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Was There a Resistance Fascism?

Narratives about Falange's Place in the Franco Regime

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Abstract

Is it possible to identify traces of dissent or even resistance to Francoism within a single fascist party? Can there be elements of radical opposition within fascism in its long duration? This article's discussion of this question, centered on the Spanish Falange's case, will focus on two main topics that define the parameters of historiographical discussion of an idealized ('authentic', 'pure', 'uncontaminated', 'rebellious') fascism that may also be useful for interpreting and establishing comparisons with other contexts. The first of these topics is the mythification of fascism's original authenticity and the second is the preeminence of Franco's providentialist leadership and how it explicitly demonstrates his *de facto* importance in the construction of the dictatorial regime as a fascist regime through the exercise of power.

Keywords

Spain – Fascism – Falange – Francoism – providentialism – resistance

Fascism is a form of armed counterrevolution and a way of organizing the State as an organic projection of the hierarchized national community that

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is characteristic of interwar Europe. All fascisms have had an internal debate about purity and contamination, essence and hybridization, intransigence and coalition-building with other counter-revolutionary, authoritarian and nationalistic formations.[1] The debate about fascism and fascistization continues today and exists in multiple geographical contexts. In Spain, one interpretation of how the Franco regime was constructed holds that the original Falange, which was rhetorically revolutionary and aligned with the interests of the working class, became, over time, an element of internal political dissidence within the regime itself, despite constituting the regime itself.[2] The historiography has always accorded a certain amount of space to this interpretation. Recently, some transnational research has been done in order to distinguish fascists from other counterrevolutionary agents, concluding that, in the Spanish case, the Francoist regime was not the direct offspring of Falange.[3] This is the debate this article seeks to address.

It is not necessary to enter into the lengthy debate about what does or does not constitute fascism, nor will this article address the question of how the Franco regime in Spain ought to be described. Readers are thoroughly familiar with the existing historiographical debates, both within Spain and among international scholars, and have long taken the side of those who consider it a form of fascism that was implemented at least until the end of the 1940s, subsequently becoming a post-fascist technocratic and development-focused dictatorship of a providentialist nature. Accepting the fascistization thesis, which understands Spanish fascism as the result of a process of synthesis of the different counterrevolutionary political traditions that converged during the civil war under the ideological frame of Falangism,[4] there will be no further discussion of this question in the following pages. What is of interest here is a question that has emerged in recent debates in Spain with regard to fascism as a single-

1 António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis, 'Introduction,' in *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1–10.

2 As an example, at the end of 1951, the philosopher Manuel Sacristán, in a very direct allusion to the regime, recalled the last words of José Antonio expressing his fear that 'a false conservative fascism' could be implanted in Spain. In Manuel Sacristán, 'Un mes en Barcelona (noviembre de 1951),' *Laye* 16 (1951): 45.

3 Ismael Saz, Zira Box, Toni Morant and Julián Sanz, 'Introduction,' in *Reactionary Nationalists, Fascists and Dictatorships in the Twentieth Century* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 1–27.

4 For an overview of this interpretation, see: Ferran Gallego and Francisco Morente, 'The Peculiarities of Spanish Fascism,' in *The Last Survivor: Cultural and Social Projects Underlying Spanish Fascism, 1931–1975* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2017), 1–35; and Joan Pubill Brugués, 'Revolución, tradición y síntesis falangista en la construcción del Estado nacional: La fascistización como interpretación (1936–1945),' in *Posguerras civiles europeas, 1939–1950: Una historia comparada*, ed. Javier Rodrigo (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2023), 187–205.

party regime, and in particular the political nature of the single party in Spain, the Falange: is it possible to identify traces of dissent or even resistance to Francoism within the single party?

Our discussion of this question will center on two main topics that undoubtedly define the parameters of historiographical discussion of an idealized Falange that is portrayed as 'authentic', 'pure', 'uncontaminated', 'rebellious', or even dissident towards Francoism and may also be useful for interpreting and establishing comparisons with other contexts. The first of these topics is the mythification of fascism's original authenticity and the second is the preeminence of Franco's providentialist leadership and how it explicitly demonstrates his *de facto* importance in the construction of the dictatorial regime as a fascist regime through the exercise of power—and it should be stressed that fascism as it has truly existed can only be understood in the exercise of power. The fascist regime in Spain was neither exactly the same as the Italian version, nor was it copied from the German one. Nor was it identical to the collaborationist French version or the Croatian eliminationist one. But it was a sibling in the same family.

The Mythification of Authenticity: Through the Historiographical Looking-Glass

The fact that Francoism survived as a political regime after the Second World War led to the perception at the time that Falangism—when it was not being used in the first years after the Civil War—had been subordinated to an institutional structure that was not fascist. This same perception continues to be shared by some historians. The idea that the Falange was 'sacrificed' for the sake of a project whose results were far removed from the original postulates of its leaders has become a cyclical leitmotiv spanning the entire period of the dictatorship. Such rumors were nourished by certain Falangists who expressed varying degrees of disagreement with the direction that was being taken, despite doing so from within the regime and from powerful positions as ministers, subsecretaries and top officials within the fascist party, *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalistas* [FET-JONS; Traditional Spanish Falange of the Councils of the National-Syndicalist Offensive], the single party formed in 1937, during the Civil War, under Franco's providentialist leadership.

One of these men was José Antonio Girón de Velasco. In *Si la memoria no me falla* [If my memory does not deceive me], the memoirs he published in 1994, when the post-Franco Transition was fully complete, this early Falangist

admitted to disagreements with Franco. Girón wrote of an extremely tense conversation in Franco's office in which he requested that Franco order him to have executions by firing squad carried out to the cry of 'Viva Franco!' because he felt that the regime had strayed from the spirit of Falangism.[5] Girón's combative position led him to be ironically labelled 'impatient' and even 'populist', in comparison to other Falangists who were 'possibilists', as the communist writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán accurately classified them.[6]

The origin of this 'nonconformity' is said to date back to concerns that had emerged within the Falange as the result of a June 1936 circular by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in which he warned of partisan attempts to use *Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* [FE de las JONS; Spanish Falange of the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive] (the minority fascist party that resulted from the 1934 merger of his Falange and Ramiro Ledesma Ramos and Onésimo Redondo's JONS) and cautioned that the doctrinal capital of National Syndicalism might be misdirected:

> Let all comrades consider the extent to which it is offensive to the Falange that it be asked to take part as a bit player in a movement that is not going to lead to the implantation of the national syndicalist State [and] the beginning of the immense task of national reconstruction outlined in our 27 points, but rather the reinstatement of a conservative bourgeois mediocrity (of which Spain has known such lengthy examples), decorated, for greater ridicule, with the choreographic accompaniment of our blue shirts.[7]

The existence of dissident tendencies such as an 'Authentic Falange' or an 'Independent Falange', which is even said to have been determined to assassinate Franco following the party unification decree, became a 'recurring specter' in the imaginary of those who felt they had been betrayed.[8] We must be wary of *a posteriori* reconstruction of past events (which almost always embellish the author's own role). It is important to analyze the historical expressions of political processes *in illo tempore*. One example of how biased interpretation serves to justify the mirage of Falangist dissidence can be found in discussion of the 'Hedilla case', the imprisonment in Salamanca of Manuel Hedilla Larrey.

5 José Antonio Girón de Velasco, *Si la memoria no me falla* (Madrid: Planeta, 1994), 213.
6 Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, 'Y la revolución quedó pendiente,' *El País*, August 23, 1995.
7 José Antonio Primo de Rivera, 'Circular del 24 de junio de 1936,' in Francisco Bravo Martínez, *Historia de la Falange Española de las JONS* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1940), 203–204.
8 Armando Romero Cuesta, *Objetivo: Matar a Franco* (Madrid: Ed. 99, 1976).

Hedilla had helped Franco merge FE y de las JONS with the *Comunión Tradicionalista* [Traditionalist Communion] in April 1937. His abrupt dismissal by Franco after he refused to accept a position as a member of the new unified party's Political Secretariat, the two courts-martial in which he was twice sentenced to death and his subsequent imprisonment in the Canary Islands helped give rise to a legend centered on the figure of Hedilla. This legend was reactivated when he briefly returned to politics in 1968, shortly before his death two years later.[9] Hedilla was in fact something of a scapegoat not so much of Franco as of the core group of Falangists who initially fought against the party unification process but later accepted it. The propagandistic and even self-indulgent view of the Falange has not been confined to coteries of nostalgic apologists. Rather, it has managed to thoroughly permeate the historiography, to the extent that some historians have portrayed the Falangists as 'defeated victors'[10] because, with unification, 'the Falange died, and Francoism was born'.[11]

This point of view was adopted by Stanley G. Payne, the first major historian of the Falange. According to this American historian, José Luis Arrese began to bureaucratize the Party and domesticate its leadership after the Second World War, which meant straying from the original guiding principles of the Republican-era Falange.[12] Since then, an important trend in Spanish historiography tended to nuance, and even diminish, the weight of Falange in the New State. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer stated that Falangism moved between 'rebellion' and 'resignation' in the aftermath of the Second World War.[13] Moreover, the arrival of Fermín Sanz-Orrio in the Ministry of Labor in February 1957 was interpreted as the 'political neutralization' of the Falange inside the regime.[14] In turn, Alfonso Lazo Díaz stressed the rejection of 'the other family branches'

9 Joan Maria Thomàs, *El gran golpe: El 'caso Hedilla' o cómo Franco se quedó con Falange* (Barcelona: Debate, 2014).

10 On this line of interpretation, see the literature review by Julián Sanz Hoya, 'Falangismo y dictadura: Una revisión de la historiografía sobre el fascismo español,' in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Zaragoza: Instituto 'Fernando el Católico', 2013), 41–42.

11 Javier Cervera, *Madrid en Guerra: La ciudad clandestina 1936–1939* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998), 122.

12 Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923–1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 402.

13 Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, 'Falange en la penumbra: FET y de las JONS entre la rebelión y la resignación, 1945–1951,' *IV Encuentro de investigadores del franquismo* (Valencia, FEIS/Universitat de València, 1999), 257–264.

14 Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, 'La vieja savia del regimen: Cultura y práctica política de Falange,' in *La España de los cincuenta*, ed. Abdón Mateos (Madrid: Eneida, 2008), 277–304.

that composed the New State towards Falange's ambitions and ideas.[15] Some other approaches have been more critical, considering the Falange as 'an artificial structure',[16] devoid of substance, a 'disperse part, lacking unanimity',[17] even a 'sham of a fascist party', hence, a tool in the hands of local elites.[18] In short, this historiographical trend underlines the 'failure' of the fascist project to persuade the other components of the regime,[19] and the 'defeat' of those falangists who, at a time when the party was increasing, still defended a fascist state.[20]

Notably, the continued historiographical acceptance of this narrative can be seen in Mercedes Peñalba's research. Published in 2009, *Falange española: Historia de un fracaso* (*1933–1945*) [Spanish Falange: History of a failure (1933–1945)] has a title sufficiently revelatory of its author's perspective. For this Spanish historian, the postwar period marked a clear decline in the ideological influence of Spanish fascism because 'the New State was beginning to emerge, but it would no longer be the State of which the original Falange had dreamed'.[21] Echoing Payne, Peñalba makes her own assumption that the men who preceded Ramón Serrano Suñer in the position of secretary-general of the Party were docile instruments in the service of an adroit Francisco Franco. As a result, she concludes that, as José Antonio Primo de Rivera's most radical positions were being modulated and moderated, 'the true Falange, as Manuel Penella called it, came to the definitive realization that its tactics had failed and joined the ranks of the opposition. A Falangist opposition that had begun in 1937 and now welcomed a new contingent opposed to the regime.'[22]

In a recent paper, Peñalba highlighted that the tensions between traditions and groups within the regime did not respond to 'a mere political rivalry, but to a cultural resistance' in order to 'protect their identity and their customs before the excessive penetration of a State, in this case represented by Falange'. For her, 'although the existence of spaces of dissent is not a clear measure of the effec-

15 Alfonso Lazo Díaz, *Una familia mal avenida: Falange, Iglesia y Ejército* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2008), 16.

16 Roque Moreno Fonseret and Francisco Sevillano Calero, 'Los orígenes sociales del franquismo,' *Hispania: Revista Española de Historia* 60, no. 205 (2000): 703–724.

17 Ricardo Chueca, El fascismo en los comienzos del régimen de Franco: Un estudio sobre FET-JONS (Madrid: CIS, 1983), 165.

18 Glicerio Sánchez Recio, 'Líneas de investigación y debate historiográfico,' *Ayer* 33 (1999): 17–40.

19 Ismael Saz, 'El primer franquismo,' *Ayer* 36 (1999): 201–221.

20 Joan Maria Thomàs, *La Falange de Franco: Fascismo y fascistización en el régimen franquista, 1937–1945* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 2001), 33, 176, 277.

21 Mercedes Peñalba, *Falange española: Historia de un fracaso* (*1933–1945*) (Barañain: Eunsa, 2009), 323–324.

22 Peñalba, *Falange española*, 323–324.

tiveness or the importance of dissident attitudes, it is in itself a proof of their existence'.[23] Her assertion is based on a rich literature that has dealt with the confrontations and discussions between the different pillars within the Franco regime. In fact, it cannot be denied that there were different points of view, and even clashes, in essential aspects concerning the New State. The relationship with the Church was a cause of dissatisfaction between the Falangists and the rest of the Catholic agents.[24] Another major focus of discrepancy was in relation to youth and education.[25] However, these divergences are not enough nor symptomatic of any inherent antagonism between Falangism and the New State. In fact, if all the actors who contributed to the construction of the regime after the *Alzamiento* (the uprising of July 1936) were examined separately, the picture resulting of these partial analyses would be that all of the Francoist 'families' would have reasons to be 'annoyed' or 'in disagreement'.[26] Following this interpretation, one would find oneself in a paradox similar to the Schrödinger's cat: with a regime whose champions and maintainers would be at the same time its most fervent opponents.

Some authors have stressed the relevance of the Party after the civil war. Antonio Cazorla Sánchez argued that the 'weak' and 'chaotic' situation of the single party, added to the aim of many Falangists to hold office and get rid of

23 Mercedes Peñalba, 'FET y de las JONS como fuente de disenso en el Franquismo a la luz del concepto *Resistenz*,' *Ayer* 126, no. 2 (2022): 79–105.

24 Alfonso Lazo Díaz, *La Iglesia, la Falange y el fascismo* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1995); Julián Sanz Hoya, 'Catolicismo y anticlericalismo en la prensa falangista de posguerra,' in *El franquismo, el régimen y la oposición: actas de las IV Jornadas de Castilla La Mancha sobre Investigación en Archivos, Guadalajara, 912 de noviembre de 1999* (Madrid: Confederación de Asociaciones de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios, Museólogos y Documentalistas, ANABAD, 2000), 907–924.

25 Ángela Cenarro Lagunas, 'Encuadramiento y consenso en la obra del Movimiento: mujeres, jóvenes, obreros,' in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Zaragoza: Instituto 'Fernando El Católico', 2013), 199–216.

26 The same logic could be applied to Carlism, whose disagreements with the *Caudillo* and other Francoist agents were not minor and even led to form dissident groups during the dictatorship: Mercedes Vázquez de Prada and Francisco Javier Caspistegui, 'Del Dios, Patria, Rey al socialismo autogestionario: Fragmentación ideológica y ocaso del carlismo entre el Franquismo y la transición,' in *Historia de la transición y consolidación democrática en España (1975–1986)*, eds. Javier Tusell and Álvaro Soto (Madrid: UNED, 1995), 309–329; Josep Carles Clemente, *El carlismo contra Franco* (Barcelona: Flor del Viento, 2003); Mercedes Vázquez de Prada, 'El nuevo rumbo político del carlismo hacia la colaboración con el régimen (1955–1956),' *Hispania: Revista Española de Historia* 69, no. 231 (2009): 179–208; Manuel Martorell, *Retorno a la lealtad: El desafío carlista al Franquismo* (Madrid: Actas, 2010).

Ramón Serrano Súñer, whom they considered an arriviste and whose popularity was disastrous, led to 'the Falange fit[ting] into a subordinate, but central position, within the political balance of the New State'.[27] Examining the evolution of Falange in Cantabria, Julián Sanz emphasized that 'the party maintained its influence in essential lines after 1945, apart from some changes in external ornaments, an ideological redefinition of a cosmetic nature and a certain momentary low profile', as part of a 'reactionary coalition'.[28] Also warning about the historiographical 'underestimation' of Falange's signature in the construction of the New State, Damián González pointed out that FET-JONS, incarnated back then in the *Movimiento* [National Movement], 'monopolized the transition' from the era of fascism to the postwar period, becoming not just 'another family', but a 'structure of power'.[29] In this regard, the aim of this article is to go a step further in the position that the Falange could not be an element of opposition to the regime for two main reasons: firstly, because it was fully integrated into the institutional and political system of the regime itself due to its nature as an estuary of all the ideologies involved in the *Alzamiento*; secondly, because it contributed in a very relevant way to the creation of the political theory of *caudillaje* [leadership], which allowed Franco to acquire a providential, central and irreplaceable role within the regime's leadership.

Beyond the Lamentation: Falange and the Regime, an Inseparable Relation

The origins of the Falangist myth can be found in the concern about the alleged failure of the National Syndicalist project, which took the form of the boasted mantra of the 'Revolución pendiente' [Pending revolution]. This slogan was pronounced by the founder of the Falange in a speech before the *Cortes* [Spanish Parliament] in 1934 in which he called for a great national movement to implement social justice. It was again used in the turbulent spring of 1941, a period marked in red on the personal calendars of many Falangists. Although the pretext was that he had formerly been a Freemason, the move to remove Gerardo Salvador Merino from his post as head of the *Delegación Nacional de*

27 Antonio Cazorla, *Las políticas de la victoria la consolidación del nuevo Estado franquista (1938–1953)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2000), 60.

28 Julián Sanz Hoya, 'FET-JONS en Cantabria y el papel del partido único en la dictadura franquista,' *Ayer* 54 (2004): 281–303.

29 Damián González Madrid, 'La banalización de FET-JONS,' *Spagna contemporánea* 39 (2011): 7–30.

Sindicatos [National Delegation of Labor Unions] and expel him from the Party in July of that year was understood as a call to discipline. The purging of Salvador Merino turned the words pronounced by José Antonio into the slogan of a group of young Falangists who, having been born during the 'Years of Peace' (meaning after 1939), were not captivated by the work that was the result of brotherly ties forged in the bloodshed of the war and called for the strict application of Republican-era Falangist thought as students at Spanish universities in the 1950s and 1960s. They mostly belonged to small, radical fringe groups whose virulence was precisely the reason they quickly disbanded.[30] Among these intransigent groups, the *Frente de Estudiantes Sindicalistas* [Syndicalist Student Front], founded by Sigfredo Hillers de Luque and Ceferino L. Mestu Barrio in 1963, was particularly noteworthy.[31]

However, the rhetorical invocation of a pending revolution was not the exclusive domain of youth who objected to the legacy they had been left by a politically comfortable and economically well-off old guard (which was also old in sense of constituting a gerontocracy). In 1956, José Luis de Arrese, as secretary-general of the Movement (the generic name given to the ensemble of organizations, institutions and mechanisms that made up the Franco regime), expressed his discontent before a large audience at the Teatro Calderón in Valladolid: 'If we Falangists are unsatisfied', he declared, 'it is because many of our revolutionary ambitions remain to be achieved and because in the society that surrounds us there is much that is unjust and dirty'.[32] These words, clearly militant in tone, should not be exaggerated, and much less used to lend credence to calculated misrepresentations—and certainly not to those of Arrese, who is said to have fallen to his knees before the *Generalísimo* he so idolized upon learning of his appointment as minister.[33] The history of the Francoist regime demonstrates that Falangism never ceased to hold a central position. There is a strong continuity in the goals and aspirations expressed by the Falangist top brass in speeches given from the end of the Civil War to the period after the Second World War. An examination of Falangist leaders' discourse allows

30 José Luís Rodríguez Jiménez, *Historia de la Falange Española de las JONS* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2000), 486–487.

31 Francisco Blanco Moral, 'El Frente de Estudiantes Sindicalistas: Una manifestación de la oposición al régimen de Franco,' *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, serie V: *Historia Contemporánea* 3, no. 2 (1990): 191–202.

32 José Luís de Arrese, 'Discurso pronunciado el 4 de marzo de 1956 en el Teatro Calderón de Valladolid, conmemorando la fusión de Falange Española de las JONS,' in *Obras seleccionadas: Treinta años de política* (Madrid: A. Aguado, 1966), 1120.

33 Javier Rodrigo, *Generalísimo: Las vidas de Francisco Franco, 1892–2020* (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2022).

accommodations to be seen not as circumstantial shifts but rather as evidence that Falangist ideas were being integrated into the formation of the New State.

If the tensions of the spring of 1941 had cast the pall of suspicion over the Falangists, Arrese tried to correct any partial and exclusivist discrepancies within the Falange in early 1942.[34] He made it clear that partial and partisan—meaning sectarian—interpretations of the meaning of Falange were not to be tolerated. Arrese's resounding and reiterated warnings can be seen in the speech he gave in Andalusia in the summer of 1942, in which he affirmed both his opposition to exclusion and his implacability regarding any form of disobedience.[35] In this same vein, the subsecretary of labor, Manuel Valdés Larrañaga, had insisted a few months earlier that the Movement could not be turned into a 'clan of nostalgic [men]'.[36] His speech to Galician Falangists in Vilagarcía was a warning, and his was far from an isolated voice. Arrese himself had called for a united party that was fervently at Franco's orders and had blind faith in the dictator.[37] Girón, the Spanish labor minister (May 1941-February 1957) and the FET-JONS national delegate for former combatants (August 1939–1954), was even more blunt. In mid-1942, he inveighed against political personalism around anyone other than Franco, to the point of considering any trace of factionalism within the Movement a 'major betrayal.'[38]

As Ferran Gallego has posited, what the Party 'proposed was something very different from the subordination of Falangism to the judgement of the State or resignedly agreeing to be part of a coalition.'[39] In late 1941, Girón published a piece in *Arriba*, the official organ of FET-JONS, that essentially eliminated any trace of a doubt regarding the role that the Party was to play in the New State. He vehemently stressed that no biased ideas that distorted the nature of the Falangist organization should be tolerated.[40] His words were a warn-

34 José Luís de Arrese, 'Discurso ante el VI Consejo Nacional de la Sección Femenina,' (January 12, 1942) in *Escritos y discursos* (Madrid: Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 1943), 145.

35 José Luís de Arrese, 'Discurso a las jerarquías de Andalucía,' (June 21, 1942) in *Escritos y discursos*, 157–158.

36 Manuel Valdés Larrañaga, 'Acto de conmemoración del VI aniversario de la fundación de Falange Gallega,' (March 20, 1941, Vilagarcía) *Discursos*, 1944, 65.

37 José Luís de Arrese, 'Discurso de toma de posesión,' (May 21, 1941) in *Escritos y discursos*, 92.

38 José Antonio Girón de Velasco, 'A la Falange de Jaén,' (May 1942) in *Escritos y discursos*, vol. 1 (Madrid: s.n., 1952), 155.

39 Ferran Gallego, *El evangelio fascista: La formación de la cultura política del franquismo (1930–1950)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2014), 717.

40 José Antonio Girón de Velasco, 'Falsificadores intencionados,' (*Arriba*, December 1941), in *Escritos y discursos*, vol. 1, 29.

ing to all the 'intentional falsifiers' who had tried to undermine and complicate the Party's relationship with the project of 1936 by assigning its members an antimilitarist stance. In the speech he gave upon being named secretary-general in 1941, Arrese stressed the kinship between the Party and the Army that had resulted from the blood ties forged during the war.[41] He recalled that '[t]he Falange was [the] Army in the war,' to then stress that 'the Army must be [the] Falange in peace'.[42] Thus, the crisis of the spring of 1941 did mean the marginalization of the Falange within the organizational structure of the Franco regime. Rather, it served to demonstrate that Falangism's synthetic and attractive content was the option that united the counterrevolutionary longings and aspirations of those who had taken up arms on 18 July.

The Falange's relationship with the New State must be examined in light of what Girón wrote in an article that was published in *Arriba* in the spring of 1943, titled 'La Falange en la guerra y en la victoria de España' [The Falange in Spain's war and victory]. During the conflict, the Party had not only provided the rebels with militiamen who were already armed and mobilized. It had also given the *Alzamiento* a 'tone, objectives and positive justification'.[43] The minister's description of the Falange's central role in the rebels' victory should not be seen as a self-interested arrogation. The Party was able to bring together the desires of a wide swath of ideological sectors in Spanish society because it was neither a typical political party nor a programmatic organization, but rather the only coherent solution to remedy 'the Spanish tragedy'.[44] Falangism was, as Arrese declared on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of party unification, the Truth.[45] A national truth, an essential truth, because it was not an ensemble of interests, a gathering of egoists. And this truth proved immutable, even in as difficult a year for the allies and supporters of the forces of the New Order as 1944. It was the firm conviction that Spain could only by saved by taking the Falangist route, as Arrese resolutely reaffirmed that year in his *Participación del pueblo en las tareas del Estado* [The people's participation in the tasks of the State].[46]

41 Arrese, 'Discurso de toma de posesión,' 95.

42 José Antonio Girón de Velasco, 'Ejército,' (March 1942, Madrid) in *Escritos y discursos*, vol. 1, 108.

43 José Antonio Girón de Velasco, 'La Falange en la guerra y en la victoria de España,' (April 1, 1943) in *Escritos y discursos*, vol. 1, 79.

44 José Luís de Arrese, 'Discurso-circular a los jefes provincials,' (July 18, 1941, Madrid) in *Escritos y discursos*, 115.

45 José Luís de Arrese, 'Discurso en el X aniversario de la fusión de FE y de las JONS,' (March 4, 1944, Valladolid) in *Nuevos escritos y discursos* (Madrid: Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 1945), 120.

46 José Luís de Arrese, *Participación del pueblo en las tareas del Estado* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1944), 19–20.

That the situation had changed was evident. Nevertheless, the doctrinaires and architects of the New State had to unequivocally and unhesitatingly affirm that there was not just incidental continuity between the seizure of power and the establishment of the regime. Rather, this continuity was structural and consistent with the fight against modernity. This line of argument aimed to avoid accusations of opportunism. Above all, however, it sought to cement the 'singular attitude' that Francisco Javier Conde described as 'a Christianly rational form of authority and representation.'[47] At the solemn event held in March 1943 to commemorate the unification of FE y de las JONS, Girón laid out the task at hand from that point forward. The Falangist leader claimed it was time to enter into a new phase, setting aside the forms of action employed during the years of the Second Republic, in order to achieve the objectives established during the *Alzamiento*. It was time to move from fighting to conquer the State to fashioning a regime according to National Syndicalist criteria. The National Revolution had been carried out and needed to be instituted, but without creating parallel structures or duplicating administrative organizations. The Falange needed to distance itself from actions that might lead to the reemergence of the accusations of 1941 and instead insert itself into the New State as its beacon and its basis.[48]

Falangist leaders undoubtedly had in mind moving beyond the prewar mindset that had made possible the defeat of the anti-Spain. Although violence had played a legitimizing role as the foundational act of the *Alzamiento*, the 'banishment of violence for the sake of violence and its submission, as a political force, to a norm of spirituality, patriotism and justice' was taking root in the rebels' thinking in these moments of reconstruction. These ideas were clearly laid out in an essay that José María de Areilza published in the *Revista de Estudios Políticos* in 1943. It was not a matter of rejecting a legacy, nor much less ignoring the recent past. Rather, at this moment in history it was necessary to differentiate between the 'essential' and the 'episodic', in a geopolitical context that required clarification as to the premises behind the coup d'état of July 1936. What was needed was neither evolution nor renovation. Rather, it was necessary to highlight the specificities of Spain's National Revolution. Because the Franco regime brought together 'three distinct and well-defined political groups', it had achieved 'that perfect unanimity and fusion of wills that overcame the failure of the coup d'état, transforming it into a victorious

47 Francisco Javier Conde, *Representación política y régimen español* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Subsecretaria de Educación Popular, 1945), 105.

48 José Antonio Girón de Velasco, 'En Valladolid,' in *Escritos y discursos*, vol. 1, 227.

war'.[49] These three core doctrinal groups—the Falange, Traditionalism and the monarchists of Calvo Sotelo and the magazine *Acción Española*—shared the desire to build a regime on the pillars of *Hispanidad* [Hispanicity] and Catholicism.[50]

Although the *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, organ of the *Instituto de Estudios Políticos* [Institute of Political Studies], wrote cynically of 'the annihilation of totalitarianism',[51] adapting to a situation in which fascist experiences had reached the end of their lives did not distance Falangists from their original resolve. The 'Spanish political regime' claimed to have specific traits that had been unleashed by and channeled into the events of 18 July. In a future in which the path of totalitarianism had been cut short and abandoned, it was necessary to reaffirm these specificities in order to guarantee the survival of the victory of 1939. In was in this context of survival that Conde was to write of the 'unfurling' of the singularities that made the New State not a relic of an outdated political model to be deposed, but rather the guarantor of a way of understanding history that ought to serve as an example in the future.[52] However, the acceptance of Spanish singularity did not lead to any outright condemnation or disavowal of the means and ends that had made possible the rebels' victory in the war. It was a matter of emphasizing Spain's genuine formula, which was presented unhesitatingly and without qualms as a 'Spanish totalitarianism.'[53] The goal of this intellectual operation was simple: it aimed to ensure the institutionalization of the regime and its acceptance into the geopolitical order.

The debates between 'political families' during this phase of international transition have been interpreted as a conflict, which is said to have ended in 1957 with the triumph of Catholic and conservative sectors over the early ideologues of National Syndicalism. In this fight between 'conflicting projects', the Franco regime is said to have been constructed via the incessant dialectic between 'ally-rivals': the 'fascist project' of the Falangists and the 'reactionary, nationalist project' of *Acción Española*.[54] This perspective holds that the New State was the battleground of a cultural war between two nationalist visions that, despite both being anti-liberal, were unable to reach an understanding

49 All quotes in this paragraph, in José María de Areilza, 'Lo esencial y lo episódico,' *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 11–12 (1943): 57–58.

50 Areilza, 'Lo esencial y lo episódico,' 57–58.

51 'Crónica de la política nacional,' *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 21 (1945): 181.

52 Conde, *Representación política*, 105.

53 Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, *La concepción institucional del Derecho* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1944), 18.

54 Ismael Saz, 'Mucho más que críticas políticas: El agotamiento de dos proyectos enfrentados,' *Ayer* 68, no. 4 (2007): 137–163.

due to profound differences. They worked together only temporarily and, once they had defeated the common enemy, they no longer had a cause to unite them, and disagreements surfaced. The unmistakable sign that marked the coming of a new era is said to have been the intellectual dispute between Pedro Laín Entralgo and Rafael Calvo Serer regarding 'el Ser de España' [the essence of Spain] in 1948–1949, a debate that allegedly foreshadowed the direction that would be taken nine years later.[55]

Naturally, the reality was in fact far less binary. A more thorough analysis of this question allows some hypotheses about the decline of Falangism within the Franco regime to the dismissed. The polemic regarding 'España como problema' [Spain as a problem] versus 'España sin problema' [Spain without problems], far from proving that National Syndicalism was no longer influential in the New State, and much less demonstrating the impossibility of compromise between two 'conflicting projects', in fact unreservedly evinces the dialogue that existed within the confluence that gave rise to the Movement. This dialogue was consubstantial to the synthesis of 18 July that allowed the civil war to become the process through which Spanish fascism was constituted. Because it must not be forgotten that, in the early stages of the 'synthesis' of the *Alzamiento*, when the Falange managed to emerge from the political margins, becoming the center of right-wing aspirations during the breakdown of the liberal State, Catholicism was a central part of its ideology.[56] As Francisco Morente has noted, the numerous pieces Sánchez Mazas published in *Arriba* permit a reconsideration of the 'victory of *Catholics* over *Falangists* in the fight to determine the course of education in Francoist Spain'.[57] The very syncretic nature of fascism meant that Falangism was not decorative, and certainly not a mere instrument. Rather, it was an ideological current that was vital to Victory, the founder of the Party and, therefore, of the Franco regime.

Laín Entralgo's references to the Generation of '98 must be interpreted in this light. He championed the Falange as a unifying option, recalling its role

55 On this interpretation of the 'change in direction' see: Santos Juliá, *Historias de las dos Españas* (Madrid: Taurus, 2004), 355–358; Javier Tusell, *Franco y los católicos* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1984), 283–285; Álvaro Ferrary, *El franquismo: Minorías políticas y conflictos ideológicos* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 1993); Ismael Saz Campos, *España contra España: Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003), 379–383.

56 Ferran Gallego, 'Sobre héroes y tumbas: La guerra civil y el proceso constituyente del fascismo español,' in *España en la crisis europea de entreguerras*, ed. Francisco Morente (Madrid: Los Libros de la Catarata, 2011), 249–268.

57 Francisco Morente, 'Rafael Sánchez Mazas y la esencia católica del fascismo español,' in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Zaragoza: Instituto 'Fernando el Católico', 2013), 130.

as the only valid alternative to antinational progressivism and outmoded traditionalism. Despite these biased admonitions, his criticism did not refer to a safe middle ground. Rather, it was clearly situated on a particular side, that of the right, a historically palpable position in the hot and turbulent summer of 1936.[58] In this respect, by capitalizing on this critical legacy, Laín attributed the entirety of the construction of the Franco regime to the victors altogether—to the members of the unified party and the Movement as a whole. Conversely, Calvo Serer's response proposed a more restrictive view of both Spanish history and the Spain that had emerged with the New State in 1939. His perspective clarifies the coordinates of the debate and situates them within the same political system. On one side was Falangism, which wished to operate—and continued to act—as the unifying element of the political culture of 18 July. On the other were Catholic sectors that, faced with a new global landscape, were attempting to lead the Catholicization of the New State in this new phase of institutionalization—while the majority of Falangists were, in turn, emphasizing their Catholicism and distancing themselves from defeated fascist experiences in Europe without examining the regime's foundational chapter. José Antonio Primo de Rivera's thinking became the original point of reference, the beacon of the combination of forces that had made possible the coup d'état and the organization of the New State.[59]

The existence of a Francoist formula outside the Falangist framework, while indicative of the state of turmoil that followed the war, was in fact evidence of a process of coupling. It goes without saying that we are not talking about the Party as an accessory—a 'claque', as Franco referred to Falangists on occasion in private.[60] The loss of influence attributed to the Falange was more of a negotiation of the symbiotic relationship between different adherents who found themselves in the position of reaffirming their union following the defeat of their foreign allies, with the aim of maintaining the regime's continuity. The Party and the *Caudillo* [leader] made up a 'strategic alliance'.[61] As Nicolás Sesma pointed out, 'this meant a resignation from the recent maximum pro-

58 Pedro Laín Entralgo, *España como problema* (Madrid: Seminario de problemas hispanoamericanos, 1949), 131–133.

59 Gaspar Gómez de la Serna, 'Síntesis y sectarismo en el 18 de julio,' *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 46, no. 7–8 (1949): 171–180.

60 Javier Tusell, *Franco y los católicos: La política interior española entre 1945 y 1957* (Madrid: Alianza, 1984), 402–403.

61 Francisco Morente Valero, 'Hijos de un dios menor: La Falange después de José Antonio,' in *Fascismo en España*, eds. Ferran Gallego and Francisco Morente (Barcelona: El Viejo Topo, 2005), 224.

gram, but it was coherent with the very accidental nature of its doctrine'.[62] Because the regime survived, there emerged voices within this framework of mutual support—which formed the locus of the political system that had originated from the war—that, annoyed with the direction that was being taken or particular decisions, made dramatic references to unfulfilled dreams.

It is important to emphasize that these discrepancies did not come from those outside the New State. Defascistization, understood as the explicit distancing from all positions that bore a clear resemblance to fascist ideologies beginning in late 1942, did not lead to—nor much less entail—the denaturation of the New State. This is how some historians and social scientists have incorrectly depicted it, basing their arguments on Falangists' attitude with respect to their prewar aspirations and proclamations or the idea of a 'generic fascism' that supposedly serves as a universal measurement and ontological model. All this is to say that there were no anti-fascist sectors within the National Movement, neither at the beginning nor after a political era in Europe came to an end. This distancing from premises that might provoke international condemnation in a historical context in which fascist regimes had succumbed to military force and fallen into generalized disrepute did not lead to 'the permanent frustration of *fascism as a whole*'. Rather, it caused all the political and ideological tendencies that had shaped the Franco regime to become fatigued.[63] In this situation of international isolation, unity was nonnegotiable for the survival of the regime. This is the context in which Franco's description of the Falange as 'a Movement for all Spaniards', shortly before the end of the Second World War, must be assessed.[64]

This loyalty to the legitimacy of a shared project was reiterated by all the actors who had come together in July 1936. Internal cohesion allowed them to overcome any rifts that might have threatened the gains obtained after the war—that is, if any of their views and outlooks can even be considered heterodox. Tensions arose not so much from a conflict between political projects or cultures as from a generational shift, as a younger generation that had not experienced the turmoil that led to war in adulthood burst onto the scene and called

62 Nicolás Sesma Landrin, '"La dialéctica de los puños y de las pistolas": Una aproximación a la formación de la idea de estado en el fascismo español (1931–1945),' *Historia y Política* 27 (2012): 51–82.

63 Ferran Gallego, '¿Un puente demasiado lejano? Fascismo, Falange y franquismo en la fundación y en la agonía del régimen,' in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Zaragoza: Instituto 'Fernando el Católico', 2013), 90.

64 Francisco Franco, 'No ha acabado la batalla,' (January 18, 1945) in *Textos de doctrina política: Palabras y escritos de 1945 a 1950* (Madrid: Publicaciones Españolas, 1951), 4.

for a changing of the guard.[65] It was to these 'youth who want to be original' that Laín issued a warning, advising them to make an effort to understand the past that their predecessors had built.[66] But these same cadets, these 'new second lieutenants,' were well aware that they were part of a State that had been born under highly specific conditions, based on values and ideals that they fully and unhesitatingly shared: 'We, with the firm Spanishness and substantial Christianity that we carry within, are monuments to the order created on 18 July and upheld by Franco'.[67]

Franco, Caudillo: Falangist Thought in the New State

A shared objective united the rebels who, after the failure of the coup d'état in July 1936, directed their weapons towards a fratricidal war: building a New State that would erase suffrage, participation and progress, notions that were understood as delusions that had their origins in the Enlightenment and the liberal revolutions of the nineteenth century. In *La revolución social del nacional-sindicalismo* [The revolution of national-syndicalism], which he began writing in 1936, José Luis de Arrese was particularly keen to note that the revolution in which Falangists like himself had played a leading role had been carried out to safeguard national integrity, and not to preserve a hypocritical and unjust order. The crisis of the 1930s led the Spanish right to conclude that it was necessary to categorically eliminate the liberal State, which it saw as outmoded, barren and lethal for the national body. It was in this period of agitated stagnation that the idea of the 'new man', a man of the nation, diametrically opposed to bourgeois nature, began to take shape.[68] A man who, as the Falangist Rafael Sánchez Mazas wrote in the spring of 1939, had to be 'the man of integrity that we need'.[69]

In order to be effective, the longed for and so often called for anthropological revolution needed to accompanied by a national revolution to put an end to the prevailing regime of anarchy. The war was the conducive setting, the laboratory in which to set in motion a radical extirpation of evils. The battlefield

65 Miguel Argaya Roca, *Historia de los falangistas en el franquismo* (*19 abril 1937–1 abril 1977*) (Madrid: Plataforma 2003, 2003), 70–74.

66 Pedro Laín Entralgo, 'Avisos breves a un joven ambicioso,' *Alférez*, no. 2, March 31, 1947, 8.

67 'Profesión política,' *Alférez*, no. 11, December 31, 1947, 4.

68 Joan Pubill Brugués, 'El "hombre nuevo" fascista frente a la vieja política: Crítica a la corrupción liberal-parlamentaria y génesis de la tecnocràcia,' in *La corrupción política en la España contemporània*, ed. Borja de Riquer, et al. (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2018), 615–628.

69 Rafael Sánchez Mazas, *Discurso del Sábado de Gloria* (Editora Nacional, 1939).

had been experienced as a redeeming act that implemented all the hygienist aspirations of the counterrevolutionary worldview at the material level. The armed mobilization was presented as a 'bloody and heroic birth,'[70] a transformative and regenerative act that gave the conflict the dimensions of a total war.[71] From the Falange's perspective, the conflagration provided the mysticism capable of turning what was a fratricidal homicide into a resurrection of the national community, healing the wounds imposed by a long and malevolent process of modernity that had sentenced, silenced and handcuffed Spain. Through violence, a purification of the national body was achieved in which the fallen were 'martyrs' in an immense Crusade that turned fallen comrades into the means to build a revived future.

The odes to a militia in arms had the clear objective of emphasizing Spaniards' efforts to rescue Spain during a new historical era. As Luis Legaz Lacambra wrote, 'I cannot conceive of a revolution and a State for Spain that does not ultimately serve to save mankind, just as I cannot conceive of an exaltation of mankind that does not entail a revolution and the establishment of a State'.[72] Legaz Lecambra, a law professor, noted that the desired national revolution was to become a reality and culminate in a new legal system that would consolidate the uprising and finalize the process of rescuing the nation that had been conceived following the proclamation of the Second Republic. The *auctoritas* was the national revolution, the foundational event of a new regime for the national community.[73] The goal of this 'revolution' was none other than changing what Spain was like.[74] It was in this essentialist continuity that the National Revolution, under the much-trumpeted 'Glorious Movement' formula, had to culminate in a State that brought together the new and the eternal. This apparent aporia was, in brief, the -ism-overcoming nature advocated by Falangism, the Spanish expression of the fascist movement. Another major intellectual architect, Francisco Javier Conde, summed it up well when he wrote that 'the crucial key to Spanish public law' was 'the idea of destiny, understood in a Catholic way and at the same time imbued with modernity'.[75]

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70 Alejandro Manzanares, *Alzamiento nacional de España* (*Una patria, un estado, un caudillo*) (Logroño: Imprenta Moderna, 1937), 49.

71 Javier Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz: Violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura franquista* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2008).

72 Luís Legaz Lacambra, *Introducción a la teoría del Estado Nacional-sindicalista* (Barcelona: Bosch, 1940), 7–8.

73 Conde, *Representación política*, 115.

74 José Antonio Girón de Velasco, 'Discurso a los productores sindicales,' (June 21, 1941) in *Escritos y discursos*, vol. 1, 124.

75 Francisco Javier Conde, *Introducción al derecho político actual* (Madrid: Escorial, 1942), 358.

The New State was new, as in the extirpation of deviant, contrived and corrupting roots, and national, because it returned to a perennial essence to place the national community back at the center of history with a mission that was consistent with the essence of an eternal Spain. It had to fulfill the non-negotiable doctrinal premises that marked both the genesis of the Franco regime and its continued existence once it was institutionalized: Catholicity and Spanishness. This profoundly spiritual, Christian and anti-materialist line of thought, characteristic of the nationalism of far-right Catholics,[76] was by no means unrelated to Falangist ideology. The Falange was able to integrate these identitarian elements into a synthetic discourse and mobilize in the virile context of the war against the enemy. The cleric Fermín Yzurdiaga Lorca, who served as the FET y de las JONS National Delegate for the Press and Propaganda from April 1937 to February 1938, unceasingly proclaimed the explicit Catholicity of Falangist ideology at a time when Catholic political activists were suspicious of National Syndicalists' ambivalent position.[77]

The inertia of the war—the dynamics that led to the single command—was the vehicle through which the fascistization of the members of the rebel side operated. Falangists, aware of the project shared by the rebels and their own leading role in it, never ceased to recall and emphasize the value of unity. In a speech about the liberation of Madrid given in the Spanish capital, Manuel Valdés Larrañaga underscored the value of unity: 'All those who feel the missionary unity of Spain are liberated in the authentic expression of the word. Because we are intransigent and exclusive in thinking about this Spain, understood and perceived as a Unity of Destiny in the Universal'.[78] This unity was expressed in Falangism through a vertical structure and rigorous compliance. In his famous *Discurso del Sábado de Gloria* [Saturday of Glory speech], given on April 8, 1939 in Zaragoza, Sánchez Mazas fervently stated, 'We enforce this hierarchy of spiritual values as the first condition of historical civil liberty, but we did not invent it, it is eternal and comes from God. That is why we enforce it rigorously, with no possible hesitation'.[79] At the apex of this hierarchized unity was the Caudillo.[80]

76 Xosé Manuel Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el invasor! Nacionalismos y movilización bélica durante la guerra civil española (1936–1939)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), 189–193.

77 Fermín Yzurdiaga, 'La catolicidad de la Falange,' *FE: Revista Mensual de Doctrina Nacional-Sindicalista*, no. 3 (1937): 121–126.

78 Manuel Valdés Larrañaga, 'La liberación de Madrid,' (June 17, 1937) in *Discursos* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1944), 15.

79 Sánchez Mazas, *Discurso*, 13–14.

80 Carlos Ruiz del Castillo, *En el confín de dos épocas* (*La repercusión de la crisis moderna del*

Franco was presented as the guide who was to carry Spain in the alters from which it had been separated by a foreignization of its nature, returning the nation to its historical path: 'Spain, liberated from Red anarchy, will for the third time save the World from the anti-Christian peril that threatens it'.[81] This is how all the supporters of the rebel side saw him. Historians have extensively written about and reflected on the process of acceptance that enthroned the Africanist general.[82] The inertia of the war resulted in Franco, who hailed from Ferrol in Galicia, being designated *Generalísimo de los Ejércitos* [Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces] and 'head of the Government of the State', thanks to his quick military victories as he advanced on Madrid, in comparison with the deadlock that other generals like Mola and Sanjurjo had encountered when trying to advance on the capital. The single command fell to Franco thanks to his military merits on the frontlines, because 'the Caesars were undefeated generals'.[83]

The principles of authority and hierarchy were closely related to the Falangist conception of power. According to Juan Beneyto, a law professor and one of the founders of *Arriba*, 'unity of command, shared interest (service) and national community' was the triad that set the tone for what the New State should be.[84] Not only did the notion of hierarchized unity have a dimension of consensus and synthesis between all the internal factions within the rebel side, it also entailed a very clear conception of power. Ramón Serrano Súñer, Franco's *Cuñadísimo* [supreme brother-in-law], highlighted the importance of this notion of hierarchized unity when he referred to the plenipotentiary concentration of the responsibilities of the State in a single person, in clear opposition to the liberal-democratic principle of the separation of powers. On the occasion of the second anniversary of the *Alzamiento*, he proclaimed: 'Here

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espíritu en la idea del Estado): *Discurso en la solemne inauguración del curso académico de 1939 a 1940* (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1939), 51.

81 Andrés de Arroyo, *El Generalísimo Franco restaurador de la patria: Conferencia para Hispanoamérica, el 1 de enero de 1937* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Tipografía Católica, 1937), 24.

82 See, among other publications: Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London: Harper Collins, 1993); Alberto Reig Tapia, *Franco: El César superlativo* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2005); Francisco Sevillano Calero, *Franco, caudillo por la gracia de Dios* (Madrid: Alianza, 2010); Antonio Cazorla, *Franco: Biografía de un mito* (Madrid: Alianza, 2015); *Las caras de Franco: Una revisión histórica del caudillo y su régimen*, ed. Enrique Moradiellos (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2016).

83 Luis Jordana de Pozas, 'El principio de unidad y sus consecuencias políticas y administrativas,' *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 3–4 (1941): 53.

84 Juan Beneyto, *El Nuevo Estado español: El régimen nacional sindicalista ante la tradición y los demás sistemas totalitarios* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1939), 33.

there is but one single, total, indivisible and sacred power of Spain united!'[85] This process of charismatic assumption of the powers of the State for life, and with no possibility of them being revoked, was eventually ratified a decade later under the 1947 Law of Succession.

Falangist jurists and ideologues played a key role in constructing the myth of Franco starting early on.[86] After the rebels took Bilbao in June 1937, the Falangist avant-garde poet and writer Ernesto Giménez Caballero described Franco as a 'Saint Michael the Archangel' who 'like a divine Caesar has seized the bundle of arrows'.[87] Alongside such lyrical and pompous outbursts, there was profound reflection on *caudillaje* as the new regime's center of gravity. When defining the figure of Caudillo, Raimundo Fernández-Cuesta underscored the factor of charisma, with which he sought to differentiate it from natural leaders, dictatorial tyrants and elected representatives:

> And this revolution requires at the helm the figure, not of the leader of a democratic party, nor of a head of government, nor even of a dictator of the common sort, but rather the figure of a Caudillo; that is to say, the charismatic Leader, the man designated by Providence to save his people; more than a legal figure, he is a historical and philosophical one that escapes the limitations of political science to enter into the realm of Carlysle's [*sic*] hero or Nietzsche's overman. He is, simply put, the idea that motivates the entire revolutionary process, the gestater of the new regime, and he is, in Spain, Francisco Franco.[88]

The Caudillo, a figure that did not fit any ordinary political typology or legal categorization, brought together and synthesized the entire process that had allowed Spain to be retrieved from the clutches of the liberal State and protected from the Marxist peril. As Juan Beneyto wrote, Franco, as Caudillo, represented this idea of hierarchized unity: 'There is but one source of Law: the people's community, the people made unity and hierarchy, blood and soil, and a single legislator: the Caudillo, the head and the root of the *Patria* [Father-

85 Ramon Serrano Suñer, *Siete discursos* (Madrid: Ediciones FE, 1938), 98.

86 Laura Zenobi, *La construcción del mito de Franco* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2011).

87 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Bilbao y España,' *ABC* (Sevilla), June 20, 1937, 3.

88 Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, 'Discurso en Valladolid,' (18 de julio de 1938) in *Intemperie, victoria y servicio: Discursos y escritos* (Madrid: Ediciones Prensa del Movimiento, 1951), 111–112. The English translation draws in part on that found in Edouard de Blaye, *Franco and the Politics of Spain* (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 181, quoted in Derrin Pinto, 'Indoctrinating the Youth of Post-War Spain: A Discourse Analysis of a Fascist Civics Textbook,' *Discourse & Society* 15, no. 5 (2004): 662–663.

land]'.[89] According to this Falangist jurist, the national community was the source of sovereignty. The Caudillo was not a member of the community, not even as its highest representative, but rather its head. Thus, Franco was the custodian of the people's sovereignty because he was the providential guide who had emerged from the mobilization. Falangist thought found in *caudillaje* the 'supreme synthesis of State and party'.[90]

The charismatic legitimacy of *caudillaje* cannot be understood from a merely socio-historical perspective, meaning it cannot be explained only by the inertia of the events of the war and the urgent need to find a leader who, in the case of the Falangists, could replace 'El Ausente' [the missing one], referring to José Antonio Primo de Rivera, and fit his vertical conception of power. The Caudillo's charismatic legitimacy was based on Falangism's Catholicity and the emphasis placed on Providence. In the theoretical development of the principle of *caudillaje*, symbols were deployed to bolster Franco's image as the *homo missus a Deo* [man sent from God]. The day after the Victory Parade, a *Te Deum* service to give thanks for the triumph was held at Saint Barbara's Church in Madrid. The red carpet was rolled out for Franco, who was welcomed by Church leaders. Isidro Gomá, cardinal primate and archbishop of Toledo, gave a prayer that meant the sacralization of the process and the public confirmation of the formula 'Caudillo por la Gracia de Dios' [Caudillo by the Grace of God].[91]

As can be seen in this ritualization, religiosity and Falangism were interconnected. Falangism never denied its Catholicism for an obvious reason: it was part of its very nature. The idea of Charles V's Holy Roman Empire and references to the Counter-Reformation were essential to being a Falangist, as central components of an ideology that was primarily concerned with reviving Spain's universalist mission, which had been frustrated by the Enlightenment. The volunteers who enlisted in the *División Azul* showed that Falangist supporters could hardly conceive of their political affiliation without their faith. The memoirs written by men who signed up to fight on the Eastern Front attest to this. The Falangist medical officer Enrique Errando Vilar wrote of how the members of his unit recited the Rosary together, not only to foster group unity in a land that was hostile to them, but also as the expression of a shared feel-

89 Juan Beneyto, *Genio y figura del Movimiento* (Madrid: Ediciones Afrodisio Aguado, 1940), 145.

90 Juan Beneyto and José María Costa Serrano, *El Partido: Estructura e historia del derecho público totalitario* (Zaragoza: Hispania, 1939), 152.

91 Giuliana Di Febo, *Ritos de guerra y de victoria en la España franquista* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2012), 109–118.

ing. It was a practice in which they engaged in their role as representatives of a political culture that sought precisely to protect religion from the violence of Soviet materialism: 'And the virile voices answered together, in synchrony . . . For a few minutes, we did alike, we thought alike, we spoke the same words and at the same time. We were never more disciplined than in those moments'.[92]

The young Falangist Dionisio Ridruejo, in charge of official propaganda, gave a clear picture of how National Syndicalist thought conceptualized *caudillaje*, as well as its aura and how it fit into the national community materialized in the Movement:

> The Caudillo is limited only by his own will, but this limiting will is precisely the movement's reason for existing: the dogmas proclaimed, the minorities chosen and the people's faith opened. Thus, the movement—and/the instrument of the Caudillo (of the State that resides in him)—popularizes, on the one hand, his will and serves, on the other, as a touchstone and a voice of advice for the decisions of this same will that other authorities (the Military, with regard to power, and the bureaucracy, in the case of the administration) will execute.[93]

Franco was responsible only before God and before History, and Rideujo saw fit to remark that the limits of his will were defined by the Movement. According to this Falangist leader, the war had created a situation in which the Party had found the custodian of its aspirations in the man who held military command. Falangists spoke of Franco as an overcomer of factionalisms and indicated that the principles that allowed *caudillaje* to be accomplished came from Falangist doctrine. In an essay entitled *El Nuevo Estado español* [The Spanish New State], Beneyto wrote that the organization of the State was 'adapted to the way of being that characterizes the Falange, whose tenets have been underscored by the Caudillo himself as a guide to be followed.'[94]

If the legitimization of the postwar regime was based on an undeniable unifying element, the uprising that culminated in military victory, this legitimacy was located, according to National Syndicalists, in the Party—meaning in Falangism's theoretical corpus and youthful drive, which had become the only viable option as other right-wing groups lost political influence during the conflict. This is the context in which the words pronounced by Serrano Súñer in a

92 Enrique Errando Vilar, *Campaña de invierno: División Azul* (Madrid: Perona, 1943), 37.

93 Dionisio Ridruejo, 'La Falange y su Caudillo,' *FE: Revista Mensual de Doctrina Nacional-Sindicalista*, no. 4–5 (1938): 35–38.

94 Beneyto, *El Nuevo Estado español*, 33.

July 1938 speech must be understood. He stated that no military or civil power existed; rather, there was an all-encompassing power, taken on by a single command. In moving from electoral insignificance to centrality during the war, the Falange came to channel counterrevolutionary aspirations. With his pompous and strident language, Giménez Caballero took charge of weaving a continuity between the Republican era and the new era that was beginning following the rebel's victories on the battlefield with the cry: 'Ha muerto un Caudillo (¡Oh José Antonio!) ¡Viva el Caudillo! ¡Franco!' [A Caudillo is dead! (Oh José Antonio!) Long live the Caudillo! Franco!].[95] This transformation of the monarchic ritual slogan speaks for itself and gives an accurate picture of the convergence of National Syndicalism and the theory of *caudillaje*, which was the theoretical work shared by all the political traditions and ideological currents that participated in the uprising and therefore constitutes the ultimate expression of the political culture engendered by 18 July.

According to Falangists, the theory of *caudillaje* emanated from an essential historical reality was inseparable from the Party's program. It was again Giménez Caballero who, in one of his extravagant harangues, reminded combatants that 'everyone knows—and particularly the Reds, our enemies—that without FRANCO all our dreams, all our sacrifices, "everything" and "everyone", "in a totalitarian way", would sink and would be lost'.[96] It could be inferred that, without the Caudillo, unity would be a chimera. As a result, it was imperative to close ranks. Beneyto noted that any deviation from understanding the Movement as a compromise would be an offense 'not only to logic but to the honor of the Caudillo'.[97] These warnings against insubordination aimed to enforce unquestioning compliance with unification, which meant holding firmly to the origins of the Falange and, at the same time, extolling the primacy of the Party in the political culture of 18 July. As Sánchez Mazas explained, the Party stood beside its providential guide, always ready and at his orders:

> [The] Falange in battle order over a Spain in order; a Caudillo in command, surrounded by laurels, who salutes spring with the unparalleled salute of the sword; at his direct orders, a Secretary-General full of heart

95 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'La semana de José Antonio en la radio nacional: Conferencia de Ernesto Giménez Caballero,' (November 20, 1938) in *Dolor y memoria de España en el II aniversario de la muerte de José Antonio* (Barcelona: Ediciones Jerarquía, 1939), 49.

96 Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *España y Franco* (San Sebastián: Ediciones Los Combatientes, 1938), 15.

97 Beneyto, *El Nuevo Estado español*, 152.

> and understanding who honors its history in the unwavering and exemplary task; and, at the difficult helm of governing the Interior, an Aragonese man, a man from Zaragoza, of illustrious mind and refined, rough, raw, energetic and elegant soul: our comrade Ramón Serrano Suñer.[98]

At the crucial juncture of 1942, facing the hypothetical defeat of the Axis, Francisco Javier Conde pointed to this dimension of *caudillaje* as a popular movement whose legitimacy was immanent and transcendent because it was not mere tyrannical coercion, but rather the Fatherland risen up, as the crucial factor for understanding its meaning, writing that, in this '"Spain in arms", "Caudillo" has been linked, from the beginning, to a totality, Spain, and renders a substantial link between the caudillo and Spaniards in arms, that is to say, an armed movement towards a goal'.[99] Refuting suspicions that the Caudillo regime was dictatorial, Conde found the principle of legitimacy in Falangist thought—and more precisely in José Antonio's poetic motto 'unity of destiny in the universal.' This demonstrates the importance of National Syndicalism in the construction of both the doctrine and the intellectual authority of the idea of *caudillaje*, which was based on 'the identity of destiny of the Caudillo and of Spain as a nation historically distinguished by exceptional universal enterprise.'[100]

Two years before the regime distanced itself from Fascist Italy and the Third Reich, Beneyto denied that *caudillaje* was dictatorial in nature in a 1940 book. This was not, therefore, a paint job made necessary by the course of the Second World War. The conceptualization of the Caudillo figure as the antithesis of a despot reflected an original and conscious idea on the part of those who had participated in the *Alzamiento*, and not a subsequent revision. And this notion was shared by the Falangist old guard because the theory of *caudillaje*, as they aimed to present it, was based on the doctrinal principles of the Party. As Beneyto remarked, God made Franco Caudillo to shape the national community 'through his leadership and his hierarchy. With the efforts of his combatants and the loyalty of his Falange. Through the 26 points and the *Fuero del Trabajo* [labor charter]'.[101]

Similarly, Fernández-Cuesta wrote in 1944, 'The personal character of *Caudillaje* does not imply political absolutism. Absolutism must acquire its accent

98 Sánchez Mazas, *Discurso*, 6.

99 Francisco Javier Conde, *Contribución a la doctrina del caudillaje* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 1942), 17.

100 Conde, *Contribución*, 43.

101 Beneyto, *Genio y figura*, 108.

not in the number of people who exercise power but in how they exercise it'. And he added, '*Caudillaje*, an essentially humane and Christian institution, is subject, like all earthly powers, to national Law, which reflects divine [Law] and is complemented by a series of councils, advisory organizations that provide it the assistance of the experience and political, administrative knowledge of their members'.[102] The question of totalitarianism should not be understood as a break with the political culture that had been forged during the previous decade. José Antonio Primo de Rivera had discussed this concept, situating its meaning within a Spanish specificity that was closed tied to Catholic thought. What some have interpreted as a caesura, a failure or the exhaustion of the New State conceived during the civil war was a theoretical attempt to arrive at a clear definition that was better suited to a regime that overcame parliamentary divisions, a definition that was to be used to underscore the antiliberal nature of the plans for and the establishment of the New State. In 1953, long after the civil war in Spain and eight years after the war in Europe, Conde remarked that 'the true meaning of Franco's work has been to give Spain's reality the political form of the time. Franco has made Spain a national State. He has configured the Spanish nation as a State'.[103] Although the Cold War context of the time was far removed from era of the collapse of liberal States and the height of fascisms, this line of argument was the same as that used by Luis del Valle in 1940 to underscore the need for an organized conscious that would exercise sovereignty by means of a hierarchy: 'the Nation will create the State and the State will create the Nation'.[104]

This continuity is not an *a posteriori* reconsideration. Rather, it allows an intellectual genealogy to be established that can be used to examine, and in turn understand, how the regime remained cohesive after European fascist experiences had run their course, thanks to a diversity of ideological traditions tied together by the counterrevolutionary political culture of 18 July. In 1943, Conde remarked that a 'political reality configured in such a way as to allow one to speak of a New State' needed to become discernable before entering into discussions about the meaning of totalitarian as a concept.[105] The architecture of the regime was reconsidered from within. In the immediate after-

102 Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, 'El Caudillaje en la teoría y práctica del Movimiento,' *El Español*, September 30, 1944, 8.

103 Francisco Javier Conde, *El Estado Nacional español* (Madrid: Publicaciones Españolas, 1953), 8–9.

104 Luís del Valle, *El Estado nacionalista, totalitario, autoritario* (Zaragoza: Atheneum, 1940), 31.

105 Francisco Javier Conde, *Introducción al derecho político actual* (Madrid: Escorial, 1942), 264.

math of the war in Europe, corrections came not only from Falange-adjacent sectors, but also from the same National Syndicalist theorists and idealogues who months earlier had unabashedly positioned themselves alongside the Axis powers.

The durability of unity can be seen in the preservation of the figure of the Caudillo after the Second World War. In May 1945, the Carlist Esteban de Bilbao Eguía gave a speech as president of the Spanish *Cortes* that clearly illustrates the value of the theory of *caudillaje* in the institutionalization of Victory and how this shared political support did not change with the Cold War on the horizon. Rather, despite adapting to the new international era that was dawning, the essence of the *Alzamiento* remained intact, as did the key doctrinal concepts on which the theoretical principle of *caudillaje* were based. Addressing members of the *Cortes*, de Bilbao reminded them of the Caudillo's exceptional nature:

> his name will live on in the memory of good Spaniards with the luster of the titles of a double pedigree, signed and sealed by the nation's gratitude: the victory of a glorious Crusade against a fratricidal Republic, sunken forever by the people's indignation and the weight of its crimes, and the victory of its diplomacy, which, inspired by the dictates of the purest patriotism, was able to keep us in this peace that all the world's peoples joyously cheer today, and that he was able to preserve for us without in any way compromising the honor, the decorum of the Fatherland and of the duties imposed by International Law.[106]

Such references to the specificity of *caudillaje* allow the meaning of a historical process that began with the proclamation of the Second Republic to be understood. Torcuato Fernández-Miranda Hevia, a law professor at the University of Oviedo, summed up the Caudillo's nature in 1961, following in the footsteps of earlier theorizations. His book is significant because it allows the theory's fundamental components to be discussed and situated within a coherent and cohesive historical narrative in a period when some historians and social scientists argue that Falangism had lost influence within the regime. Fernández-Miranda contemplated the Caudillo's legitimacy on the basis of the Weberian concept of charisma but, in turn, inserted this political legitimacy into Spain's great traditional path. Due to a situation of 'social shipwreck,' a captain who exercised power and was capable of 'eliciting the *support of the*

106 Session of May 14, 1945, *Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Españolas*, no. 95, 2069.

people and becoming its director or driver' had come to be needed. The alarming situation of exceptionality was said to have caused a national emergency. One need only look at Fernández-Miranda's arguments to understand the continuum that was established not only between the historical events that led to the adoption of the Caudillo, but also within the worldview with which the doctrine of *caudillaje* was cemented: 'The doctrine set out is ultimately the doctrine of conquest, as the legitimate origin of power, of Saint Thomas Aquinas and of our Spanish theologian jurists from our Golden Age, [Francisco de] Vitoria, [Francisco] Suárez, etc . . . The process of permanent civil war—latent or express—in Spanish life since Fernando VII sank into anarchy in the Second Republic, which made the civil war inevitable.'[107]

While some contemporary historians have sought to portray the post-fascist era as a profound break with the ideas, notions and plans that preceded the institutionalization of the regime, the line of argument that was used at the time, as well as the interpretation of events, calls into question the existence of an intellectual and ideological break with the past during the *desarrollista* [development-focused] period of the Franco regime. Consistency with fascist thought is apparent in the references to doctrinal foundations that went back to the scholasticism of Aquinas and the theology of School of Salamanca figures like Vitoria and Suárez. It is also demonstrated by the causal relationship that was established between a wicked and disastrous nineteenth century and the motives of the uprising and the military justification of the Victory. And this fundamental consistency is indisputable if the bulk of the writing produced by National Syndicalist doctrinaires, both before the *Alzamiento* of the 18th of July and during the civil war, is taken into account.

Conclusion

On the basis of the elements laid out in this article, the idea of a Falange that was anti-Francoist, dissident or resistant to the political architecture of the Franco regime is simply the result of a historical approach in need of greater and profounder familiarity with primary sources and historiographical debates. To present it as a paradigm is to flagrantly misinterpret history by misplacing the analytical focus, obscuring Falangism's political centrality in the political framework of the Franco regime, as well as how Falangism decid-

107 Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, *El hombre y la sociedad* (Madrid: Ediciones Doncel-Delegación Nacional de Juventudes, 1963 [1961]), 119.

edly, certainly and unquestionably embraced the values embodied by Franco. Where does this sort of retroactive defascistization of Franco and his regime, which has even led to the affirmation that there was a disenchanted fascist resistance, come from? Why insist that Franco was uninterested in doctrine, intellectually lazy and lacked belief a fascism understood in almost missionary terms? Why insist that the dictator was apolitical? As we have shown here, this narrative defascistization, and the subsequent historiographical defascistization, have been more successful than even the political and institutional defascistization of Francoism itself. The Falange did not operate or possess agency outside the regime (and we must insist that fascism cannot exist without power), nor did it work to build an alternative to Franco's leadership. In Spain, in the context of both fascism as it was implemented and the post-fascism of development-focused authoritarianism, there was always a figure that did not fit into any political typology or ordinary legal classification: the Caudillo. Naturally, defascistization did occur, and power was held by men who belonged to political traditions other than fascism. The regime evolved into a development-focused form of authoritarianism with a corporativist and religious fundamentalist foundation. However, a basis of fascist *caudillaje* was maintained until the very end.

After 1948, when the 1936 State of War was declared to be over, the principal difference between Spain and its neighbors was that in Spain the far right was in power, rather than being an outsider that needed to revise and reconfigure its political foundations. If it was no longer fascist in the 1950s and 1960s, it was because the regime itself evolved, maintaining the fundamental characteristics of its political architecture: a providentialist *caudillaje*, a clear authoritarian and development-focused vocation that included elements typical of corporativism and, naturally, rigid religious fundamentalism. Primary sources in hand, it is clear that it is a mistake to claim that there was internal fascist dissent. It is a flagrant misreading of history that misplaces the analytical focus and obscures more than it enlightens because it makes a paradigm of the exception and rejects the analysis that has been shown to be empirically, theoretically and comparatively viable: that the history of the Franco regime after 1945–1948 is the post-fascist evolution of a regime that had originally belonged to the family of fascisms.

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