate* made significant references to the ‘Jewish nature’ of prostitution, immoral entertainment and subversive activities. See also Michael Richards, ‘Antonio Vallejo Nágera: Heritage, Psychiatry and War’ in Alejandro Quiroga and Miguel Ángel del Arco (eds.), *Right-Wing Spain in the Civil War Era: Soldiers of God and Apostles of the Fatherland, 1914-45*, (India: Continuum International Press, 2012), pp. 195-224 and Richards, ‘Morality and Biology’, pp. 404-5 for such pan-European frameworks of bio-political meaning and their deployment in Francoist Spain

<sup>30</sup> Jim Haughey to his sister, 25 May 1939, printed in *The Times*, 31 October 1943

<sup>31</sup> Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior: cárcel y represión en la España franquista (1939-1950)*, (Madrid: Taurus, 2009), p. 139

A number of priests, whose cases are explored in this chapter, were transported to a prison housed in a sixteenth century Franciscan monastery on the outskirts of the town of Carmona, thirty kilometres from Seville in the Andalusian countryside.<sup>32</sup> The exact number of clerical prisoners who spent time in Carmona remains unclear, although in the first year after the end of the civil war at least seventy priests were housed in Carmona.<sup>33</sup> Whilst the most famous prisoner of the prison was the veteran socialist leader Julián Besteiro and, from 1939 as prisoners were transferred from across Spain, a small number of members of Izquierda Republicana and Freemasons arrived, almost all of the inmates in the converted monastery were priests.<sup>34</sup>

Material necessity ensured that the near 500-year-old monastery was appropriated and utilised by the Francoist state, a shortage of prison space ensuring all kinds of buildings were pressed into service. But the use of the monastery of Carmona in the incarceration of priests also performed another function tied intrinsically to a choreography of space: the performative penance and redemption demanded by Francoist incarceration was built on a semiotic theory of punishment that utilised Spain's architecture and the physical landscapes it contained. That the country was turned into an 'immense prison' was much more than a metaphor – punishment was a communicative act, rendering clear the structures of authority and determining the application of particular sets of moral values.<sup>35</sup> Within the spatial and structural dimensions of that punishment, prisoners across Spain noted a 'choreography of space' that indicated techniques to increase their subordination.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the Spanish archaeologist Alfredo Gonzalez-Ruibal has recently argued that the repeated use of convents, monasteries and seminaries served a clear and particular function in

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<sup>32</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 87

<sup>33</sup> In February 1940, Francoist authorities noted that there was 'space' at the prison for 150 inmates, although it is unclear whether this is calculated according to cell numbers, given the Francoist propensity for large-scale, destructive overcrowding, Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior*, p. 134. At the time of the report, official figures indicated that there were 64 inmates at Carmona, although the emergence of a photograph in the Basque exile journal *Euzko Deya* in the same month depicting 69 priests alone at Carmona makes this quantification difficult – there was also already a number of non-clerical political prisoners in Carmona (including Besteiro). Besteiro's own notes, which include individuals not appearing in the *Euzko Deya* photograph, list 54 inmates in two (of five) dormitories, Archivo de la Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero (FFLC), Archivo de Julián Besteiro, 002303-067

<sup>34</sup> On the imprisonment and death of Besteiro, see Julián Besteiro, *Cartas desde la prisión*, (Madrid: Alianza, 1988), pp. 177–202; Andrés Saborit, *Julián Besteiro* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1967), pp. 301-15

<sup>35</sup> Philip Smith, *Punishment and Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 6

<sup>36</sup> Tomasa Cuevas, *Testimonios de mujeres en las cárceles franquistas*, (Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 2004), p. 85, 120-1; Francisco Moreno, 'La repression en la posguerra', in Juliá (ed.) *Víctimas de la guerra civil*, pp. 288-91

the prosecution of this social cleansing.<sup>37</sup> Though this remained implicit in the claustrophobic monastery of Carmona, there could be little better reminder of the victory of the Francoist ‘crusade’ and its particular reading of integrist Catholicism than the incarceration of dissident priests within a monastery built during the golden age of imperial Spain.

But for the Francoist dictatorship, this remained much more than performative punishment articulated through architectural structures and the drama of setting alone. The psychological reconfiguration and social cleansing intended to create a new national community was anchored throughout in apocalyptic Catholicism, ecclesiastically approved and staffed.<sup>38</sup> Francoist authorities had as early as 1938 provided the Church with a central, strategic role in an emergent prison system, allowing it to enforce theologically-justified punishments and which in turn ‘harnessed punishment with wider social objectives.’<sup>39</sup> That the agents of this social cleansing were priests and Church officials only further confirmed the intention of the Francoist state to control and punish through a particular reading of Catholicism – celebrating mass and hearing confessions, ecclesiastical staff ensured that some of their masses became grand spectacles of demonstrative power, the politico-religious nexus at the heart of Francoism confirmed as they spoke of meting out the punishment of God.<sup>40</sup> Gómez Bravo notes that the Jesuit priest Pérez del Pulgar believed only through the appointment of large numbers of prison chaplains could it be ascertained whether prisoners had repented, their punishment anchored in Catholicism and administered by clerical personnel and most obviously through the work of the ‘Board for the Redemption of Prison Sentences through Work’ [Patronato central para la

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<sup>37</sup> Alfredo Gonzalez-Ruibal, ‘The Archaeology of Internment in Francoist Spain (1936-1952)’ in Adrian Myers and Gabriel Moshenska, *Archaeologies of Internment*, (New York: Springer, 2011), p. 60

<sup>38</sup> Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, *La redención de penas: la formación del sistema penitenciario franquista, 1936-1950*, (Madrid: Catarata, 2007), p. 112 and “‘Loving the Punished’”, pp. 137-8

<sup>39</sup> Gómez Bravo, “‘Loving the Punished’”, p. 138, 143

<sup>40</sup> Clerical personnel also played crucial role in driving the repression against ‘dissident’ priests and lay Catholics outside of the prison system, see Pere Fortuny i Velázquez, *Testimony of the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist Dictatorship*, (San Diego: University of California Press, 2009); Fortuny recounts that his father, a member of the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, was mayor of the municipality of Mollet between 1933 and 1939 until the proximity of Francoist troops forced the mayor and his family to escape to France. The town’s priest occupied their house and business, preventing them from access upon their return from exile, further discouraging the residents of Mollet from selling food to the family. Fortuny’s father was also immediately detained in a concentration camp in León and subsequently in Barcelona’s Modelo Prison. He describes how the priest intervened in his father’s execution, prohibiting the town’s people from signing a petition to commute the death sentence



redención de penas por el trabajo] which remained a key component of the prison system.<sup>41</sup>

The Francoist prosecution of repression against the defeated was a ‘purifying’ reassertion of control in which those social groups outside of the boundaries demanded by Francoism needed to be cleansed.<sup>42</sup> In its intention to ensure Catholics (and others) were being surveilled, there could be little more repressive a system than the constant claim to ‘true’ Catholicism, an omnipotent God watching over the every ‘sinful’ move of those incarcerated.<sup>43</sup> In this, as Michael Richards has explained, ‘Catholicism and pathology provided parallel repressive linguistic and ethical frameworks, the one consisting of sin, punishment and redemption, and the other of infection, disease and cure.’<sup>44</sup> In turn this eugenicist inflection also built upon older ideas of disease within the absolutist worldview of the ecclesiastic hierarchy. Languages of illness and contagion had long formed a stable part of the discourse of the Catholic Church across Europe in its targeting of alternative Catholicisms. Now (latterly) framed in the shadow of the 1914-18 war, these languages were enmeshed too with the location of political liberalism in biological-psychological difference.<sup>45</sup>

Dissident forms of Catholicism were represented as a disease that had to be eradicated and, like others considered to be outside the political community, were thus separated from society: the aim behind this was to create a pure community, free of ‘disease’ and contagion.<sup>46</sup> Indeed as Richards also shows, in the studies conducted by the department of psychological investigations created in the Francoist zone to find ‘the bio-psychological roots of Marxism’, Basque ‘separatists’ were of particular

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<sup>41</sup> Gómez Bravo, “‘Loving the Punished’”, p. 143; see also *Archivo Goma*, XIII, 13-187

<sup>42</sup> This is discussed conceptually at length in Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 195-228

<sup>43</sup> Gonzalez-Ruibal, ‘The Archaeology of Internment’, p. 60. Foucault is also relevant again here as he refers to the ‘enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings’, Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 198

<sup>44</sup> Richards, ‘Morality and Biology’, p. 420

<sup>45</sup> Monique Zerner (ed.), *Inventer l’hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l’Inquisition* (Nice: Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis, 1998). For the reappearance of thirteenth century ideas in twentieth century Spain, see for instance Francisco de Echalecu y Canino, *Contestaciones al programa de psicología criminal: con nociones de psiquiatría, sociología y política criminal*, (Madrid: Dirección General de Seguridad, 1943)

<sup>46</sup> Zerner (ed.), *Inventer l’hérésie?*; Isabelle Rohr, *Antisemitism*, as Basque and Catalan nationalisms were linked to Jews within bio-political discourses of disease, pp. 79-80

interest because they ‘unite political and religious fanaticism.’<sup>47</sup> Medical investigations were one part of a much wider process of indoctrination and re-education aimed at purifying the nation, and Catholic priests who challenged both the political and religious discourses of Francoism remained of significant concern, undermining, as they did, the projection of homogeneity of Catholic thought. In a speech in Zaragoza on 9 April 1938, Franco had again confirmed the anathema of other ideas of Catholicism from that supported by his regime; ‘let those Christian democracies (although they are less Christian than democratic) be aware, in their egotistic stoicism, that because they are infected by a destructive liberalism, they do not understand this sublime story of Spanish religious persecution that, with its thousands of martyrs, is the most glorious of all that the Church has suffered.’<sup>48</sup> In this demarcation of the national community, cleansed from ‘infection’, the Francoist prison universe functioned as both the isolating quarantine that kept those diseases away from the population, and at the same time its laboratory to discover a cure, to destroy those alternative forms of Catholicism that threatened the ‘health of the nation’.<sup>49</sup> This was the role Carmona was to play.

The largest and most visible group of prisoners to arrive in Carmona were Basque priests, transported across Spain from prisons in the Basque Provinces as part of a much wider isolation of ‘degenerate’ priests from their parishes. That process had accelerated rapidly with the appointment of the enthusiastic Francisco Javier Lauzurica y Torralba as apostolic administrator of Vitoria in September 1937 (succeeding the twice deported Mateo Mugica, who had refused to sign the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s collective pastoral).<sup>50</sup> Immediately, Lauzurica had overseen a transfer of Basque priests into Spain’s interior in a process of internal exile, separating them from their parishes and installing pro-Francoist, ‘Spanish’ priests in

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<sup>47</sup> Richards, ‘Morality and Biology’, pp. 398-9

<sup>48</sup> Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia*, II, p. 455

<sup>49</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 203

<sup>50</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.) *Archivo Gomá, I*, 1-162; Santiago Martínez Sánchez, ‘Mons. Antoniutti y el clero nacionalista vasco (julio-octubre de 1937)’, *Sancho el Sabio*, 27, 2007, pp. 39-79. Antoniutti’s reports indicate that 76 priests and religious were imprisoned first in the prison of El Carmelo, Bilbao and military authorities sought, between the months of July and September 1937, the transfer of 66 other priests before eventual transfers to Carmona. According to this source, 61 priests Basques, most of them battalion chaplains were processed by the military authorities and courts-martial. In other situations Basque priests were unable to escape north-eastwards toward Santander and France and were picked up, or were captured alongside Basque forces on the frontlines

their place.<sup>51</sup> This was part of an expanding process in which priests were brought in for questioning by military and ecclesiastical authorities, investigated in advance of the suspension of their ministries by the Church hierarchy. Peter Anderson notes that already by August 1937, 81 Basque priests had been imprisoned, whilst in one document alone, military authorities had notified the ecclesiastical hierarchy of at least 237 priests under investigation.<sup>52</sup> Such ongoing correspondence also indicated that similar investigation processes were proceeding against non-Basque clergy.<sup>53</sup> It is clear that in certain cases the Church occupied a determinant, crucial role in the intelligence gathering processes that proceeded courts-martial. As Lauzurica declared himself ‘one more general under orders from the Generalissimo to smash Basque nationalism,’ Cardinal Gomá appealed to colleagues to show their ‘españolismo’ by providing evidence against offending clergy.<sup>54</sup>

Crucially, it was clear that the Church itself was not only providing the symbolism and rhetoric of the Francoist repression, but was acting as a key driving force in the persecution and prosecution of ‘dissident’ priests and in the reshaping of religious life.<sup>55</sup> And by ‘españolismo’ Gomá referred not only to a particular idea of Spanish nationalism, but a certain idea of what the Church and Catholicism meant within that community – a political and social concept far beyond any geographical boundary.<sup>56</sup> In Carmona alone there were priests from across Spain’s interior – from Huesca, Madrid, and Toledo – indicating that there were no regional limitations to those who had, in Serrano Suñer’s words, ‘stained the honour’ of Spain.<sup>57</sup> As priests

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<sup>51</sup> This followed an earlier letter to the Vicar General of Vitoria and to Gomá in January 1937 in which the military governor of Guipúzcoa, Alfonso Verlade provided a list of ‘dissident’ Basque priests and demanded strong punishment meted out to such ‘criminal’ priests, including their transfer to other dioceses. Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-323; Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia*, II, p. 339

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, ‘From the Pulpit to the Dock’, p. 70 fn. 61; Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.) *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-323. See also Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.) *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-71 and *VI*, 6-361; Martínez Sánchez suggests close to 400 priests supported the Basque nationalist PNV ‘Mons. Antoniutti’, p. 73

<sup>53</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.) *Archivo Gomá, IV*, 4-134; *VII*, 7-428; *VIII*, 8-144, 8-510

<sup>54</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-186; *IV*, 4-216

<sup>55</sup> Gómez Bravo, “‘Loving the Punished’”, pp. 138-9

<sup>56</sup> *ABC* (Sevilla), 21 June 1938. Similarly in this process, Francoist authorities sought to limit activities surrounding the Ezkioga apparitions, ‘seek[ing] to cut short all political activity that is forbidden by the law, like Basque nationalism, which is at the root of these meetings.’ Following his appointment as apostolic administrator in Vitoria, Lauzurica attempted to internally exile a ‘separatist’ parish priest from Urnieta, Juan Bautista Ayerbe. According to Bautista’s son Daniel (also a priest) his father held no separatist political opinion, but was a vocal supporter of the cult surrounding Ezkioga; see Christian, *Visionaries*, p. 377

<sup>57</sup> This speech appears in *ABC* (Sevilla), 21 June 1938

were transported to Carmona over the course of 1938-40 they came, by early 1940, to represent around ninety percent of a fluctuating prison population in the converted monastery.<sup>58</sup>

Given the international reaction to the wartime execution of a number of priests, Francoist authorities were naturally cautious in proceeding with the prosecution of priests.<sup>59</sup> Those executions had also led to protests to Franco by Cardinal Gomá, who nonetheless justified them to the Vatican as the result of priests engaging in political activity.<sup>60</sup> That political activity resulted in the blanket condemnation of all those guilty of rebellion overrode the complex, nuanced experiences of those priests, making no distinction between those who had done little more than oppose the repression, had spoken out against aspects of it, or those who had actively fought against the insurgency. Those found guilty of joining the rebellion were sentenced to death or up to thirty years in jail; aiding and abetting the rebellion carried a charge of up to fifteen years in prison, whilst those who were tried for ‘inciting the rebellion’ received lesser sentences ranging from six months to twelve years.<sup>61</sup> The most significant charges were levied upon those who had worked for the Republican government (and the Basque autonomous government), and particularly those who had volunteered in Republican army units – naturally levied most regularly at the *capellans* of Basque army units.<sup>62</sup> A large number of the Basque priests interned in Carmona had been found guilty of the severest form of rebellion, including the forty-four year old Román Jáuregui, who had been the coadjutor of rural Abadiano, a town close to Durango. Arrested alongside four other priests, Jáuregui was sentenced to execution in August 1937 for volunteering as a *capellan* in the Basque forces opposing the insurgency, and for having denounced the military and the ‘national cause.’<sup>63</sup> Had he not been killed behind the lines shortly before the end of the war, similar charges would likely have been levied at the Catalan priest Jeronimo Fabregas,

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<sup>58</sup> FFLC, Archivo de Julián Besteiro, 002303-067

<sup>59</sup> Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Goma, II*, 2-71. Following the fall of Guipúzcoa (September 1936), a number of parish priests had been detained in Vitoria, while others sought sanctuary in the same city. On 15 February, twelve were shot following secret military process. See also *Archivo Goma, XII*, 12-12 Anexo 1

<sup>60</sup> *Spain: Catholic and Protestant Priests, Freemasons and Liberals shot by Rebels* (London: Press Department of the Spanish Embassy in London, 1937); Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, p. 431

<sup>61</sup> Peter Anderson, ‘In the Interests of Justice?’, pp. 32-3

<sup>62</sup> Goñi Galarraga, *La guerra civil en el País Vasco*, p. 210

<sup>63</sup> Santiago Martínez Sánchez, ‘Mons. Antoniutti’, p. 66

who was embedded with Republican troops in the north east of Spain until arriving on the Ebro front and where, stationed close to the frontlines and using a house owned by a family close to the battlefields, he celebrated Mass every day and offered confession to a number of the Republic's soldiers.<sup>64</sup> The twenty eight year old Modesto Arana had been sentenced to twenty years imprisonment for a variety of 'crimes.' These ranged from his role as a *capellan* within the Basque forces and for undergoing military training in the 'rebellion,' to having taught the Basque language to women, and having left his post as organist of the parish of Trucios. Arana was also found guilty of the 'crime' of having organised a banquet in celebration of the Basque government.<sup>65</sup>

Of the priests interned in Carmona, there were only an isolated few who had actively been involved in any fighting, anywhere in Spain, despite the attention paid to Basque forces. Not least amongst those was Cándido Nogueras, the parish priest of Broto (Huesca).<sup>66</sup> Nogueras had been arrested in Zaragoza on 17 April 1938 and tried before a military court on 30 June where 'serious charges' for his 'actions in the red zone' were brought against him.<sup>67</sup> From 'the first day of the war, he [Nogueras] had fought with the people' and when militia columns loyal to the Republic had entered Broto, he immediately volunteered to join their efforts.<sup>68</sup> He had no doubt that had Jesus been alive in Spain he would have helped form the *milicias populares*; he 'would have been a fighter for freedom,' Nogueras declared.<sup>69</sup> Proudly adorning his cap with a red star and abandoning his priestly vestments, Nogueras was affectionately called 'father' by his fellow militiamen, though he insisted on simply

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<sup>64</sup> AHN, FC-Causa General, 1449, Pieza 1, Exp. 14, p. 27 (Tarragona); Fabregas has latterly been represented as a victim of anticlerical violence, forming one of the '522 martyrs' beatified in October 2013, *La Razon*, 13 October 2013; *El Mundo*, 13 October 2013

<sup>65</sup> Santiago Martínez Sánchez, 'Mons. Antoniutti', p. 50, 66

<sup>66</sup> *Mi Revista*, 1 March 1937; Nogueras' file is located in Archivo General Militar de Guadalajara, Los expedientes personales de penas ordinarias conmutadas, Caja. 889, Exp. 65374; Euzko Apaiz Talde, *El clero vasco ante los tribunales, Historia General de la Guerra Civil en Euskadi*, vol. 7, (San Sebastián: Haranburu, 1982). Nogueras' younger brother Julio, who had 'socialist sympathies', had also been executed by Falange members at the start of war.

<sup>67</sup> Luisa Marco Sola, 'Cándido Nogueras (1899-1976): el cura miliciano' in Feliciano Montero García et al. (eds.), *Otra Iglesia; Clero disidente durante la Segunda República y la guerra civil*, (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2014), p. 215; see also Marino Ayerra Redín, *No me avergoncé del evangelio (desde mi parroquia)*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Periplo, 1959), pp. 29-30

<sup>68</sup> Marco Sola, 'Cándido Nogueras' pp. 213-5; Gumersindo de Estella, *Fusilados en Zaragoza, 1936-1939: tres años de asistencia espiritual a los reos*, (Zaragoza, Mira Editores, 2003), p. 85

<sup>69</sup> *Mi Revista*, 1 March 1937

being referred to as ‘comrade’ by those he considered to be his equals.<sup>70</sup> Sentenced to a six year jail term for aiding the rebellion, Nogueras was described at his trial as being an ‘important member of the war committee’ of Broto and influential in the work of the local organisation of Socorro Rojo.<sup>71</sup> With the partial defence of temporary insanity [*trastorno mental transitorio*] – perhaps on the advice of his lawyers, with rumours of intervention from the Bishop of Huesca, although it cannot be ascertained – saving him from the very real possibility that he would be sentenced to death, Nogueras was transferred first to the prison at San Isidro de Dueñas with over sixty other priests, and then on to Carmona.<sup>72</sup>

Those individuals also included Gregorio Fernández, a parish priest from a poverty-stricken village close to Burgos. When the war broke out, Fernández was one of those small number of priests saved by local left-wing political organisations because he was well known for his broadly left wing political views and because he had been ‘affectionately held’ for his ‘kindness’ and ‘humility.’<sup>73</sup> With the rebels having assumed control of nearby Burgos immediately, local trade unionists and workers urged him to flee. Despite being convinced that his status as a priest would protect him from harm, Fernández was quickly arrested and interrogated, but refused to give up any details of the local committee or where they had fled to. Deemed to have ‘aided the rebellion’ and worked for the village’s Popular Front committee established in the wake of the coup, the priest was sentenced and transferred to Carmona.<sup>74</sup>

The growing population of Carmona would soon be joined by Régulo Martínez Sánchez, but if they had arrived in the same prison by 1940, found guilty of their respective ‘rebellions’, the wartime experiences of Gregorio Fernández were far removed from that of Martínez Sánchez. Politically active and publicly visible as a leading figure in Azaña’s progressive republican Izquierda Republicana – actions that were certainly enough to make him a target – when he was arrested at the end of the

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<sup>70</sup> *Mi Revista*, 1 March 1937; Bonifacio Fernández Aldana, *La Guerra en Aragón. Cómo fué*, (Barcelona: Ediciones Cómo fué, 1937), pp. 50-1

<sup>71</sup> Marco Sola, ‘Cándido Nogueras’, p. 215

<sup>72</sup> FFLC, Julián Besteiro, 002303-067; Marco Sola, ‘Cándido Nogueras’, pp. 215-6; Estella, *Fusilados en Zaragoza*, p. 112

<sup>73</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 96

<sup>74</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 97

war by Francoist forces Martínez Sánchez was initially accused of complicity in the murder of Ramón Serrano Suñer's two brothers, and for his role in the creation of Madrid's *tribunales populares*, notwithstanding the additional charge of being a 'traitor to religion.'<sup>75</sup> Although the evidence surrounding many of the accusations presented at the priest's trial was tenuous at best, Martínez Sánchez had no doubt been a central political figure in wartime Madrid, and was a willing supporter of the anti-Negrínista 'National Defence Council' led by Colonel Segismundo Casado, intent on negotiation with Franco.<sup>76</sup>

That Martínez Sánchez had placed his support behind Casado illustrated visibly that even for those priests who had remained loyal to the Republic in a tremendously fraught landscape, facing the condemnation of their ecclesiastical superiors and massive dislocations to their lives and environments, the huge cost of summoning a continued energy to fight and to resist Francoism would eventually prove too much.<sup>77</sup> Although he had often spoke of the defence of liberal-democratic values, the wartime work of Martínez Sánchez recalled his childhood experiences too – as the priest's father had wished that he could have written prescriptions for bread and olives for local villagers, so too his son, now an adult in the midst of civil war, had organised food parcels in the embattled capital with staggering enthusiasm and energy. But decimated through an erosion of morale in Madrid, accentuated by the human suffering of the city and a now-faltering belief in the viability of the war effort, Martínez Sánchez had come to believe in the possibility of a negotiated peace. Although diplomatic efforts to get Non-Intervention lifted and international brokerage for a negotiated peace had been increasingly focused on Paris since 1938, especially after the March *Anschluss* again brought world war into focus, Martínez Sánchez arrived in Paris in early 1939 with altogether different motivations.<sup>78</sup> By his own account, the priest and political leader had hoped to encourage Manuel Azaña to

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<sup>75</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173). For some of the priest's most visible public work as an Izquierda Republicana politician towards the end of the war, see *La Libertad*, 21 April 1938 and 5 July 1938; Martínez Sánchez, *Conferencia*, passim

<sup>76</sup> Graham, 'Casado's Ghosts', p. 255

<sup>77</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173)

<sup>78</sup> Martínez Sánchez was almost certainly helped here too by the Catholic politician Rafael Sánchez Guerra, himself a supporter of Casado's attempts to secure a platform for negotiation, Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 82-3

broker French government intervention to end the war before his resignation on 27 February, as Britain and France issued their formal recognition of Franco.

But returning to Spain after failing to meet with Azaña in late February, Martínez Sánchez was arrested and sentenced to death on 8 June 1940.<sup>79</sup> His experience of the immediate post-war years made it clear why there had been no negotiated peace: spending almost a year in prison in Porlier, the priest's execution was staved only following intervention from the Vicar General of the Navy, whom Régulo had saved from anticlerical protagonists in 1936, and who in turn had enlisted the help of Gregorio Modrego, auxiliary bishop of Toledo and future Bishop of Barcelona.<sup>80</sup> With the courts functioning on the prior assumption that all were guilty as charged, it often took acts of personal intercession like this to save the lives of the condemned, whether priests or otherwise: the Republican artillery commissar and devout Catholic Luis del Romero was saved from Francoist authorities only because of a twist of fate and the intercession of a Francoist army officer. During the war his mother had regularly escorted a local priest as he visited military rebels interned by the Republic, including the officer in charge of Luis's pending trial.<sup>81</sup> In this, Romero's experience, like that of Martínez Sánchez, stood for much a wider story and the experience of many thousands, itself part of the way Francoism reinforced 'old ways' of politics and patronage whilst at the same time making them something new.<sup>82</sup> Even his survival through the intercession of a grateful Francoist officer granted him no further favours – freed by a twist of fate rather than constitutional process, and with no access to 'civil rights,' Romero struggled to get documentation until May 1939, when he befriended the Falange chief of the district of Gran Vía de Valencia.<sup>83</sup>

Sentenced to execution, it was by virtue of friendships and personal associational networks that Martínez Sánchez's death penalty was commuted in May

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<sup>79</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 42

<sup>80</sup> Ronald Fraser, *Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros. Historia oral de la Guerra Civil española*, (Barcelona: Planeta DeAgostini, 2005), p. 685. Documentation surrounding the trial is also available in the files of the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Toledo, 65880

<sup>81</sup> Romero, *Memorias de un joven católico*, pp. 172-4

<sup>82</sup> Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez, 'Dictatorship from Below: Local Politics in the Making of the Francoist State, 1937–1948', *The Journal of Modern History*, 71(4), p. 883

<sup>83</sup> Romero, *Memorias de un joven católico*, pp. 149-53



1941. But he was certainly not freed – transferred first to a prison in Segovia, the priest was quickly moved on to Carmona.<sup>84</sup> Loaded onto a cattle truck and driven to Carmona along with a cohort of other priests, Régulo repeated a journey identical to that undertaken by Noguerras and others.<sup>85</sup> If these priests had lived vastly separate lives during wartime, from the moment of their arrests those experiences converged into similar patterns on the road to Carmona. Many of the inmates were transported to the prison in open trucks, exposed not only to the elements on the long journey from concentration camps and prisons from all over Spain, but also to the jeering of the public as they were paraded around the streets to be mocked. Though insult and systematic humiliation were key aspects of the Francoist repression, those priests and other prisoners segregated from the general prison population carried a significant symbolic weight in both domestic and international terms.<sup>86</sup> Máximo Cuervo, the Jesuit educated Director General of Prisons had already received complaints from the Vatican (through Cardinal Segura) about the humiliating treatment of priests on the journey to Carmona by the time Martínez Sánchez arrived.<sup>87</sup> Cuervo also received regular reports on the conditions in the monastery, where it was clear that Francoist authorities went to great lengths to portray Carmona as a much more relaxed prison than the general prison environment. Just as these dissident priests were prosecuted with the utmost care and thorough examination of their cases, removal to the prison of Carmona also seemingly ensured that the brutal physical abuse of prisoners that occurred with alarming regularity elsewhere – physical abuse, torture, and countless deaths in custody, did not occur in Carmona.<sup>88</sup>

Here it was clear that the latent tensions between much of the Spanish Catholic Church hierarchy and the regime, the ‘conflictive accommodation’ that characterised even the immediate aftermath of military victory, already threatened to drive fractures deep into the alliances that underpinned the Francoist state.<sup>89</sup> Even Cardinal Gomá –

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<sup>84</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 86-7

<sup>85</sup> Anderson, ‘From the Pulpit to the Dock’, pp. 62-3

<sup>86</sup> Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, p. 481, 498, 511

<sup>87</sup> Antonio Marquina Barrio, *La diplomacia vaticana y la España de Franco (1936-1945)*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), 1983), pp. 292-5 charts more widely the concerns raised by the Vatican about the appointment of ‘politicised’ ecclesiasts, not least taking some time to agree to the appointment of Plá y Deniel to the primatial see of Toledo in 1941, and the firm belief of Pius XII that Bishop Vidal i Barraquer be allowed to return to Spain.

<sup>88</sup> Besteiro’s death from tuberculosis in September 1940 at Carmona, suffering from a clear lack of appropriate medical attention, underlines the fragility with which any such claims can be made

<sup>89</sup> Guy Hermet, *Les Catholiques dans l’Espagne Franquiste*, I, (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale

who epitomised the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy's unconditional support for the 'crusade' – recognised the complex and shifting relations between the Church and the regime. Centrally those tensions focused on what the 're-evangelisation' of Spain ought to mean, an issue that crucially focused on those priests interned in Francoist gaols.<sup>90</sup> And though Gomá maintained an abiding confidence in the restoration of the Church to what he saw as its rightful place within the new order, he recognised that the Church was just one of the interest groups seeking to achieve its objectives and that not all of those groups, especially the Falange, were disposed to allow the relatively comfortable treatment of imprisoned priests.<sup>91</sup>

But with the regime focused on avoiding any visible rifts with the Catholic hierarchy that had blessed their crusade, it is clear that in comparison to much of the *universo penitenciario*, Carmona was represented as offering its inmates much more hygienic conditions. The Inspector General of Prisons, Miguel Pérez Blasco, was a regular visitor to Carmona in the first years after the arrival of the first 'red priests' in 1938.<sup>92</sup> Cleaning facilities were reported as far more suited to the number of prisoners than the cramped and overcrowded conditions suffered by the general prison population elsewhere. On one visit, Pérez Blasco described the prison as 'totally different from the others, with ample space, sufficient food and a very relaxed disciplinary regime.'<sup>93</sup> The Inspector General also claimed that prisoners were also allowed to 'practice their faith and pray freely' – although religious practice was imposed everywhere in the prison system – to congregate and sing hymns, whilst

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des Sciences Politique, 1980), pp. 15-6

<sup>90</sup> María Luisa Rodríguez de Aisa, *El Cardenal Gomá y la guerra de España*, (Madrid: CSIC, 1981), pp. 32-3. This is in addition to already nascent hostility from ecclesiastical figures such as Cardinal Segura, and the eleven other bishops who publish Segura's pastoral letter criticising the suppression of Catholic associational life – see Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, p. 378 and José Andrés-Gallego, *¿Fascismo o Estado católico? Ideología, religion y censura en la España de Franco, 1937-1941*, (Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, 1997), pp. 148-52

<sup>91</sup> In a small number of cases, Gomá supported appeals for clemency for prominent Catholics arrested and sentenced by the Francoist regime, see for instance Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-45, 2-46. He also maintained, throughout this period, correspondence with the exiled Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer and Maximiliano Arboleya. The eventual signing of the Concordat in 1953 illustrated the growing problems in the relationship between the Church hierarchy and the Francoist state: the nuncio protested the regime's brutal reprisals against Republican prisoners, and the Government refused to allow the publication of papal encyclicals and episcopal pastorals that it considered anti-Nazi or anti-regime; see Marquina Barrio, *La Diplomacia Vaticana* and later reflections in Román Oria Fernández, *1968...Fragmentos de una lucha para los indignados de hoy*, (Seville: Punto Rojo, 2013), pp. 174-8

<sup>92</sup> Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior*, p. 138

<sup>93</sup> AGA 41/11987

those who were sick were given prompter medical attention than might have been received elsewhere and excused from punishment duties.<sup>94</sup> Far removed from what he termed the ‘harsh reality’ of the rest of the Francoist *universo penitenciario*, Pérez Blasco commented on the availability of fresh fish, fruit and vegetables within the prison.<sup>95</sup> That was in spite of the Ministry of Justice officially declaring that it could not improve the feeding of inmates, given the scarcity of food and the continuous increase in the volume of prisoners during 1940 and through to 1941. Pérez Blasco was seemingly more concerned with representing Carmona as a pleasant place than his colleague Marcos Villa Gómez, whose first report as the director of Carmona during the late summer of 1940 was indicative of the true nature of the Francoist repression. Villa Gómez warned of the danger of ‘making concessions, lavishing attentions and courtesies’ on the prisoners.<sup>96</sup> Other reports from inspectors and authorities within the prison system had raised similar concerns. Such processes would ‘detract from the *acción de la justicias*’ and work only ‘to diminish the principles behind the enforcement of sentences.’<sup>97</sup>

And though the authorities were aware of the negative impact any large-scale repression of the clergy would have on the regime’s image on both a national and international level, in Carmona at least the wide emergence of the photograph of ‘Besteiro and the Basque priests’ (it included non-Basque priests too), published in February 1940 by the journal *Euzko Deya* – founded by Basque exiles in Paris and now published in Basque, French and Spanish to an increasingly wide readership – provided the perfect justification for tightening conditions in Carmona to bring them more into line with the rest of the Francoist prison universe.<sup>98</sup>

Though the standards at Carmona remained – in the loosest terms – superior to much of the rest of the Francoist prison environment in the physical treatment of prisoners (which mainly did not include the introduction of any additional arduous

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<sup>94</sup> AGA 41/11987; see also FFLC, Julián Besteiro, 002303-056 and -068

<sup>95</sup> AGA 41/11987

<sup>96</sup> Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior*, p. 138

<sup>97</sup> Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior*, p. 138

<sup>98</sup> Despite what the editors of *Euzko Deya* claimed (and what the subsequent debates over the photo also claimed) the photograph also included a number of those priests in Carmona who weren’t from the Basque Provinces, including Gregorio Fernández from Burgos and the ‘militia priest’ Cándido Nogueras – although Régulo Martínez Sánchez had not yet arrived

physical work), it was clear that inmates suffered badly from the deteriorating conditions in the monastery prison. One prisoner referred to the prison as an ‘infectious hole’, whilst another complained that the mattresses supplied to the priests and other inmates were so infested with bedbugs and fleas that inmates chose to sleep on the floor of their cells.<sup>99</sup> Those tiny, dark and damp cells were hidden away in the depths of the monastery, far removed from the wide open spaces of the courtyard so often referred to in those reports presenting Carmona as an airy, spacious place of confinement.<sup>100</sup>

But internment in Carmona meant much more than difficult physical conditions: though it might have been more relaxed in terms of physical discipline, the psychological function remained the same, that the *universo penitenciario* was a Catholic panopticon bar none.<sup>101</sup> For its Catholic prisoners, every aspect of their life was subjected to a Francoist gaze defined by a particular reading of Catholicism. ‘Redemption’ and the expiating of ‘sin’ through suffering were the key features of the Francoist prison universe, and only by purging this sin were prisoners able to begin the long road to freedom.<sup>102</sup> The participation of the clergy and religious orders as prison personnel was crucial to this process, providing a service of ‘religious regeneration’ that became the dominant motif inside prison.<sup>103</sup> Not only did it include the physical controls of incarceration, isolation and exile, but also psychological control.

For those priests now incarcerated, disciplinary Catholicism aimed to silence them in ways that had been impossible during wartime. If such Catholic priests had explained their support for the Republic as being grounded in true Christian values

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<sup>99</sup> Julio Ugarte, *Odisea en cinco tiempos*, (San Sebastián: Eusko Ikaskuntza, 1989); Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 90; José Manuel Mendizabal Mendiol, *Gudaris y rehenes de Franco (1936-1943)*, (Itxaropena: Alberdania, 2006) pp. 298-9

<sup>100</sup> FFLC, Julián Besteiro, 002303-065; Besteiro made some records of the prison layout and notes regarding cell occupants during 1940 although these numbers changed often

<sup>101</sup> With the Francoist prison universe properly located amongst the prison systems of totalitarian states, Michelle Perrot’s discussion of the Russian gulag system is as relevant here as elsewhere, Michelle Perrot, ‘L’Inspecteur Bentham’, in Jeremy Bentham, *Le Panoptique*, (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1977) pp. 169-219, p. 188

<sup>102</sup> Gómez Bravo, *La redención de penas*, pp. 147-9; Ángela Cenarro, ‘La institucionalización del universo penitenciario franquista’, in Carme Molinero, Margarida Sala and Jaume Sobrequés (eds.), *Una inmensa prisión. Los campos de concentración y las prisiones durante la guerra civil y el franquismo*, (Barcelona, Crítica, 2003), pp. 133-54

<sup>103</sup> Gómez Bravo, “Loving the Punished”, pp. 142-4

and teachings abandoned by the institutional Church, now the Church sought to remind them that their actions had transcendental repercussions, and threatened the eternal punishment of purgatory for their heretical dissent.<sup>104</sup> Guilt, loneliness and sinfulness were emphasised and encouraged.<sup>105</sup> Mocked for their ‘false’ interpretation of the gospels, and their foolishness for believing that religion belonged ‘to the people’, the deeply prescriptive nature of the medieval Catholic thinking subscribed to by the Spanish Church hierarchy in the 1940s was used as a weapon against the life works of these ‘red priests’.<sup>106</sup> Insults and the ridiculing of understandings of Christianity that did not conform to the boundaries of the ‘crusade’ were commonplace. One priest wrote of guards’ ‘hate’.<sup>107</sup> Another priest was refused permission to say mass in gaol because the prison director deemed ‘any mass said by a red priest to be worthless.’<sup>108</sup> The priest was then forced to attend a ‘true’ Catholic mass, the exuberant content of which reinforced the political and religious unity demanded by Francoism and formed yet another aspect of brutal psychological warfare waged in the name of the ‘crusade’.

It was also made clear that if Francoism was based on homogenous, essentialist ideas, rather than the individualisms and free choices that were associated with political liberalism and thus with these *curas rojos*, this ‘re-Christianisation’ of Spain ensured that faith too belonged less to the individual than to the regime. In this totalitarian system, even the deeply private religiosity of those incarcerated could be subordinated to the control of prison officials as they invaded personal and private spaces now choreographed to the needs of the regime. For many of Franco’s prisoners, forced involvement in Catholic ceremonies acted as a means of psychologically besieging them, but in many cases we might perceive this psychological torment as functioning much more acutely for priests and devout Catholics. The knowledge that absolution had been *withheld* by their ecclesiastical jailors condemned them to the anguish of believing the best they could hope for was purgatory. In this, the Franco regime subverted the very meaning of freedom through

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<sup>104</sup> For the deployment of confession as a weapon, see Martín Torrent, *¿Qué me dice usted de los presos?*, (Alcalá de Henares: Imprenta Talleres Penitenciarios, 1942), pp. 11-2

<sup>105</sup> This had begun in wartime, identifying such Catholics as ‘traitors to God’, Casanova, *Iglesia*, p. 142

<sup>106</sup> Torrent, *¿Qué me dice*, pp. 11-2; Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 104-5

<sup>107</sup> Fundación Sabino Arana (FSA) [sabinoarana.org], Fondos Personales, Justinio Argeata, 01153-01

<sup>108</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 105

the spectre of self-criticism and denial – priests were encouraged to see fundamental flaws in any association between democratic politics and their faith, and were accused of challenging not only the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the Vatican, but their very faith itself.<sup>109</sup> Such self-criticism, evoked by torture, terror and psychological manipulation, could often function to turn supporters of the Republic into its deniers.<sup>110</sup> The French philosopher and sociologist Jacques Ellul commented that in this way, the enemy of the regime ‘can be made to declare, while he is still the enemy, that this regime was right, that his opposition was criminal and that his condemnation is just – that is the ultimate result of totalitarian propaganda.’<sup>111</sup> This was the organised manipulation and re-fixing of the identities of prisoners, forcing many of them into self-betrayal. The instrumental effects in the disciplining and demoralisation of the non-executed are clear, but so too this was the case for those about to be executed. In the eyes of the regime and its interlocutors, an intended last victory over the political and cultural values of the condemned – liberal Catholicism included – ensured that, notwithstanding those who continued to resist, they knew they were defeated.<sup>112</sup>

Even amidst this onslaught, many of the Catholic priests in Carmona reconciled their suffering with their faith and, safe in the belief that they would be judged before God after death, interpreted the redemptive suffering of the prison universe on their own terms rather than that of ecclesiastical hierarchy. It was clear that Cándido Noguerras had continued to lead an active religious life in prison as during the war – in Zaragoza, where he was later transferred, the priest Gumersindo de Estella remembered that Noguerras had confessed to him weekly.<sup>113</sup> Such acts of penance and contrition continued without fail for nearly three years as Noguerras, first from Carmona and then from Zaragoza, wrote to the Bishop of Huesca, who before the war had been heavily involved in the work of Acción Católica in the region and

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<sup>109</sup> See also the priest encouraged to enter an asylum because of his ‘half-mad’ decision to make a clenched-fist salute, Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 425

<sup>110</sup> For this attitude among the priests employed within the Francoist prison system, see amongst others, Estella, *Fusilados en Zaragoza* and Torrent, *¿Qué me dice...?*

<sup>111</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 11

<sup>112</sup> Torrent, *¿Qué me dice...?*, p. 11

<sup>113</sup> Estella, *Fusilados en Zaragoza*, p. 112

had fully supported the Francoist cause, in the hope of being granted forgiveness and absolution.<sup>114</sup>

It seems clear that for many Catholic prisoners, spiritual devotion helped them to see through their torment.<sup>115</sup> Across the Francoist prison universe, Catholic prisoners kept, made and traded religious icons and mementos that helped them draw strength to deal with their situation. Images of the Virgin Mary were amongst the most popular, and were often exchanged with communists and other political prisoners.<sup>116</sup> This had been as true during wartime for soldiers on the battlefields as for those seeking comfort and salvation on the home front, ensuring that such religious icons and mementos were often clung to desperately.<sup>117</sup> Many soldiers, aware both of the proximity of death and the potential for capture, made sure their religious icons were stitched into their uniforms or were attached to belt buckles or fastenings to prevent their loss. The insurgent chaplain Cabrerizo Paredes told of Republican soldiers with scapulars of the Sacred Heart hidden in their clothing.<sup>118</sup> Though captured and interred in a vicious prison universe founded upon integrist Catholic ideals of redemptive suffering appropriated by the regime, belief that God (or at least the protection brought by Providence and symbolised by those icons) would shield them from death provided security and reassurance for many captured Republican supporters now gaoled in Francoist prisons.

For many prisoners, whether clergy or devout lay Catholics, survival always equated to faith in God, which provided the hope for them to cope with imprisonment – especially those who were serving long sentences with years remaining. This was especially important for those priests and lay Catholics who found themselves detained elsewhere, completely isolated from their religious communities, far away

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<sup>114</sup> For the Bishop of Huesca's commitment to the 'crusade', see Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.) *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-121

<sup>115</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 95; On this as a sociological phenomenon, see Shadd Maruna, Louise Wilson, and Kathryn Curran, 'Why God is often found behind bars: Prison conversions and the crisis of self-narrative', *Research in Human Development*, 3, 2006, pp. 161-84

<sup>116</sup> Marcos Ana, *Decidme cómo es un árbol*, (Barcelona: Umbriel, 2007) pp. 119-22; see also E. Frances King, *Material Religion and Popular Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. xii-xiii

<sup>117</sup> Ignacio Yarza Hinojosa, *Diario de campaña de un soldado catalán (1936-1939)*, (Madrid: Actas, 2005), p. 107

<sup>118</sup> The *gudari* Ramón de Galarza remarked of the surprise of Francoist chaplains 'when they saw how pious and honest' some of the interned 'separatist-Red-commies' were; Galarza, *Diario de un gudari*, p. 65

from the prison of Carmona where the concentration of priests allowed something of a shared religious life to develop. Catholic prisoners practised private devotions in a number of ways, most centrally through prayer and meditation and bible study.<sup>119</sup> That personal, devotional life was considered essential to spirituality and a ‘good’ Christian life, and for priests and lay Catholics interned in Francoist jails, time spent in prayer and reading the bible could provide feelings of inspiration, rejuvenation, peace, and contentment.<sup>120</sup>

Without their congregations and interned, subjected to a Francoist rewriting of their own faith, these dissident clergy faced the challenge of a loss of purpose. The reassuring routines of a communal religious life changed inexplicably by the war were shattered further by the reality of imprisonment in a totalitarian state founded on a diametrically opposed reading of Catholicism. But in this environment, their faith could remain critical in empowering them and helping them to cope with such harsh conditions.<sup>121</sup> Though he had given up the priesthood before the war, the communist party member and practising Catholic Amable Donoso García became more focused on his lapsed priestly vocation after a number of years in Francoist prisons.<sup>122</sup> Like a number of others, Donoso believed that his religious faith could help him reinterpret his current situation, just as it had during the civil war, and help him to more effectively manage the negative emotions associated with prison life. In this, inmates like Donoso did not conceptualise their faith as a panacea for all of their problems, nor did they believe that the prison was instantaneously improved by recourse to faith. But there was evidence of a belief that that they could effectively minimise the negative emotional consequences of prison life through faith: exposed, condemned and banished to an environment extremely hostile to his understanding of a Christian life, Cándido Nogueras – like many others – experienced a confirmation and concretisation of his faith, in which the hostile environment of the prison universe itself played a part.<sup>123</sup> The belief that only in the worst moments can one truly find God provided a

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<sup>119</sup> FFLC, Archivo de Julián Besteiro, 002303-061

<sup>120</sup> Galarza notes that prisoners were sometimes punished by having any such reading materials confiscated, *Diario de un gudari*, p. 233

<sup>121</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 87-110; Maruna et al, ‘Why God...’, pp. 161-84; that communal faith structures provided consolidation and safety in a frightening environment was also evident amongst right-wing priests and lay Catholic inmates in Madrid’s prisons during the war: Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp. 146-58

<sup>122</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 93-4

<sup>123</sup> Marco Sola, ‘Cándido Nogueras’, pp. 215-9



positive goal and hope for many of the priests (and lay Catholics) in Francoist jails.<sup>124</sup> Believing that their suffering was an integral part of God's plan also represented a common theme for Catholic priests. This was a difficult decision to make in a challenging experience. Other lay Catholic prisoners wished they had been executed. In a letter to his wife, the prisoner Miguel Xambrot spoke emotionally of his desperation – 'how many times I wish they had shot me; it would have ended my suffering!'<sup>125</sup> But understanding prison as a Christian trial to be endured, just as at the start of the war he had declared himself to be 'with the people', now in Carmona, Cándido Nogueras understood his incarceration as suffering shared with the same people persecuted in the insurgent-inflicted class war.<sup>126</sup>

Though those feelings of isolation and despair were not entirely absent from Carmona, that the majority of the prisoners in Carmona were priests, quickly allowed a strong communal religious life to develop. That existence of an artificial parish, developed in a fearful climate, was in many ways similar to those masses said in the lounges, cellars and spaces of private houses in the wartime Republic, the comfort of which was explained by Joan Mestres, a former member of the CEDA who, freed by CNT militants who knew the poverty of his family and saw him as a 'son of the people,' then became a Republican government civil servant in wartime Valencia.<sup>127</sup> Mestres said of those wartime cellar masses that 'it was a marvellous example of human solidarity. Everything was heightened by the imminence of death. You became far more sensible to religion, living in a constant state of God's grace.'<sup>128</sup> Such meetings provided spiritual assistance amongst like-minded individuals, and they were gatherings in which people could talk freely. Devotionals in which prisoners joined together were possible at certain times, which functioned not only as an appropriation of official, proscribed rituals but also allowed for the emergence of a parallel subterranean religious life, going on 'beneath' the official rituals prescribed in the prison.<sup>129</sup> That shared spiritual life, central to Catholicism, the emphasis on saying the rosary, hearing confession, receiving the Eucharist regularly and the ceremony of

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<sup>124</sup> This is also evident in Galarza, *Diario de un gudari*, who comments dryly on the Catholic prisoner Jose de Leturia's 'forgiveness' of his warders, p. 169

<sup>125</sup> Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior*, p. 93

<sup>126</sup> See his earlier comments in *Mi Revista*, 1 March 1937

<sup>127</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 474; see also p. 300

<sup>128</sup> Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 474

<sup>129</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 95

Mass itself, were rituals that Catholics in Spain were accustomed to from a young age and which guided the quotidian lives of priests. It made their faith a vital tool in the unfamiliar, chaotic and often frightening world of the prison.<sup>130</sup>

It seems that for many, evangelising in a group environment helped to nurture faith in prison, with interned priests spending time in group religious activities. This stood directly against Francoist prison policy, based in authoritarian Catholicism, which stressed ideas that isolation could break down the collective solidarity of prisoners.<sup>131</sup> Catholic prisoners instead stressed the need for regular communal prayer, group scripture study, and group discussions involving religion to maintain their faith.<sup>132</sup> Although they discussed the need for personal prayer, meditation, and scriptural reading, group religious practice was a crucial factor in helping them keep their motivation high.<sup>133</sup> In a demoralising environment it provided spiritual support and fellowship and a mutual source of hope and encouragement.

Group activity also offered temporary respite from the gruelling prison life; for perhaps an hour or two a week one could ‘escape’ the endless subjection to the Francoist gaze. The prisoners were allowed some small freedoms in their daily existence. Martínez Sánchez, who arrived at Carmona in 1941, recalled that the inmates were permitted to take part in some cultural activities.<sup>134</sup> Music was a common pastime across the prison universe, aided at Carmona by the Basque army chaplain Modesto Arana, who had been about to leave Spain for the Roma Estudios Superiores de Música Sagrada when war broke out.<sup>135</sup> From the prison, the organist won a major musical prize: entered into a contest held in Seville on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the Hermandad de la Coronación, Arana won first prize for his composition.<sup>136</sup> The priests also collaborated in song-writing and singing, which could

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<sup>130</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 97, p. 105. Martínez Sánchez made repeated attempts to secure approval for his own sermons and masses without success.

<sup>131</sup> Gómez Bravo, “Loving the Punished”, p. 144

<sup>132</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 95; much earlier in the war, the priest José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull also spoke of the need for a communal life in times of suffering and hardship, Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey*, p. 32

<sup>133</sup> Galarza, *Diario de un gudari*, p. 43, 80, 108

<sup>134</sup> AHCB, FO, Ronald Fraser, Régulo Martínez Sánchez, A1 E3-E4 (126-153-162-172-173); Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 95-9

<sup>135</sup> Anxo Ferreiro Currás, *Consejos de guerra contra el clero vasco (1936-1944), La iglesia vasca vencida: asesinada, encarcelada, desterrada y exiliada*, (San Sebastián: Kultur Elkartea, 2013), p. 294

<sup>136</sup> Ferreiro Currás, *Consejos de guerra contra el clero vasco*, p. 294

be utilised for subversive means. Martínez Sánchez remembered one song, which contained the lines, ‘come and see the priests of Carmona...where the “España grande” brought [them] to purge them.’<sup>137</sup>

The appropriation of cultural activities in this way and the limited sacramental events that the priests were allowed to engage in represented a functioning neutralisation of Francoist Catholicism by the appropriation of an alternative religious life. The inmates were allowed access to theological materials and bibles through which they were able to confirm their understandings of the war, their confinement and the future of Spain.<sup>138</sup> If biblical passages had encouraged these prisoners to make sense of their wartime experiences alongside the trials of Christ, so to we might suggest their imprisonment could be understood in similar terms. The veteran socialist leader Julián Besteiro also regularly read the bible (although whether this was because of the lack of other materials which were rigorously controlled, even at Carmona, must remain a matter of speculation), and commented dryly that though he could neither confirm nor deny the existence of God, the atmosphere encouraged by the vast number of clergy working within the prison system was enough to convince him that ‘he had no need for priests, supporters of the bloody crusade.’<sup>139</sup>

But for interned priests, the ability to practise a religious life outside of the boundaries of the Francoist repression was, even after their release from Carmona, inevitably constrained by those same ‘supporters of the bloody crusade’. By the early 1940s, many of the priests who had been sentenced to death had seen their executions commuted to long terms of imprisonment.<sup>140</sup> As part of wider trends within the justice system, many prisoners convicted of general ‘propaganda’ activities rather than ‘blood crimes’ saw their sentences revised sharply downwards from 1940.<sup>141</sup> As part of this process, some priests given short sentences were released, like another Carmona inmate Cástor Marañón, sentenced to six years and a day in 1937 for having

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<sup>137</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 95. The ‘España grande’ obviously alludes to ‘una, grande y libre’ which is problematic in direction translation

<sup>138</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 87-110

<sup>139</sup> Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior*, p. 62. For Besteiro’s prison inventory, FFLC, Julián Besteiro, 002303-065 and 070

<sup>140</sup> Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia*, II, p. 144, p. 290; Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 41

<sup>141</sup> *Anuario Estadístico de España, 1946-47*, II, p. 1240 in Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 201, fn. 20. The national prison population was reduced to 233,373 in 1940 and 159,392 in 1941

denounced right-wing politicians and for ‘propaganda activities’ on behalf of the Republic.<sup>142</sup> Saturnino Ganchegui and Modesto Arana, both sentenced to twenty years, were freed from incarceration by 1940 and 1944 respectively.<sup>143</sup> In some cases the reduction of sentences and the pardoning of civil war-related offences was a logistical measure made necessary by the sheer number imprisoned under a new wave of state security legislation from 1939.<sup>144</sup> There were even some isolated calls from within the Church hierarchy to temper the punishment meted out to priests. Cardinal Segura, who made little secret of his detestation for the Falange and its appropriation of Catholic symbolism, had appealed to Francoist authorities to allow priests to return to the Church as part of the prison work programme established in October 1938, the *Redención de Penas por el Trabajo*.<sup>145</sup>

This measure was intended to allow prisoners to reduce their sentences through labour, and over the first decades of Francoism thousands of prisoners of war and later prison inmates were put to work in the system.<sup>146</sup> This move was certainly not motivated by a desire for reconciliation but an extension of the desire to enforce public penitence and, in part, a pragmatic response to massive prison overcrowding. Although there were only 20,000 prison places nationally in 1939, Madrid’s jails alone held 50,000 by 1940.<sup>147</sup> In 1939 the official national tally was some 270,000, the vast majority of whom were political detainees, and which stands as a likely minimum figure given the dearth of statistical records left behind by the destructivity of the repression itself.<sup>148</sup> As the organisation of the *Batallones Disciplinarios de Soldados Trabajadores* that ran alongside the *Redención* legislation made clear, ‘redemption through labour’ was an extension of the prison system, its purpose to;

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<sup>142</sup> Santiago Martínez Sánchez, ‘Mons. Antoniutti’, p. 65; Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 101-2

<sup>143</sup> Barruso, ‘La represión del clero diocesano guipuzcoano durante la guerra civil’, *Actas del Congreso Internacional 1936-1939, La Guerra Civil Española*, Madrid, 2009, p. 19; Ferreiro Currás, *Consejos de guerra contra el clero vasco*, p. 294

<sup>144</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 112

<sup>145</sup> Cenarro, ‘La institucionalización del universo penitenciario franquista’, pp. 133-54

<sup>146</sup> ‘Reglamento Provisional para el Régimen Interior de los Batallones de Trabajadores’, approved by Franco on December 23, 1938, AGMA, Cuartel General del Generalísimo, 2-155, Caja. 16 in Fernando Mendiola Gonzalo, ‘Forced Labour in Franco’s Spain’, *EHES Working Papers in Economic History*, 4, 2011, pp. 7-8

<sup>147</sup> Julius Ruiz, ‘A Spanish Genocide? Reflections on the Francoist Repression after the Spanish Civil War’, *Contemporary European History*, 14(2), 2005, p. 187

<sup>148</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 109

‘Achiev[e] the correction of the prisoner, providing him with the means and occasion to demonstrate his intentions and at every moment his degree of moral, patriotic and social rehabilitation, acquiring the habit of deep discipline, prompt obedience and respect for authority, precisely and especially at work, as the prior and indispensable basis of his adaptation to the social environment of the New Spain.’<sup>149</sup>

In the immediate post-war years, Cardinal Segura made several more trips to Madrid, trying to convince the Minister of Justice of his proposal for priests to reduce their sentences through ecclesiastic work.<sup>150</sup> Although it is unclear what was the specific response to Segura’s proposal, given the Francoist authorities were intent on quarantining alternative understandings of Catholicism in isolation, Segura’s plan was never likely to be met with much enthusiasm. Like the thousands of other political prisoners incarcerated, Catholic priests were guilty of ‘having ideas’ that existed outside those circumscribed by Francoism. But though Segura never succeeded in ensuring the widespread application of his idea, some individual priests were able to secure an early release under certain conditions. As with the stories of the artillery commissar Luis Romero, released by a military official aided by Romero’s mother, and Josep María Tarragó, freed by the intervention of Severino Aznar, it was largely through acts of personal intercession by Francoists through which the defeated gained their freedom, or at least escaped the worst. It was his pedigree as an outstanding and renowned musician that ensured the Basque priest and army chaplain Modesto Arana was given special dispensation, organised by ecclesiastical personnel, to leave prison early and travel to Santander, where he was to work as the Church organist.<sup>151</sup> Those Catholic priests who did secure an early release like Arana were forced to sign a statement declaring that their ‘rebellion’ against the ‘national cause’ was a criminal act and that they admitted to having participated ‘directly in the destruction of the faith in Spain’.<sup>152</sup> A process that had other secular parallels in Spain (see the story of Mercedes Maes Barayón’s obligatory ‘testimony’ in the prison newspaper *Redención*),

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<sup>149</sup> ‘Reglamento Provisional para el Régimen Interior de los Batallones de Trabajadores’

<sup>150</sup> Ramon Garriga, *El Cardenal Segura y el Nacional-Catolicismo*, (Barcelona : Editorial Planeta, 1977) p. 266

<sup>151</sup> Ferreiro Currás, *Consejos de guerra contra el clero vasco*, p. 294

<sup>152</sup> Ugarte, *Odisea en cinco tiempos*, p. 182

it was an increasingly common feature of political and social control organised by right wing political authorities across post-war Europe.<sup>153</sup>

As Julius Ruíz notes, modifications to the justice system in the immediate postwar years facilitated ‘the parole of all prisoners guilty of civil war offences’ with a threshold increased gradually, and which by 1943 encompassed sentences of twenty years.<sup>154</sup> Such measures ensured that few priests would actually serve their sentences in full in penal institutions, including the priests from Carmona. By the time of his transfer to a prison in La Rioja, Régulo Martínez Sánchez remembered that there was just a handful of inmates left in the monastery.<sup>155</sup> But even for those priests who were able to secure their release from Carmona, public freedom did not mean that they had escaped the Francoist gaze. Many of the priests were freed only under the conditions of *libertad vigilada*, which had allowed the Francoist prison authorities to start the process of emptying the prisons for new inmates, but without any recourse to amnesty or pardon of any kind.<sup>156</sup> In practical terms, the sheer volume of prisoners released according to these conditions, and therefore still subject to constant monitoring, was so large that it required the creation of a new agency exclusively for that function, the Servicio de Libertad Vigilada. This agency was not purely a narrowly penal institution, aiming instead to complement and contribute to the pathological Catholicism (the ‘redemption as cure’ ideal) focused on in prisons.<sup>157</sup> Surveillance and monitoring was concerned centrally with what the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman referred to as ‘gardening’ and nurturing a specific political community whilst at the same time moulding that society’s human material according to the parameters dictated by the state.<sup>158</sup> In the new Francoist state under construction, the work of the Servicio de Libertad Vigilada thus focused on the comprehensive control of the

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<sup>153</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 184, 55n. Francoism’s long ‘afterlife of violence’ meted out to the Barayón family is discussed in detail in *The War and its Shadow* pp. 65-92, and also extensively in Espinosa-Maestre, *Shoot the Messenger*, pp. 43-69. There were later echoes here of this process in the ‘apology’ texts political prisoners were forced to sign after the Greek civil war; see Polymeris Voglis, ‘Between Negation and Self-Negation: Political Prisoners in Greece, 1945-1950’, in Mark Mazower (ed.), *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 73-90

<sup>154</sup> Ruíz, *Franco’s Justice*, pp. 116–7

<sup>155</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 113-6

<sup>156</sup> Domingo Rodríguez Teijeiro, ‘Instituciones de control post-carcelario en el primer franquismo: el Servicio de Libertad Vigilada’, *Historia Actual Online*, 28, 2012, pp. 49-60

<sup>157</sup> Rodríguez, ‘el Servicio de Libertad Vigilada’, pp. 50-1

<sup>158</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 70-81

movement and the activities of inmates given limited parole: prisoners were forced to live where they were told to, and that was frequently in places where they had no natural contacts or support.

In 1940, the Guipúzcoan priest Saturnino Ganchegui arrived in the city of Ciudad Real, having been freed from Carmona jail after three years of internment.<sup>159</sup> In the city he was able to regain some limited freedoms, but only under the watchful eye of Francoist and Church authorities, and conditional upon regular reporting of his own activities. His social activities were restricted – not least by being forced to live hundreds of miles from family and pre-war social ties – but also by the obligation to report to the police, or to the headquarters of the Guardia Civil every two weeks, ensuring that information about his whereabouts was constantly collected. Ganchegui's 'conditional liberty' ensured that he was unable to return to his family and his local spiritual community in Guipúzcoa until 1947, some ten years after his trial.<sup>160</sup> For a short period, the Basque chaplain Julio Ugarte was confined to the city of Toledo upon his release whilst his fellow clergyman Nazario Sarasola – who had been denounced in 1937 by several members of his local community in Lekeitio (Vizcaya) as an 'enemy of the new Spain' – was forced into internal exile in Almería.<sup>161</sup> This was perhaps the most obvious difference in punishment of Basque priests, for although in many respects Basque priests were being punished for their alternative Catholicisms for exactly the same reasons as other dissident priests (and indeed dissenting lay Catholics), the impact of the sometimes complicating issue of nationalism was perhaps clearest in this internal exile.<sup>162</sup>

Beginning with the wartime targeting of Basque churchmen led by Lauzurica and reaching its logical conclusion in post-war exiles, there were few parallels in this process for non-Basque priests. Régulo Martínez Sánchez was allowed to return to

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<sup>159</sup> Pedro Barruso Barés, 'La represión en las zonas republicana y franquista del País Vasco durante la Guerra Civil', *Historia Contemporanea*, 35, 2007, p. 673 and Barruso, 'La represión del clero diocesano guipuzcoano durante la guerra civil', *Actas del Congreso Internacional 1936-1939, La Guerra Civil Española*, Madrid, 2009, p. 19

<sup>160</sup> Barruso, 'La represión', p. 19; Andrés-Gallego and Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá, II*, 2-323; Conxita Mir, *Vivir es sobrevivir. Justicia, orden y marginación en la Cataluña rural de posguerra*, (Lleida, Ed. Milenio, 2000), p. 41 gives another example of how this process worked at the local level

<sup>161</sup> Ugarte, *Odisea en cinco tiempos*, p. 182; Ferreiro Currás, *Consejos de guerra contra el clero vasco*, p. 235

<sup>162</sup> Espinosa, 'Sobre la represión franquista', pp. 67-71

Madrid and – whilst still physically isolated in the claustrophobic conservative heartlands of the new Francoist state – the ‘militia priest’ Cándido Nogueras was sent to the Huescan parish of Santa Engracia. Only a few miles from Broto, where he had lived (and fought) during the war, the diocese was, nevertheless, presided over by the conservative Bishop of Huesca, who had refused to pardon Nogueras throughout three years of regular correspondence and repeated requests from the incarcerated priest.<sup>163</sup>

The decision to confine prisoners to a specific location (confinamento) was decided by prison authorities in the first instance, then by national authorities supplemented crucially by local boards always containing a priest.<sup>164</sup> As the historian Peter Anderson has convincingly shown, these local authorities were often considerably more vindictive than the national authorities.<sup>165</sup> Under the constant eye of the regime – constructed through a network of perpetrators and collaborators – the climate of fear for these priests was claustrophobic, working to remind them daily of their exclusion and defeat long after their release from Carmona.<sup>166</sup> The purpose of this was to observe the ‘social and political behaviour of those who are subject to probation under the decrees of pardon granted to those who were convicted as a result of the Marxist subversion and military courts during the duration of the sentences set out in the respective judgments, or where appropriate, in the review of the same.’<sup>167</sup> Confining clerical prisoners to certain locations, with surveillance and perustration conducted by a conservative ecclesiastical hierarchy, ensured that information was collected regarding the behaviours ‘of those who are in probation during the time they remain in this situation, i.e. to fulfil their remaining conviction.’<sup>168</sup>

Collecting and transmitting that information about the priests (and other inmates) freed under the terms of *libertad vigilada* circulated in two directions: from

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<sup>163</sup> Marco Sola, ‘Cándido Nogueras’, p. 217

<sup>164</sup> Cenarro, ‘La institucionalización del universo penitenciario franquista’, pp. 137-8

<sup>165</sup> Anderson, *Francoist Military Trials*, pp. 127-31; Rufina Balbás, *Testimony of the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist Dictatorship*, (San Diego: University of California Press, 2008): Balbás was forced to move to Madrid to seek work after the local priest, whose brother was the local Falange head, denied subsidy to her family following her father’s arrest and execution in Burgos during the war.

<sup>166</sup> For the fear and suspicion this atmosphere generated see for instance Miguel Durán Pastor, *Sicut Oculi, Vigilantes y vigilados en la Mallorca de la posguerra, 1941-1945*, (Palma de Mallorca: Miquel Font, 1992); Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez, *Fear and Progress; Ordinary Lives in Franco’s Spain, 1939-1975*, (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), pp. 18-9

<sup>167</sup> *Redención. Órgano del Patronato para la Redención de Penas por el Trabajo*, 8 July 1944

<sup>168</sup> *Redención*, 9 September 1943 and 8 July 1944



Francoist authorities to the local population, and from those local populations back to the authorities, most commonly through the networks of the Servicio de Libertad Vigilada, but also through extensive civic, ecclesiastical and military power structures.<sup>169</sup> The local population were aware of the arrival of these priests, the Catholic communities in which they were housed knew when and what to report, thus bringing them all closer to the Francoist political ideal in a society that was already extensively mobilised politically. Just as in the collecting of information on these priests before their trials, local populations provided crucial surveillance that brought them into Francoist society and at the same time excluded those being ‘watched’.<sup>170</sup> As Peter Holquist makes clear in his analysis of surveillance in Soviet Russia, this was an instrumental endeavour, aimed at reshaping society and transforming every individual in it.<sup>171</sup> For those priests still under the watchful eye of Francoism, the stifling presence and surveillance of the ecclesiastic hierarchy – and the version of Catholicism they had rejected completely – controlled every aspect of their daily lives. And it was only as part of this larger project of transforming each and every individual that ‘surveillance was used to recognise the recalcitrant (so they could be singled out for special attention) and, later, to identify those impervious to improvement (so they could be eliminated and no longer pollute the body politic).’<sup>172</sup>

Conditional liberty thus functioned as the ultimate quarantine within Francoist society, extending the grip of incarceration far beyond the walls of Spain’s cramped and overcrowded gaols. It did not matter whether the state was surveilling those on conditional liberty at all times (it did not need to), those subjected to its gaze knew that surveillance was instrumental, was being used to construct a certain form of society, and they knew (though how extensively most could not guess) that, through surveillance, the state was not only reporting and collecting reports on what they said and did, but was also seeking to use this information against them where necessary.<sup>173</sup> That constant gaze created an atmosphere all the more fraught for its victims, who

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<sup>169</sup> Gómez Bravo, “Loving the Punished”, p. 149

<sup>170</sup> Cazorla-Sánchez, ‘Dictatorship from Below’, pp. 882-901, Peter Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials*, pp. 123-7

<sup>171</sup> Peter Holquist, “‘Information is the Alpha and Omega of our Work’: Bolshevik Surveillance in its Pan-European Context”, *The Journal of Modern History*, 69(3), 1997, pp. 415-50

<sup>172</sup> Holquist, “Information is the Alpha and Omega”, pp. 448-9

<sup>173</sup> Peter Anderson, ‘Singling out Victims: Denunciation and Collusion in the post-Civil War Francoist Repression in Spain, 1939–45’, *European History Quarterly*, 39(1), 2009, pp. 7-26

lived in the knowledge that this was surveillance too by the local society – so returning us to the many ways in which the state mobilised society at grass roots, and how interests within local society likewise used the state to achieve their own purposes, which were often political too, if sometimes in more diffuse ways.<sup>174</sup>

The vast reach of the repressive system constructed by Francoist authorities and supporters ensured that priests on parole remained within the gaze of the ‘immense prison’ that Spain had become. Shortly after his release from prison in late February 1944, Régulo Martínez Sánchez returned to Madrid. Arriving back in Spain’s capital for the first time since the end of the war, the priest quickly set about contacting old colleagues and friends, many of whom had been members of republican political parties including the IR, the PSOE and the anarchist CNT.<sup>175</sup> Personal networks like these were often the only way in which released prisoners could take the first steps on the road to survival within Francoist Spain, to find shelter and future employment, but for Régulo Martínez Sánchez this was something different. He did not want to be a part of that Spain – he had fought for a Republican project that offered bread and olive oil to the poor, a tangible marker of the potential for a plural, open future – even if massive war-weariness had encouraged him to work towards negotiation from the bleak winter of 1938. But with his worst fears realised, together with his wartime friends and comrades, these radical, sometimes revolutionary, political associates from wartime Madrid formed the clandestine Alianza Nacional de Fuerzas Democráticas (ANFD) in October 1944.<sup>176</sup> In a bid to construct as wide an anti-Francoist network as possible, the umbrella ANFD incorporated individuals and organisations from across the political spectrum, including the monarchist General Antonio Aranda, who had been decorated (and indeed promoted to General) by the military rebels during the civil war.<sup>177</sup> Though the Alianza was to play a crucial role in, constructing embryonic links between left-wing political parties and dissident monarchists, particularly after the end of the Second

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<sup>174</sup> Cazorla-Sánchez, ‘Dictatorship from Below’, pp. 889-95; Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials*, p. 59. The deference of regulatory and repressive duties more widely to include state citizens is addressed by Louis Althusser, ‘Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d’État’, *La Pensée*, 151, 1970

<sup>175</sup> Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, p. 155

<sup>176</sup> Ángel Herrerín López, ‘Los anarcomonárquicos. La opción monárquica en la CNT’, *Historia y Política*, 11, pp. 199-222, p. 200; Martínez Sánchez, *Republicanos de catacumbas*, pp. 115-21

<sup>177</sup> Javier Tusell, *La oposición democrática al franquismo 1939-1962*, (Barcelona, Planeta, 1977), pp. 152-61

World War, they would do so without the involvement of Martínez Sánchez. Arrested in December 1944, not long after General Aranda, the priest was transferred to a prison near to Guadalajara and, tortured physically and psychologically, was held in prison for two years before he was eventually tried again in January 1947.<sup>178</sup>

It was clear that Martínez Sánchez had never escaped the vast surveillance and repression deployed by the Francoist regime and its supporters after the end of the war, its mechanisms aimed directly at eradicating the dissident political options the priest represented. But more importantly, the priest's arrest indicated publicly that the war was over for no-one, as conflicts between the nascent Francoist state and its opponents remained live. In this struggle, Régulo was certainly not the only priest to work against the Francoist regime long after the final collapse of Republican governmental resistance in 1939. Also in this ongoing struggle was the former parish priest of Huelma (Jaén), Amable Donoso García, a one-time cellmate of Martínez Sánchez.<sup>179</sup> Having worked for the PCE throughout the war, moving first from Huelma to Madrid, Donoso had come to play a pivotal role in the capital's communist party organisation: working first as a librarian for the PCE/JSU, organising literary and educational materials to be sent to the front, and then as a teacher first at the Escuela de Cuadros del Comité Provincial de Madrid and then in military training schools Alicante, and Valencia. From there, Donoso moved with government officials to Barcelona in February 1938 for a number of months before returning to Valencia.<sup>180</sup>

By this time, Donoso had acquired major responsibilities within the PCE and spent much of the last year of the war acting as a crucial commutative channel between Valencia and Madrid, arriving in the demoralised, hungry capital when the final collapse of Republican resistance was detonated by the Casado-led National Defence Council (which of course, included Martínez Sánchez). Sparking off what was, in effect, a civil war against the communist party, the Junta brought the city's defences crashing down, and the desperate escape of communist leaders from the capital. Leaders including José Cazorla, the civil governor, and his chief of police Ramón Torrecilla managed to escape the slaughter, but Donoso remained, even amidst

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<sup>178</sup> Australian Associated Press (AAP), Madrid, 12 January 1947

<sup>179</sup> Archivo del Tribunal Territorial Primero (ATTP), proceso. 48924; CDMH, Tribunal Especial para la Represión de la Masonería y el Comunismo (TERMC) 16656, sumario. 160-46-C

<sup>180</sup> ATTP, 48924; TERMC, 16656, 160-46-C

the explosion of the PCE. And as PCE leaders including Enrique Sánchez, Alejandrino González Venero, José Luis García, Carmen Barrero Aguado and the playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo sought desperately to form a new leadership committee within the city, Donoso joined them.<sup>181</sup> It was a crucial position for a former parish priest and his key role was confirmed as, unable to reach a ship at Alicante, Cazorla and Torrecilla returned to Madrid: it was Donoso, alongside Enrique Sánchez, who first met with the pair in the city's Retiro park.<sup>182</sup>

Donoso was one of only a handful of people who knew the pair of PCE cadres had returned to the capital and, having already worked for several months trying to reconstruct those clandestine networks of the PCE, together these men began to organise the reconstitution of the capital city's communist cells in utmost secrecy.<sup>183</sup> They were to work closely with Matilde Landa as head of the Provincial Committee in Madrid and, within weeks, steps had been initiated to constitute the first delegation of the Central Committee of the PCE in hiding.<sup>184</sup> It was a striking transformation for Donoso, a priest whose political activism and radical politics had drawn attention and suspicion in the revolutionary ferment of 1936 Madrid. From there, Donoso had been catapulted into ever expanding duties and responsibilities within the communist party that had provided him not only with food and shelter, but consolidation and belief in a shared goal. It was a continued commitment to that shared goal, chiming practically with his own social motivations that saw him rise to become a key architect in the reconstruction of the clandestine PCE after May 1939.<sup>185</sup>

But his involvement in the centre of those efforts and his own, personal war effort, would soon come crashing down. As the new Francoist state extended its stranglehold over the city, supported not least by the collaboration of former fifth

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<sup>181</sup> Carlos Fernández Rodríguez, *Madrid Clandestino: La reestructuración del PCE, 1939-1945*, (Fundación Domingo Malagón: Madrid, 2002), p. 377

<sup>182</sup> Fernández Rodríguez, *Madrid Clandestino*, p. 78

<sup>183</sup> Carlos Fernández Rodríguez, 'Madrid, ciudad clandestina', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 24, 2004, pp. 127-8. As Helen Graham notes, 'earlier in March, the Comintern supremo Togliatti, on his own authority (given the whole of the centre-south zone was *incomunicado*), had sent an emissary to Madrid instructing the PCE there to treat with Casado in order to allow party cadres space and time to prepare for the clandestine phase to follow the imminent defeat', 'Casado's Ghosts', p. 273

<sup>184</sup> Fernández Rodríguez, *Madrid Clandestino*, pp. 377-8; Fernández Rodríguez, 'Madrid, ciudad clandestina', p. 128

<sup>185</sup> ATTP, 48924 and TERMC, 16656, 160-46-C for information gathered by Francoist authorities regarding Donoso's various functions within the PCE

columnists, Donoso and almost all his colleagues involved in the reconstruction of the PCE in Madrid were arrested, including Sánchez, Juan Fonseca and Alejandro González between July and September 1939.<sup>186</sup> Cazorla and Torrecilla were also captured in August 1939 and interrogated under torture.<sup>187</sup> Donoso was tried alongside ten others, including Sánchez, Fonseca and González under the Law for the Repression of Freemasonry and Communism, a law with an ‘impossibly high threshold for an acquittal’ and a likelihood of a death sentence that ‘reflected the regime’s conception of the nebulous power of the “Masonic-communist” conspiracy.’<sup>188</sup> Sánchez, Fonseca and González were sentenced to execution on 16 January 1940, as were Cazorla and Torrecilla, and that they were tried separately on the same day says much about the speed with which their guilt was ascertained.<sup>189</sup>

Donoso meanwhile received thirty years’ imprisonment, quite why he had avoided a death sentence remains unclear.<sup>190</sup> But in that tense atmosphere of secrecy and fear within which Donoso had operated, his escape from execution and subsequent return to the priesthood once in prison might have led many communist cadres to believe Donoso had been a fifth columnist all along. Even withstanding the very high wastage in the PCE in the immediate postwar years, both as a result of the PCE’s profligacy with its front-line militants and the efforts of Francoist authorities to dismantle the party’s clandestine networks, it is not difficult to see the ease with which individuals could be targeted and singled out in an atmosphere in which rumours spread like wildfire, of accusations and counteraccusations of conspiracy and mutual betrayal.<sup>191</sup> The extent to which the painfully recent memory of the Casado coup (and how the party had harboured an ‘enemy within’) underlay the targeting of Donoso in particular as a ‘traitor’ remains speculative. But there is no doubt that what happened in Madrid in March 1939 remained poisonous long after; the impact of the

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<sup>186</sup> Fernández Rodríguez, *Madrid Clandestino*, p. 82

<sup>187</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 477

<sup>188</sup> Ruiz, *Franco’s Justice*, p. 205

<sup>189</sup> ATTP, 48924 for Sánchez, Fonseca and González; AHN, FC-Causa General, 1525, Pieza 2, Exp. 5, pp. 1-39 for further information on Cazorla

<sup>190</sup> ATTP, 48924; TERMC, 16656, 160-46-C

<sup>191</sup> Fernández Rodríguez, ‘Madrid, ciudad clandestina’, p. 141; Graham, ‘Casado’s Ghosts’, p. 277 for the profligacy of the PCE

Casado coup would continue to make itself felt during the PCE's years of clandestinity under Franco.<sup>192</sup>

Though the priest was blamed by many, it seems that real cause of the arrests was the confession under torture of the JSU leader Sinesio Cavada Guisado.<sup>193</sup> Of course, confessions obtained under torture extracted a heavy price from those who had not been able to resist the constant beatings, torture and psychological abuse. There were many cases where prisoners gave in and confessed to something they had or had not done or, worse still, became informers.<sup>194</sup> But confession certainly did not always necessarily also mean the work of traitors: for those who knew they had delivered their peers to Francoism, the torment was often unbearable.<sup>195</sup> This was in itself part of the grip of Francoism – the brutal sculpting of a national community that was shaped through structures and mechanisms of violence that reached far beyond physical repression and incarceration, the pain of which too lasted far beyond the immediate.

As Helen Graham makes clear, building on the formulation put forward by Hannah Arendt, the Francoist state 'used the civil death of incarceration' as part of the assertion of control and the construction of a circumscribed political community through 'purification.'<sup>196</sup> Outside of this political community stood those ideas anathema to the war waged by Francoism, crucially including alternative understandings of Catholicism. In the Francoist crusade to 're-Christianise Spain' then, there was 'a political dream of the plague, which was exactly its reverse: not of the collective festival, but strict divisions; not laws transgressed, but the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power.'<sup>197</sup> Thus open and

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<sup>192</sup> Graham, 'Casado's Ghosts', pp. 276-8

<sup>193</sup> Fernández Rodríguez, *Madrid Clandestino*, p. 82

<sup>194</sup> These fears are discussed throughout Tomasa Cuevas, *Testimonios de mujeres*, with a particular focus on the experience of Matilde Landa, who worked closely with both Amable Donoso and Enrique Sánchez until their subsequent arrests, pp. 350-2, 446-9

<sup>195</sup> Many prisoners turned to suicide, and as Michael Richards suggests in more general terms 'under conditions of the most barbarous torture, suicide was often both a release and perhaps a final protest against the regime', *A Time of Silence: Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain 1936-1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 11; Gómez Bravo notes too that 'the suicide rate rose particularly before or shortly after prisoners were placed on trial in military courts or when prisoners were subject to close police investigation', "'Loving the Punished'", p. 146

<sup>196</sup> Graham, *War and its Shadow*, p. 116

<sup>197</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 197

tolerant forms of Catholicism – those that challenged the conservative, patrician formulation constructed and demanded by the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy – joined Judaism, Masonry, liberalism, communism and separatism, and had to be quarantined and purged from the new Francoist society under construction.

## Conclusions

*'...the war which the Spanish people had to sustain from 1936 to 1939 was in no sense a civil war, but a war of liberation of the patriotic soil from its domination by a foreign power and, at the same time, a crusade in defence of the Catholic faith which this atheist power sought to eradicate.'*<sup>1</sup>

Luis Carrero Blanco, January 1964

On 1 April 1964, twenty-five years after Franco had declared that 'the Red Army has been captured and disarmed...the war has ended', military dignitaries, political authorities and the ecclesiastical hierarchy joined together to hear Te Deums to the glory of the regime at the Valle de los Caídos.<sup>2</sup> This liturgical spectacle was the first, dramatic event in a highly choreographed, nationwide campaign ostensibly commemorating a quarter of a century of peace. But far from this, Franco's 'Twenty-Five Years of Peace' marked a celebration of victory. All across Spain, in every town and village, the war was proclaimed as a religious crusade that had saved Spain from the 'atheistic hordes of the left'.<sup>3</sup>

The intermingling of religious and political ceremony confirmed that the Franco regime had restored the alliance of throne and altar, upon which was founded a new, distinctly modern dictatorship. The fundamental result on the institutional Church was the construction of an official discourse which identified religion as a Catholic traditionalist monopoly, and placed it at the heart of the Francoist dictatorship's vast nation-building effort. By the twenty-fifth anniversary of the final collapse of Republican resistance, the pre-war fears that had driven the July 1936 rebellion had become post-war myths, consolidating and strengthening the bonds

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<sup>1</sup> Luis Carrero Blanco, *Discursos y escritos, 1943-1973*, (Madrid, 1974), p. 102, quoted in Michael Richards, *After the civil war: Making memory and re-making Spain since 1936*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 190

<sup>2</sup> Franco's 1 April 1939 communique, quoted in Paloma Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia: The role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2008), p. 112

<sup>3</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, p. 517



between the dictatorship and its core supporters, and functioning to legitimise both the Francoist repression and the regime itself through the narrative of the ‘crusade’.<sup>4</sup>

Although the very concept of a ‘crusade’ predated the military rebellion and the civil war it provoked, widespread anticlerical violence in territory that did not fall immediately to the rebels after July 1936 played into the hands of all those seeking to portray the Republic as a demonic, atheistic government that persecuted religion. This anticlerical violence emboldened the ecclesiastical hierarchy in its already established support for the rebels and provided a reductionist narrative behind which a host of anti-republican social constituencies could mobilise. The ‘martyrs’ of the ‘persecuted Church’ were at the heart of the mythicised narrative of the Civil War’s meaning constructed by the Church and the Franco regime. This narrative ignored the fact that many priests had actually been able to survive the anticlerical violence in the Republican zone.

Building upon recent scholarship that correctly understands this anticlerical violence as a historical phenomenon that was heterogeneous, rational and often based upon political logics grounded in daily experiences, the first chapter of this thesis explored the selectivity of such violence. In many cases, individual priests who had not come into conflict with members of their local community, or who otherwise had no history of conservative political militancy, were often protected in the aftermath of the coup. Their safety was ensured by a variety of local townspeople, newly created local militia groups, village and neighbourhood committees, previously existing unions and political organisations, and still existent yet fragmented governmental authorities, many of which held differing understandings of the forms and functions of this violence. Whilst some elderly priests were left unharmed by virtue of their advanced years, or because of illness, the survival of many of the priests explored in this thesis can be directly linked to their dedication to intensive pastoral activity amongst Spain’s working classes.

The existence of such priests and lay Catholics, and their lives and experiences during wartime, are evidence of forms and practices of a more complex, heterogeneous Catholic world which existed long before the war. Celebrating the

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<sup>4</sup> Anderson, ‘In the Name of the Martyrs’, pp. 355–70

birth of Spain's first real democratic system in 1931, many of these priests and devout lay Catholics saw liberalism and socialism (and anticlericalism) as artefacts of a new political modernity requiring constructive engagement, believing that the construction of democracy in Spain should be inspired by the universal values of the gospel. Championing modern, progressive Catholic thought, born of their own lives and chiming with initiatives underway all across Europe, these individuals found spaces for such alternative forms of Catholicism severely restricted in Spain. Attempts to redefine popular understandings of Catholicism – to present their own alternative understandings of their faith as spiritually and practically concomitant with the lives and needs of Spain's working classes – were hampered by the daily realities of what remained, despite its new political system, a vastly unevenly developed country. Even before the outbreaks of anticlerical violence in the summer of 1936, narrowing and polarising options had closed down the spaces in which such Catholics could interpret their place in the Republic. This was true even where such understandings of Catholicism found popular support, not least in the specifically complicated cases of the Basque Country and particularly Catalonia, and where the vast divide between rural and urban experiences of life in Spain remained a more significant obstacle to social and political integration than differing readings of Catholicism.

This thesis has focused directly upon the lived experiences of a number of such priests and lay Catholics who, driven by their faith, remained loyal to the Republic or otherwise refused to identify with the rebel cause during the civil war. It examines not just the thoughts and actions that guided and shaped their participation in the wartime Republic, but also too the physical and psychological costs borne of the searing experience of civil war. Chapter two has sought to demonstrate that, beyond the nightmarish months of anticlerical violence, never forgotten by the Spanish Church in its war narrative of 'martyrs and barbarians', some priests sought to construct an alternative narrative of the civil war. In doing so, these individuals sought to make public their commitment to the Republic as naturally and intrinsically linked to their Catholic faith, represented through the tropes of a mental universe shared and understood by many more Catholics across Spain. Of central importance to their work, and a focus that has been repeated throughout this thesis, is the idea of Jesus as the 'first socialist', an egalitarian hero-figure seeking progressive, utopian

change – far removed from the intransigent absolutism of the contemporary Church. In that image, Jesus stood side by side ‘with the people’ and, echoing those in the Republic who called for the formation of a new, reforming and modernising nation comprised ‘of the people’, the resonances were obvious. Such frameworks of meaning represented a direct challenge to the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s message and reached a mass citizen audience, through newspapers, radio and targeted propaganda campaigns, whether they were committed republican supporters, political activists or those with scant earlier political motivations or none, or Catholics who were sheltering from violence in hiding or those able to move about more freely.

As chapter three explored, such alternative narratives of the civil war threatened the very foundations upon which the failed rebel war effort had been transformed into a popular ‘crusade’. It was as a direct consequence of growing international discomfort at the rebel war effort – the controversy and outrage over the destruction of Guernica in April 1937 dramatically accelerating such processes – that on 1 July 1937 the Spanish Episcopate published their collective pastoral letter to the world. Although the letter argued that the rebels had taken up arms to ‘save religious principles’ from those set on the ‘elimination of Catholicism in Spain’ it was far from a measured response to the anticlerical violence that had occurred in Republican territory during the first months of the war. Instead, the letter was wielded as a weapon in defence of an authoritarian Catholic political world, targeted centrally at combating hostility to the rebel war effort from the international press and confirming the Church’s political role and its subservience to the Francoist state under construction.

In response, Catholics across the Republic sought immediately to challenge the narrative of the conflict laid out in the collective pastoral. Building upon those efforts explored in chapter two, their challenge to the ecclesiastical hierarchy was aided immeasurably by the growing realisation, over the previous months, that many Catholics in rebel-held territory had faced imprisonment, torture and execution beneath the carapace of the ‘crusade’. As the war itself was transformed, understandings of its boundaries were subtly (and sometimes less so) reshaped in the minds of many of its protagonists. Rebel violence consequently became an important shaper of identity and responses amongst Catholics not only to the war, but their

place in the Republic. Some of these Catholics, far removed from liberal and progressive strands of Catholicism during the preceding years, found new places in a world that no longer seemed certain.

As the Church hierarchy continued to justify the rebel war effort as necessary to reconquer Spain ‘for religion, for the fatherland and for civilisation’, the Republic it had portrayed as ‘without God and against God’ continued to make concerted and continuous attempts to reconstruct the fabric of its democracy. The fourth chapter of this thesis has analysed these processes, through explorations of the linkages between government, policy intentions on the ground, and the daily experiences of people across the Republic, including priests and lay Catholics who took on active roles in such efforts. Building upon a picture first explored in chapter two, growing numbers of Catholics renegotiated their own ideas of what it meant to be a part of the Republic, urging on the war effort from below and often playing assiduous roles in the reconstruction of the fabric of the Republic itself. They responded to, and took new directions from their wartime government, just as that government policy was influenced by their initial efforts. Witnessing the Republic’s activism as it sought to rebuild its contract with them as citizens, the lives of these Catholics were intrinsically bound to the evolving and cumulative experience of a Republic at war.

The cumulative impact of the war was such that even for Catholics who had urged on the war effort against the rebels, warning – time and time again – of a catastrophic future under Franco, resistance had its limits. As the final chapter of this thesis indicates, the implosion of that resistance allowed for Franco’s rapid expansion and acceleration of a violent process of state building indicative of a new order of totalitarianism emergent across the continent. This remaking of Francoist society through the destruction of those who – recalling the words of General Mola in July 1936 – ‘do not think as we do,’ necessarily targeted those social constituencies who represented deviations from the integrist brand of Catholicism demanded by the rebels.

Such Catholic priests, now deemed to be ‘reds’ and ‘marxist puppets’ were targeted alongside hundreds of thousands of Republican supporters, ordinary civilians, provincial and mid-level political activists, and soldiers in this brutal

nation-building process. This violence had begun in the first days after the military coup of July 1936 and had been extended, following the final collapse of Republican resistance, to the entirety of the national territory on 1 April 1939. Driving the repression was the hatred and ideologically charged language of the Catholic crusade, urged on in a reciprocal relationship between the Francoist leadership and its grassroots supporters. If many of the priests and lay Catholics explored in this thesis had explained their support for the Republic and its supporters as being grounded in true Christian values and teachings abandoned by the institutional Church, now the Church sought to remind them that their actions had transcendental repercussions, and threatened the eternal punishment of purgatory for their ‘heretical’ dissent. Meanwhile, necessary and inexorable punishment was needed to purge Spain of these ‘sinners’ – a task that the Francoist regime had planned from the outset.<sup>5</sup>

This Francoist crusade to ‘re-Christianise Spain’ was buoyed up and legitimated by the western anti-communism of the Cold War, allowing the regime to turn publicly away from fascism, without ever abandoning its ultranationalist, repressive vision of a future Spain. The result of this repressive effort was not, however, the ideal, ‘static’, homogenous society the Francoist regime intended to construct. Spain’s was a changing society, evolving at breakneck speed as Europe-wide economic growth, impelled by post-world-war reconstruction, was given added impetus in Spain by virtue of the country’s already enormous economic stagnation.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the Francoist regime recognised the changing shape of its society and, although still tied to social and political conservatism, acknowledged that in pursuing ‘apolitical’ consumerism to secure the future survival of the dictatorship would, in time, come to necessitate a dependence more on the memories of this repressive universe than its continued deployment.<sup>7</sup>

Whilst Francoist authorities sought consolidation during the 1950s and 1960s through access to new consumerist cultures and material wealth – nevertheless still with the potential for incredible social violence – this was a new modernity that had to be engaged with on its own terms. Consumerist society seemingly promised much,

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Anderson and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco, ‘Grappling with Spain’s Dark Past’, in Anderson and del Arco (eds.), *Mass Killings and Violence in Spain*, p. 10

<sup>6</sup> Adrian Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 256-61

<sup>7</sup> Richards, *After the Civil War*, pp. 188-9

but it also brought with it inadequacies, poverty and strikes.<sup>8</sup> In Barcelona, Madrid and other expanding industrial cities, members of the clergy increasingly perceived their Catholic duty as founded in the challenges of this new modernity, and saw it as their duty to tackle the severe difficulties faced by new worker constituencies, their lives constrained as the underclass of the Francoist ‘economic miracle’.<sup>9</sup> Principally, Catholic workers’ organisations including the Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica (HOAC) and the Juventud Obrera Católica (JOC) represented mechanisms through which such radical advocacy for workers’ needs could be made.<sup>10</sup> And whilst the ecclesiastical hierarchy remained immutable in its support for the particular reading of Catholicism enshrined by the Francoist regime, the efforts of HOAC and JOC members, however small, represented a fundamental departure from such intransigence – their progressive Catholicism chiming with emergent worker constituencies and challenging the Church itself.<sup>11</sup> Crucially too, these organisations offered opposition forces a relatively safe political and physical space, independent of the state.<sup>12</sup>

This situation led to the emergence of worker-priests, members of the clergy whose lives and experiences echoed the progressive priests explored in this thesis. Committed to social justice and new forms of social order, these priests lived within and consequently understood the community life of their flocks. In May 1964, the year of Franco’s ‘Twenty-Five Years of Peace’, one such priest in the poverty-stricken town of Cieza (Murcia) spoke to almost two thousand people, declaring that Christ had been the ‘greatest communist’ in history.<sup>13</sup> If this linkage between Catholicism and radical left-wing politics echoed the claims of priests in the Republic during the 1930s, so too did a perceptive critique of Spain’s socioeconomic condition. The Jesuit priest, Ildefonso Sola, continued to inform his audience in Cieza that in Barcelona ‘200,000 people live in shacks, in subhuman conditions’,

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<sup>8</sup> Álvaro Soto Carmona, ‘Huelgas en el franquismo: causas laborales – consecuencias políticas’, *Historia Social*, 30, 1998, pp. 39-61

<sup>9</sup> Richards, *After the Civil War*, pp. 234-5

<sup>10</sup> Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 235

<sup>11</sup> Álvarez Espinosa, *Cristianos y Marxistas*, pp. 222-9, 244-6; see also Alonso, ‘Children of a Lesser God’, pp. 113-6

<sup>12</sup> Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, p. 231

<sup>13</sup> Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez, ‘Did You Hear the Sermon? Progressive Priests, Conservative Catholics, and the Return of Political and Cultural Diversity in Late Francoist Spain’, *Journal of Modern History*, 85(3), 2013, p. 546

even in spite of the vast and vertiginous economic and social changes of post-war Spain. This was a concern that Sola believed no Catholic could ignore, grateful that for the last five years Pope John XXIII had proven himself to be a pope ‘for the workers’, in stark contrast to his predecessor Pius XII, whom the priest described only as ‘the representative of aristocracy and diplomacy.’<sup>14</sup>

Just as in the 1930s, many of these priests focused their efforts on offering tangible assistance to their communities – whether through working class associations, or pamphlets, leaflets, speeches and sermons that offered comfort and consolidation in a desperate climate.<sup>15</sup> A smaller number took on more visible political roles, including individuals such as the HOAC leader Tomás Malagón, who had been a member of the PCE before being ordained as a priest in 1943.<sup>16</sup> Maintaining their devotion to their priestly vocation, such priests worked to re-interpret Catholic teaching and praxis in a world where left-wing political options continued to offer a more compelling ideology and promising political programme to Spain’s increasingly-urban working classes.<sup>17</sup> In a recent article exploring the extent to which such priests’ sermons and actions challenged the dictatorship, the historian Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez remarks that ‘that the word democracy—even if it involved other concepts, such as social justice or the language of Liberation Theology—was first explained in positive terms to many Catholics in sermons in the 1960s and early 1970s, while they were attending what they had expected to be the traditional ritual of Mass.’<sup>18</sup> This transformation in values on behalf of representatives of the Church, Cazorla-Sánchez continues, ‘helped initially to make viable, and later to consolidate, a democratic system in Spain.’<sup>19</sup>

The political and cultural interactions of those worker priests with Spain’s changing social constituencies were indicative of much larger societal shifts away from supporting the Francoist regime and towards democratic reform, however cautious or limited. Nevertheless, understanding these worker-priests as introducing democratic, progressive concepts within a Catholic framework for the first time

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<sup>14</sup> Cazorla-Sánchez, ‘Did You Hear the Sermon?’, p. 546

<sup>15</sup> Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, pp. 230-8

<sup>16</sup> Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, p. 234

<sup>17</sup> Álvarez Espinosa, *Cristianos y Marxistas*, pp. 244-5, 321-30

<sup>18</sup> Cazorla-Sánchez, ‘Did You Hear the Sermon?’, p. 557

<sup>19</sup> Cazorla-Sánchez, ‘Did You Hear the Sermon?’, p. 557

conceals the existence of the complex, heterogeneous Catholic world which existed before and during the Spanish Civil War. As this thesis has argued, that world had been closed down through the vast repressive architecture of the Francoist regime, through brutal killings, psychological and physical torture, imprisonment, starvation and exile. So whilst the focus on worker-priests may illustrate the emergence of oppositional currents within the Church amidst the much wider fragmentation of the dictatorship, revealed at the same time is the survival of what might be termed sociological Francoism, and with it the overwhelming silences surrounding the history of the Republic, through the transition to democracy and beyond, its grasp extending well into contemporary Spain.

Whilst singularly evident in the enduring opposition from conservative sectors to the excavation of mass graves in order to identify the extra-judicially murdered, that same 'afterlife of violence' permeates the lives and memory of the priests and lay Catholics explored throughout this thesis. Their daring to support, work, fight (and sometimes die) for the Republic and the democratic, equalising changes it promised, ensured that their lives and experiences became intertwined in its silent fate.



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