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Once and for all: The Spanish Civil War and the Nationalist Concentration Camps

Abstract

This project examines the Nationalist concentration camps of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). First, it outlines the ideological origins of the war. Second, it covers how the Nationalists' ideological beliefs translated into extreme violence during the early months of the war. Third, it analyzes how an increasing number of Republican prisoners of war during the campaigns of 1937 led to the creation of the Inspección de Campos de Concentración de Prisioneros (ICCP), the bureaucratic department designed to administer the expanded camp system and classify Republican prisoners. Finally, this project examines the system of "reeducation" in the camps, the psychobiological studies conducted on the prisoners and the results of these studies. Ultimately, this study uncovers why and how the Nationalists attempted to create a "new" Spain.

Keywords

Spanish Civil War, fascism, nationalism

Disciplines

European History

Comments

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ONCE AND FOR ALL: THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND THE NATIONALIST
CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Steven Jay Perez

2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research
Fellowship

University of Pennsylvania

AN HONORS THESIS

in

History

Dr. Kathy Peiss, Honors Seminar Director

Dr. Jonathan Steinberg, Thesis Advisor

For Jesús Garza

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Steven Jay Perez, College of Arts and Sciences 2014, University of Pennsylvania

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Introduction

The main objective of my research is to examine the creation and evolution of the Nationalist concentration camp system during the Spanish Civil War. This is a study of the attempt of ideologically driven men to create a “new” society through violent means. It is an examination of purges, terror, internment, classification and a system of extermination. Above all, this project is an effort to comprehend a program of social engineering and its high human cost. Perhaps the only easy part of attempting to explain the inexplicable is the abundance of questions that the researcher has the opportunity to answer within his study. This project will attempt to answer four questions central to an understanding of the Nationalist concentration camp system. First, what were the ideological motivations that led the Nationalists, in the early phases of the civil war, to unleash such brutal violence against Republican sympathizers? Second, how did the Nationalists’ ideology and the violence of the early phases of the civil war influence the creation of the concentration camp system? Third, how did the bureaucratic structures designed to oversee the camps function? Finally, what was the purpose of the camps and how did the Nationalists use the concentration camp system to create a “new” society?

This study is a work of intellectual, military, and institutional history. To be precise, it is an attempt to understand how institutions function as a means to an ideological end. The first chapter examines the origins of the Nationalists’ ideology that led to the violence of the early phases of the war and served as the basis for the new society. The second chapter analyzes the materialization of that ideology in the form of the extreme violence the Nationalists unleashed against the Republicans in the early

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stages of the war and covers the creation of the earliest concentration camps. It also seeks to explain the motivations for the creation of the early camps. The third chapter explores the transition from purges to the creation of a concentration camp system, which was contingent on the outcomes of Nationalist military operations. It will cover the development of a legal system of classification and formation of the *Inspección de Campos de Concentración de Prisioneros* (ICCP), the department that oversaw the camps and the prisoners. The final chapter focuses on the reeducation programs in the camps and the psychobiological studies of Republican prisoners. It will also examine the eugenic theories of Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera, which served as the basis for the prisoner studies.

In order to adequately comprehend the history of the Nationalist concentration camps, one must examine the nature and origins of the Spanish Civil War, which was, above all, an ideological and social conflict.

One could describe Spain in the century prior to the outbreak of the civil war as a caldron left unattended and slowly boiling, fed by the fire of political and social turmoil. The idea of a “modern” Spain (liberal, industrialized, and democratic) collided with the forces of “traditional” Spain (conservative, agrarian, and authoritarian) to tear apart a society that still bears scars of the conflict. The seams began to rip during the mid-nineteenth century when the forces of liberalism and the old conservative order fought over the future of Spain. Revolutions, counter-revolutions, coup d’états, and wars over the regency (the Carlist Wars) marred the nearly sixty years between the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy (1814) and the First Spanish Republic (1873). A continuous process of political instability developed, in which neither the leftists nor the monarchy

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could find peace for long. Industrialization, though limited, only complicated the situation as the emerging industrial working class demanded political representation. What began to crystallize was a society in which the small traditional oligarchy of agrarian landowners and industrialists held political power and the large population of landless peasants and industrial workers were left underrepresented.¹

As political and social tensions grew, the century ended with the important loss of Spain's overseas territories. By the late 1890's, the sun had set on the Spanish Empire. The colonies in the Americas had long since achieved independence and only the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam remained. Control over the remaining territories of the empire was tenuous at best, particularly in the Philippines and Cuba. The United States soon gained control over these remnants of the empire after the short Spanish-American War of 1898, leaving Spain and its armed forces humiliated. The parliamentary monarchy's credibility was lost. Drawn out wars in Morocco (1909-1927) undermined the system of government even further. The failed experiment of General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship left the monarchy with little support and in 1931 Alfonso XIII abdicated. The Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed soon after and with its creation came progressive reforms. In keeping with the continuity of the previous century, the first two years of the republic consisted of radical agrarian reforms and secularization of the state. After a rightist coalition, *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), won a majority vote in 1933, the next two years were a time of conservative reaction as the CEDA suspended social reforms. Socialists, communists, and left-Republicans united in 1936 to form the Popular Front coalition that

¹ Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 17-37.
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won a parliamentary majority. Tensions between the left and right existed throughout the Second Republic and led to several bloody confrontations, such as the 1934 uprising of miners in the Asturias. Although the assassination of right-wing opposition leader José Sotelo on July 13, 1936 exacerbated the situation further, the conspiracy of the right-wing and senior army officers was already in place and days away from execution.

The military uprising against the Second Spanish Republic began on July 17, 1936, in the protectorate of Morocco. The violence reached Spain the next day and did not cease for many years, even after the end of the war. Three years of civil war transformed the cities and countryside of Spain into killing grounds. The Nationalists and Republicans battled each other desperately, exposing the Spanish population and the world to the sheer brutality of modern warfare in the twentieth-century. Although both sides committed atrocities, the Nationalists' planned mass exterminations in advance while the violence committed in Republicans' zones can be characterized as "mob-violence" and sporadic.² Massacres, looting, and rape followed the African Army led by Francisco Franco, the army of General Quiépo de Llano in southern Spain, and the army of General Mola in northern Spain. For the Nationalists, the systematic violence had an important purpose. Using methods employed during the Rif War, the Nationalist leadership, mostly composed of veterans of the colonial war, sought to eliminate the demand for agrarian and political reforms.³ At the same time, in late 1936 Franco's war of annihilation in the Basque Country, Asturias, Aragon, and Catalonia was designed as

² Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-century Spain*. 1st American ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2012), 383.

³ Paul Preston, "The Answer Lies in the Sewers: Captain Aguilera and the Mentality of the Francoist Officer Corps," *Science and Society*, Vol. 68, No. 3, (Fall 2004), 285-286.
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an investment in fear and terror that would create an unshakable foundation for a dictatorship.⁴ For example, he used the massacre at Badajoz as a warning to the people of Madrid about what to expect if they resisted his advance into the city. In order to maintain the complex socio-political hierarchy that existed in Spain, the army needed to crush the masses of landless laborers (*braceros*) and leftist Republican sympathizers (communists, anarchists, socialists, etc.) once and for all. By 1937, Franco and the Nationalists understood the impossibility of a swift coup d'état and prepared for a long war, which included the capture of thousands of Republican prisoners of war and suspected Republican sympathizers.⁵

The bureaucratic and legal departments created to run the camps reflected the Nationalist goals of purification, reeducation, and the re-Hispanicization for the Republican prisoners.⁶ This purification process meant removing the ideas of secularism, regional nationalism, and, in general, liberalism from Spain. The *Jefatura de Movilización, Instrucción y Recuperación* (MIR) was the first of the structures created in response to the influx of prisoners. The MIR functioned principally as the department that oversaw the prisoners condemned to forced labor in the rearguard. Still, there was no centralized department designated with specifically running the camps. The increased number of prisoners following advances on the northern front in 1937 forced Franco to consider the need for a bureaucratic structure to manage the concentration camps as well as classify prisoners, based on socio-political affiliations, and distribute them to camps.

⁴ Preston, preface to *Spanish Holocaust*, xv.

⁵ Fernando Gonzalo, "Forced Labor in Franco's Spain: Workforce Supply, Profits and Productivity," *EHES Working Papers in Economic History*, No. 4 (January 2011), 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

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As Franco's campaign in the north came to a close at Santander, he issued orders for the creation of the ICCP, an institution designed to work in conjunction with the army and resolve the problem of the prisoners of war.⁷ Although the ICCP was officially a department under the MIR and collaborated with the *Auditorías de Guerra*—the legal section of each Nationalist army group that determined whether a crime was subject to military justice (similar to the JAG Corps in the American Military) it answered directly to Franco's headquarters.⁸ For the remainder of the war, the ICCP oversaw the system of concentration camps where Franco and the Nationalists sought to eliminate the “Anti-Spanish,” radical leftist ideologies and any notion of social reform in Spain's future. For example, the ICCP created numerous forced work battalions to exploit the labor of the prisoners. During the war, the Nationalists forced the prisoners to construct fortifications, work in mines (to help raise money to pay back debts to Nazi Germany), and build roads.⁹ The “right to work” was just one of the aspects of the “reeducation” process. For thousands of republican prisoners, the camps represented a process of political reeducation, “re-Catholicization”, humiliation, torture, and finally reutilization as forced laborers.¹⁰

⁷ Javier Rodrigo, *Cautivos: Campos de concentración en la España franquista, 1936-1947*, (Barcelona: Crítica Contrastes, 2005), 46; Rodrigo, “Campos en tiempos de guerra,” in *Una Inmensa Prisión*, eds. Carme Molinero, Margarida Sala, and Jaume Sobrequés (Barcelona; Crítica Contrastes, 2003), 23.

⁸ Javier Rodrigo, *Los campos de concentración franquistas: entre la historia y la memoria*, (Madrid: Siete Mares), 80; Julius Ruiz, *Franco's Justice: Repression in Madrid after the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61-62.

⁹ Javier Rodrigo, “Internamiento y trabajo forzoso: Los campos de concentración de Franco,” *Revista de Historia Contemporánea*. No. 6 (2006), 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

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Literature Review

Many historical accounts of the origins and course of the Spanish Civil War lack sufficient analysis of the Nationalists' wartime concentration camps. Much of the secondary literature in English does not address how the *Inspección de Campos de Concentración de Prisioneros* (ICCP) ran the camps or mention the bureaucratic institution at all. Primarily Spanish authors have produced extended analysis of the wartime camps. Spanish historian Javier Rodrigo has written several works that address the history of the wartime camps and the origins of the ICCP. Questions still remain concerning the ICCP and its relationship with the army, how it functioned as a political institution, and its role as an ideological and bureaucratic institution. The strength of the secondary material that I will examine in this review is the insight it provides regarding the ideological origins of the Nationalists violence during the war. Still, the lack of detailed examinations of the wartime camps in most narratives and the small amount of literature dedicated specifically to their study indicates the need for further research and analysis.

Works of Spanish historians can, with understandable reason, be embroiled in the passions of conservative or liberal views and present-day Spanish politics.¹¹ There are works such as Roberto Villa's *La Republica en las urnas* that offer a more liberal interpretation of the war.¹² Villa's interpretation can be considered as part of the

¹¹ For an insightful analysis of how the Spanish Civil War has affected modern Spanish politics and historical scholarship see Antonio Feros, "Civil War Still Haunts Spanish Politics - New York Times." *New York Times*, (March, 2004).

¹² Roberto Villa, *La Republica en las urnas: el despertar de la democracia en España*, (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2010); Although he writes with some apparent leftist biases, Enrique Moradiellos' *La Guerra De 2013-2014* Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

consensus that most British and American authors adhere to: that the civil war was the result of an army uprising against the democratically elected Second Republic. At the same time, Villa's work offers a discussion of the socio-politics of the Second Republic. He argues the Second Republic was created at a time in which democracy was not thought of as an ideal system of government. Reforms addressing land distribution and secularization in 1931 distanced the new liberal government from a wide range of conservative segments, from moderate to radical rightists.¹³ The reforms thus infuriated a sizable segment of Spanish society and set off the short-term events that would lead to war. Pío Moa, part of the pro-Francoist/revisionist school, argues in *Franco: un balance histórico* that the Popular Front was responsible for the outbreak of war. He further asserts that Franco kept Spain free from radical revolution, out of WWII, and ultimately built the structures that would facilitate democracy in Spain.¹⁴ The argument of *Franco: un balance histórico* overestimates the unity of the different leftist parties and their agendas.

Paul Preston's book *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* offers a concise survey of the war and its causes. In Preston's survey the long-term origins of the war involved the absence of the democratization and liberalization that other European countries experienced during the nineteenth century. Uneven industrial growth and the lack of a classic bourgeois revolution meant that the power of the landed

España (1936-1939): Estudios y Controversias is a useful and recent guide to navigating the mountains of Spanish scholarship on the war.

¹³ Ibid., 506.

¹⁴ Pío Moa, *Franco: un balance histórico* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2005); Moa remains a controversial author of the war. His revisionist work, *Los mitos de la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Esfera, 2003), contains a similar argument to *Franco*. It is noteworthy that *Los mitos* was a bestseller in Spain after its release. 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

nobility, church, and monarchy existed well into the twentieth century. In short, the legal basis for capitalism became established without a political revolution.¹⁵

For Preston, the short-term causes of the war lie in the transition of political power from the oligarchy of bankers, industrialists, and agrarian landowners to the moderate-left in 1931. The traditional oligarchy, with its continued social and economic power, feared a communist or anarchist revolution, and loathing the Republic's progressivism, it united with the army and Church to protect its interests and traditional values.¹⁶ Preston views the Republican defeat as a consequence of international diplomacy and intervention. He contends that Stalin's late intervention and meddling in internal affairs did not entirely doom the Republic. Instead, German and Italian intervention combined with British and French neutrality to give the Nationalists a technological edge and more diplomatic maneuverability, as neither member of the Anglo-French alliance wanted a revolutionary communist power in southern Europe.¹⁷

Antony Beevor's *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* focuses less on the origins of the war and more on conflict and its aftermath. It is worth noting that Beevor's interpretation of the origins of the war focuses on regionalisms and the importance of the army in the nineteenth century. He traces the regional conflicts between Catalonia and the centralized monarchy back into the seventeenth century and argues that this unresolved issue ultimately contributed to the outbreak of the war.¹⁸ At

¹⁵ Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 38-41.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 148-152.

the same time, conservative generals began to view the army as the unifying agent of Spain in response to regionalisms and anti-clerical liberalism. Military coups became a regular event during the nineteenth century, and the loss of overseas territories in 1898 only fueled ideas regarding the unifying role of the army.¹⁹ An important strength of Beevor's survey is the examination of Franco's Spain just after the end of the war. In the final chapters he describes the post-war system of fear and imprisonment that further solidified Franco's regime. Franco used Republican prisoners for forced labor and condemned them to years of horrendous conditions in overcrowded concentration camps.²⁰

None of these surveys describe the wartime concentration camps. The camps are, at best, given a cursory examination in Preston's survey, described simply as "chaotic, improvised, and utterly arbitrary."²¹ However, Paul Preston's recent work, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth Century Spain* provides the most detailed and complete account of the atrocities and the Nationalists' use of violence.²² Across its over five hundred pages of analysis, Preston traces the Nationalist violence to different theories of extermination and subjugation. Although Preston mentions, more than most works in English, the hasty nature in which the Nationalists created the wartime camps, he only elaborates on the conditions of the postwar concentration camps.

¹⁸ Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 5-6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 404-405.

²¹ Preston, *Revolution and Revenge*, 308.

²² Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth Century Spain* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2012).
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A lack of food, overcrowding, disease, dehydration and unsanitary conditions plagued the camps while the overseers subjected the prisoners to daily tortures, beatings, and “reeducation” exercises, such as singing Francoist anthems.²³

In order to understand how the wartime camps functioned the works of Javier Rodrigo are highly recommended.²⁴ *Cautivos: Campos de concentración en la España Franquista* is the most complete and detailed of Rodrigo’s works and offers compelling interpretation of the camps. Rodrigo argues that the job of the bureaucratic and legal departments created to run the camps reflected the Nationalists’ goals of purification and reeducation for the Republican prisoners.²⁵ The increased number of prisoners following advances on the northern front in 1937 forced Franco to consider the need for a bureaucratic structure to manage the concentration camps as well as classify prisoners, based on socio-political affiliations, and distribute them to camps. As Franco’s campaign in the north came to a close at Santander, he issued orders for the creation of the ICCP, an institution designed to work in conjunction with the army and resolve the problem of the prisoners of war.²⁶ The ICCP created numerous forced work battalions to exploit the labor of the prisoners. One weakness of *Cautivos* is the broadness of the survey; there is not enough focus on how the institutions, like the ICCP, ran the camps.

²³ Ibid., 480-481.

²⁴ Javier Rodrigo, *Cautivos: Campos de concentración en la España franquista , 1936-1947*, (Barcelona: Crítica Contrastes, 2005); Rodrigo, “Campos en tiempos de guerra,” in *Una Inmensa Prisión*, eds. Carme Molinero, Margarida Sala, and Jaume Sobrequés (Barcelona; Crítica Contrastes, 2003); For a work that examines the memory of the camps see Javier Rodrigo, *Los campos de concentración franquistas: entre la historia y la memoria*, (Madrid: Siete Mares, 2003). It is also important to note the peculiar lack of Spanish scholarship in the field. One only needs to examine the bibliographies of Rodrigo’s works to see that his secondary literature mostly consists of works on German concentration camps and the Holocaust, and Franco’s post war system of camps.

²⁵ Rodrigo, *Cautivos*, 26.

²⁶ Ibid., 46.

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As the study of the Spanish Civil War continues, it is imperative that historians of modern Spain integrate an examination of the wartime concentration camps into their surveys and into the larger scholarly narrative of the war. The goal of this study is to not only examine the structures and procedures of the camps but also offer my interpretation of how the wartime camps fit into this historical narrative. This study contributes new knowledge to the historiography of the Spanish Civil War in several ways. First, this study is the first attempt to construct and examine different factors that led to the formation of what I call the Nationalists' ideology, a sets of beliefs that fueled the mass political murders and the formation of the concentration camp system. Second, it is also novel in its interpretation of the concentration camps as a continuation of the violence during the early stages of the civil war. I argue that both originated from the Nationalists' ideology. Third, it offers an examination of the concentration camps, the ICCP, and reeducation process that expands the limited literature on these topics. Finally, its discussion of Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera's works on eugenics and studies of concentration camp prisoners is one of the first of its kind.²⁷ With this project, I hope to create interest in the intellectual origins of the violence, the Nationalist concentration camps, and theories of eugenics in twentieth century Spain. In short, the study of the Spanish Civil War has produced countless classic and thought provoking works that seek to understand the nature of such a brutal conflict. However, in their focus on the origins and sheer horrors of the war, historians of modern Spain have largely ignored those

²⁷ The only other study I found that discussed Dr. Vallejo's works and prisoner studies is Javier Bandrés and Rafael Llavona, "Psychology in Franco's Concentration Camps," *Psychology in Spain*, no. 1, 3-9., vol.1, (1997); It is important to note that Bandrés and Llavona only briefly examine Vallejo books on eugenics. There is no discussion of the findings of Vallejo's study on the Latin American concentration camp prisoners from the International Brigades.
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whom the Nationalists captured and left alive: the prisoners subjected to the unforgiving process of creating a “new” Spain.

Sources

The primary sources I used for this study consist of books, memoir, reports, political party doctrines, correspondences, and medical journal articles. All archival sources are from the *Archivo General Militar de Ávila*. The primary sources of Chapter 1 consist of contemporary books, the Falangist party doctrine, and a memoir. Chapter 2 is a mix of memoirs from American and British reporters who covered the war with the Nationalist forces, reports from Nationalist army officers and chroniclers who traveled with the Nationalist commanders, and *some* archival sources related to the early concentration camps. Perhaps the best ally of a historian working with archival material is bureaucracy. With bureaucracy come organized reports, dispatches, and coherent information. What distinguished the earliest camps from those of mid-1937 and on was a bureaucratic administration. As such, the sources I found for the camps of late 1936 and early 1937 are few in number. Still, I believe I have been able to make a coherent and convincing argument with the sources I had the luck to discover and used for this chapter. Chapter 3 is comprised of reports, correspondences related to the war on the Northern front, legal decrees related to Republican prisoners, archival sources pertaining to the creation of the ICCP, and sources related to conditions in the expanded concentration camp system. Chapter 4 consists of archival sources related to the reeducation process in the camps, Vallejo’s books on eugenics and race theory, and his studies on concentration

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camp prisoners that were published in the medical journal, *Revista Española de Medicina y Cirugía de Guerra* (the Spanish Magazine of War Medicine and Surgery).

Argument

It is important to understand the unique place of the Nationalist concentration camps within the context of the Spanish Civil War. The Nationalists designed and developed the camps into centers of internment, classification, “scientific” study, and reeducation. However, the creation of these camps was not planned but rather a response to military developments. Though the creation was contingent on military events, the development of the concentration camps and the ICCP was the result of ideological imperatives. The concentration camps, as well as the mass murders and violence of the early stages of the civil war, were an extension and manifestation of the Nationalists’ ideology.

It is also essential to say what the camps were not. Above all, they were not the death camps of the kind that would scar the map of Europe in the coming world war. The mass murders of the Spanish Civil War would take place in the public sphere as a warning to all those who opposed the Nationalists. The Nationalist concentration camps functioned as purification centers for Franco’s “new” Spain. It was in the camps that the Nationalists treated those infected with the “Bolshevik” virus. The Nationalists interned thousands of Republican prisoners under the assumption that forced labor and “reeducation” would disinfect the prisoners and transform them into loyal Spaniards, the foundation on which “new” Spain would rise. In addition, the camps were designed to

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uncover, on a psychobiological level, the origins of radical leftist behavior and separate those who exhibited this behavior from society until they had been reformed. This process was critical to the long-term existence of “new” Spain. Franco and the Nationalists only used pseudoscience to legitimate the purges; Catholic extremism, and ultra-nationalism was necessary for the continued existence of the fatherland.

Franco created the ICCP not only to oversee the camps, but also to examine its prisoners. And it was in this examination of Spanish *and* foreign socialists, communists, republicans, and anarchists that ICCP sought to find the link between psychological disposition and political temperament. Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera, the psychiatrist in charge of the prisoner examinations, believed there was a socio-political link and that Republican or leftist prisoners possessed innately degenerative psychological characteristics. This theory contradicted the Nationalists’ notion that “revolutionary leaders,” as the Nationalists referred to high-ranking Republicans, spread Marxism like a virus. Vallejo believed that the “revolutionary leaders” merely had triggered the masses’ innate propensity to follow ideas like Marxism. Thus, the cure Nationalists demanded did not exist. Furthermore, the methods used to treat the “genetic,” rather than “viral,” ailment proved ineffective. The studies, however, showed that, despite the undergoing reeducation in the camps, a majority of prisoners had not changed their leftist sympathies. The Nationalists’ concentration camps were designed to exterminate the idea of leftism, not the prisoner, and to engineer men loyal to Franco. The camps, nonetheless, were not able to fulfill that function. Thus, socialist, regionalist, communist, and democratic ideas still existed, though suppressed. The continuation of these ideas meant the foundation of “new” Spain was weak. It was only a matter of time before the structure collapsed.

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In order to understand the violence of the early phases of the war and the creation of the concentration camps, one must examine the set of ideas that served as the basis for such actions. The following chapter will endeavor to construct a coherent picture of the ideology that influenced the Nationalists and the origins of these ideas.

Chapter 1: The Nationalists' Ideology and its Origins

In order to understand why the Nationalists killed and interned thousands of Republicans, where their idea of “new” Spain originated, and the nature of their opposition to the Second Republic, one must analyze the political rhetoric of far-rightists during the early years of the Second Republic and the experience of the *Africanista* officers in the colonial war against the Rif in Morocco (1920-1926). Through an examination of these elements of twentieth century Spanish society, we will discover what the Nationalists believed and on what foundation they attempted to build their new state.

Politics of the Rightists

Although the Spanish right of the 1930's was unified in its opposition to the Second Republic's reforms, each party had its own agenda. Just as the left was comprised of parties of various degrees of radicalism, the right was divided among the traditionalist party of the Carlists, the Catholic conservative CEDA, and the more nationalist fascist party known as the *Falange*.

During the Second Republic, the CEDA was, in terms of electoral votes and seats in the Spanish Parliament, the most powerful of the three parties. A coalition of the CEDA and the Carlists, as well as other rightists groups, won the 1933 elections. However, the CEDA's defeat in the 1936 election by the leftist coalition of the Popular Front diminished the party's influence as the civil war began. In its place arose the

Falange party with its unique brand of fascism. A marginal political party during the Second Republic, the radical and militant *Falange* membership swelled during the first year of the civil war.²⁸ In 1937, in order to prevent the same type of internal political discord that hindered the Republicans, Franco merged the Carlists and *Falange* into a single party, the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* or FET y de las JONS. The decision to create a single-party around the Carlists and *Falange* was also based on Franco's desire for long-term national unity. Franco combined the traditional and religious ethos of Carlism with the ultra-nationalist and imperialist doctrine of the *Falange* to create a wide base of support from the populace in the Nationalist zones.²⁹ As part of this merger, Franco developed a party doctrine known as the "twenty six points," based on an amended version of the "twenty seven points" of the *Falange*. In keeping with his policy to unify the Nationalist parties, Franco dissolved the CEDA. To understand the collective political ideology of the Nationalists' "new" Spain, we must examine the individual ideologies of these two parties.

All three parties predated the outbreak of the civil war, but Carlism had the longest history. In 1830, a dynastic crisis of the ruling Bourbon family placed the daughter, Isabella II, of then regent Ferdinand VII ahead of the Infante Carlos, Count of Molina and second son of King Charles IV, in the line of succession to the crown of Spain.³⁰ Two wars against the ruling monarchy diminished some of the Carlists' political

²⁸ Stanley Payne, "Spanish Fascism," *Salmagundi* no. 76/77 (Fall 1987/ Winter 1988), 106-107.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 107-109.

³⁰ Martin Blinkhorn, "Carlism and the Spanish Crisis of the 1930's," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 7, No. 3/4 (July. Oct., 1972), 65-68; Gloria Martínez Dorado and Juan Pan-Montojo, "El primer carlismo, 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

base between 1833-1849, but the defeat of 1898 and the secularism and leftism of the Second Republic revived the party. Above all, the Carlists were a traditionalist, Catholic, and monarchist party whose creed clearly emphasized their political stance: *Dios, Patria, Rey* (God, Fatherland, the King).³¹ As an electoral force during the Second Republic, the Carlists' influence, in terms of independent seats in the Spanish Parliament, was minuscule. As part of the various rightist coalitions, with a majority victory in the 1933 elections, the Carlists were able to gain more influence.³² However, as an ideological force in the Second Republic, Carlism was significant. The Carlists openly opposed the Second Republic for its secularism and democratic institutions. They viewed their struggle against the Second Republic as "a war of religion and a war of Reconquest. During the five years of the Second Republic, the Carlist militias, known as the *requetés* trained and prepared for the final Crusade against radical Marxism."³³

The Falange party (officially known as the *Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* or FE de las JONS) emerged in October 1933 after the merger of two fascist parties, the *Falange Española* (Spanish Phalanx) and the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* (JONS). The party derived some of its ideology from Italian fascism, such as the pronouncement of extreme nationalism, authoritarianism, and

1833-1840," No. 38, *Ayer*, 36-40. The literature on Carlism and Carlist ideology is extensive and, this author must admit, truly compelling. For further reading on Carlism see Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain 1931-1939*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); M.K. Flynn, *Ideology, mobilization and the nation: the rise of Irish, Basque, and Carlist nationalist movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Jeremy MacClancy, *The decline of Carlism* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000); María Cruz Rubio Liniers, *El carlismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2007); José Carlos Clemente, *Los orígenes del carlismo*, (Madrid: Ediciones EASA, 1979).

³¹ Payne, *The Franco Regime*, 51-52.

³² Blinkhorn, *Carlism*, 94-139.

³³ *Ibid.*, 267-271.

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imperial expansion, but differed in its semi-devotion to Catholic values.³⁴ More secular than the Carlists and CEDA, the *Falange's* party doctrine, known as the “twenty seven points,” outlined their vision for a new, imperial Spain. Divided into six sections, the first four points of the *Nación. Unidad. Imperio* (Nation. Unity. Empire.) section are the most pertinent to this study:

- I) We believe in the supreme reality of Spain. To strengthen, elevate, and enlarge Spain is the urgent collective task of all Spaniards. In the accomplishment of this task we must disregard the interests of individuals, groups, and classes.
- II) The universal destination of Spain is unity. Any conspiracy against that unity is repulsive. All regionalism is a crime that we will not tolerate. The current constitution, as it incites a lack of harmony, threatens the unity of Spain. We, therefore, demand its immediate annulment.
- III) We desire an empire. We affirm that the historical destiny of Spain is imperial. For Spain, we must reclaim our preeminent place in Europe. No longer will we tolerate international isolation. In regards to the countries of Latin America, we propose the unification of culture, economic interests and power.
- IV) Our armed forces—on land, on the sea, and in the air—will be as capable and numerous as necessary for Spain to ensure its own autonomy and its place within the global hierarchy of nations. We must divert funds to the armed forces so that it may achieve dignity among the public and reestablish its image.³⁵

For the *Falange*, “new” Spain was a military and, above all else, a glorious imperial state.

Given the party’s marginal importance during the Second Republic, the inclusion of these points may appear superfluous. After the 1937 merger, however, the amended “twenty

³⁴ Ibid., 55-59. The literature on the Falange is very extensive. However, I offer my list of works that were the most helpful for me in this study. See Sheelagh Ellwood, *Spanish fascism in the Franco era: Falange Española de las Jons, 1936-76* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987); Stanley Payne, *Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961); Joan Maria Thomás, *La falange de Franco: fascismo y fascistización en el regimen franquista, 1937-1945* (Barcelona: Plaza and Janés, 2001); Manuel Penella, *La falange teórica* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2006).

³⁵ “Los XXVI Puntos del Estado Español,” (Burgos, 20 April 1937), *Heráldica Hispánica*, <http://www.heraldicahispanica.com/XXVIpuntos.htm> 16 November 2013. 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

six points” became the doctrine of Franco’s single party state. Furthermore, and as will be discussed in the third chapter, the “twenty six points” became an integral part of the ICCP’s reeducation process in the concentration camps.

The Response to the Second Republic

Following the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic, radical-rightist writers responded with a wave of anti-Semitic works. As a result, anti-Semitism was incorporated into the beliefs of the anti-Republican rightist parties. Among the most popular and influential of these writings was Juan Tusquets’ *Origenes de la Revolution Española* (Origins of the Spanish Revolution), published in 1932.

Before discussing Tusquets’ book, it is important to note its significance and the background of its author. In 1901, Tusquets was born in Barcelona to a rich banking family. After he was ordained a priest in 1926, Tusquets began to show interest in secret societies and conspiracy theories regarding their aims. Despite his paternal Jewish ancestry, between 1926 and 1932 Tusquets developed a deep hatred for Jews and Freemasons. Perhaps the most significant event that affected his growing hatred was the publication of Spanish translations of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* between 1930 and 1932. Due to its popularity and citation of the anti-Semitic hoax as fact, Tusquets’ book raised the popularity and acceptance of *The Protocols* among the Spanish rightists.³⁶

³⁶ Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 34-35.
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Written as a study of the creation of the new republic, *Origins* posited the Second Republic as the product of a “Jewish-Masonic” conspiracy to use radical socialism and freemasonry to destroy Spain. For Tusquets, Spain was another battleground in the existential conflict between Christianity and Judaism:

The fight that arouses political conflict and has created the history of modern civilizations is based on two essential centers: Rome, with its multiple organizations, which desires progress within the plans of Christ and marks those destined for heaven; and Israel, which has decided to destroy Christian civilization through the forces of revolution, impure and pornographic propaganda, economic disasters and unrestrained liberal reforms...For such work, the Hebrew leaders mainly utilize Freemasonry. And for the above reasons, Jews and Freemasons appear intimately bound together and complicit in the majority of modern revolutions.³⁷

By 1932, the leftist Popular Front coalition had passed legislation that secularized schools. The laws angered many on the right, especially Catholics. Even before the publication of *The Origins of the Spanish Revolution*, rightist parties, such as the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), denounced these reforms and the Second Republic as products of a Masonic conspiracy.³⁸ However, it was Tusquets who introduced the anti-Semitic elements of the “Jewish–Masonic Conspiracy.” Since their expulsion from Spain in 1492, Tusquets argued, the Jews were dedicated to destroying the Catholic state. He stated that the Jews and Freemasons used the “popular appeal” of socialism in order to win over the masses to their cause.³⁹ Tusquets also asserted that the inventor of socialism, Karl Marx, was a Jew and, considering the global

³⁷ Juan Tusquets, *Origenes de la Revolucion Española*, (Editorial Vilamala: Barcelona, 1932), 35.

³⁸ Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 34.

³⁹ Tusquets, *Origenes*, 39.

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scale of the Communist International, the connection between Judaism, Freemasonry, and socialism indicated a plan of world domination. One only had to read *The Protocols*, he argued, to see that the Jews used socialism to create economic crises in order to disrupt Christian states and the global economy.⁴⁰ Thus, Tusquets and those influenced by him viewed the clamors for reform from the landless peasants and industrial workers as products of this global conspiracy.

It was no coincidence that many senior army officers, including General Franco, read and accepted Tusquets' theories.⁴¹ When Franco crushed the 1934 miners' strike in the Asturias, he earned, among the leftists the name "the butcher of Asturias." For the rightists he was a hero of a war for the survival of Christian civilization. Tusquets' *Origins* gave the rightists justification, the survival of the fatherland, for their opposition to the Second Republic. At the same time, the "Jewish-Masonic" conspiracy bound the various rightist political parties together in spite of their different agendas. The fascists, CEDA, and Carlists all had different ideas for the future of Spain, but all opposed the Second Republic. These rightist groups believed socialism, liberalism, and secularism were, above all, Jewish.⁴² No matter the label the rightists and, later, the Nationalists gave the radical leftists (Jews, Marxists, socialists, liberals, Reds, Freemasons to name a few), they needed to be exterminated in order to save Spain by *any* means deemed necessary. The means were the purges and concentration camp system, and the end was a "new" Spain.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 37, 41.

⁴¹ Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 36-37.

⁴² Isabelle Rohr, *The Spanish Right and the Jews, 1898-1945: Antisemitism and Opportunism*, (Sussex Academy Press: Portland), 32, 34, 38-39.
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At the same time, theories of eugenics had an effect on the development of the rightists' views of the Second Republic. With anti-Semitism, the rightists created an "other" or enemy who would serve as the focus of their crusade. Still, the Jews were a human enemy with human aims, such as world domination and the destruction of Christian civilization.

That the enemy was still considered human placed them on nearly equal footing as the rightists. The rightists understood this, and subsequently began to describe the leftists in subhuman terms. The anti-Semitism of the early 1930's facilitated the transition from Spaniard to "other, but it was eugenics that transformed the "other" into "rats." A war against an "other" or internal enemy was far different than fighting an infestation of vermin.

Using biological language, the rightists and, later, the Nationalists described the leftists as "parasites" and "infections."⁴³ The beliefs of Captain Don Gonzalo Aguilera, one of Franco's chief press officers during the civil war, exemplify how the Nationalists justified their political aims in the context of a biological struggle. In a conversation with American reporter John T. Whittaker, Aguilera described the conflict as struggle to exterminate the leftists:

We have got to kill and kill and kill...[y]ou know what's wrong with Spain...Modern plumbing! In healthier times—I mean healthier times spiritually, you understand—plague and pestilence could be counted on to thin down the Spanish masses. Held them down to manageable proportions...Now with modern sewage disposal and the like they multiply too fast. The masses are no better than animals, you understand, and you can't expect them not to become infected with the virus of bolshevism. After all, rats and lice carry the plague. Do you understand now what we mean by the regeneration of Spain?

⁴³ Preston, "The Answer," 285-286.
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The captain continued his outline of the Nationalist plan in more specific and, frankly, horrifying terms:

It's our program, you understand, to exterminate one third of the male population of Spain. That will purge the country and we will be rid of the proletariat. It's sound economically too. [We will never] have any more unemployment in Spain, you understand. We'll make other changes too. For instance, we'll be done with this nonsense of equality for women. I breed hoses and livestock, you understand. I know all about women. There'll be no more nonsense about subjecting gentlemen to court action. If a man's wife is unfaithful to him, why, he'll shoot her like a dog. It's disgusting, the idea of a court interfering between a man and his wife...It begins with...the American and French revolutions. The Age of Reason indeed! The Rights of Man! The masses aren't fit to reason and to think. Rights? Does a pig have rights?⁴⁴

It was far easier to justify the extermination of animals than humans, or fellow Spaniards for that matter, especially when they carried the “Bolshevik” virus, which threatened to infect and destroy all of Spain. The Bolsheviks had created an infectious idea in the Russian Revolution of 1917, one that threatened to destroy Western civilization. Once infected with the “Bolshevik” virus, the individual would betray the fatherland and adhere to radical leftism. The Nationalists referred to all the different leftist ideologies, such as communism, socialism, and anarchism, as “Marxism.” Thus the Marxists, infected with “Bolshevik” virus, needed to be either “treated” or exterminated in order to ensure the virus did not spread. For the Nationalist, it was not a *civil* war but a war of *extermination* against those who spread the virus, and a struggle to destroy the virus itself by any means necessary. This virus became the Nationalists' obsession. They went to unimaginable lengths and exacted a high human cost to eradicate it.

⁴⁴ John T. Whitaker, *We cannot Escape History*. (New York: MacMillan Company, 1943),108-109.
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The End of the Empire

Since losing the overseas empire in 1898, recapturing their former imperial glory had become an obsession for many rightists, especially those in the army. One aspect of this obsession was the era of the “Catholic monarchs” and the *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors between 711 and 1492. Once again, Tusquets provided Franco and the rightists with his unique interpretation of Spanish history in *Origins*. For Tusquets, the glory of Ferdinand and Isabel, as well as their Habsburg successors, was their ability to keep “the various nationalities within their territories united.”⁴⁵ The expulsion of the Jews was simply an extension of the *Reconquista*.⁴⁶ The second aspect of the imperial obsession was the humiliation of the Spanish military after the Spanish–American War (1898) and the end of the overseas empire. After the *U.S.S. Maine* explosion in Havana harbor provided an excuse for war, American forces, armed with superior naval ships, defeated the Spanish Army and Navy in the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. As part of the 1898 Treaty of Paris, the U.S. annexed the last of Spain’s imperial possessions. The defeat traumatized the military more than any other section of Spanish society for three different reasons. First, the empire gave the army a sense of purpose. For over three centuries, the army was the protector of the empire. Second, much of the army’s prestige and respect derived from its role as imperial guardian. Without the empire, and after the humiliating defeat at the hands of the U.S, Spanish generals and officers were jeered openly in the streets and satirized in parades and the

⁴⁵ Tusquets, *Origenes*, 131.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

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press. Third, the loss created feelings of resentment toward the government and the ruling oligarchy. For the humiliated officers of the army an incompetent government had not allowed them to win.⁴⁷

Perhaps the gravest consequence of the loss of the empire in 1898 was the army's new obsession with the unity of Spain. With its duty as guardian of the empire no longer possible, the army found a new role for itself in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1909, Spanish colonial forces began a campaign of expansion in Morocco. This action was met with widespread discontent that eventually manifested itself in a series of riots of the working class in Barcelona after the Minister of War ordered Catalan reserve units to reinforce the colonial forces. The Army violently crushed the riots in a week-long struggle known as the *semana trágica* (the tragic week). Along with increasing separatist and radical-leftist movements in Catalonia, these protests convinced many in the army, particularly those who had served in Cuba and were serving in Morocco, that the fatherland was disintegrating and it was their task to be the sole defender of Spanish unity.⁴⁸ This transformation had dire consequences. As they created the myth of their historical responsibility as the guardian of Spain, the army turned its centuries-long training as an authoritative force over colonial subjects against the Spanish populace. In their "colonization" of Spain, the army aimed to rid the populace of all the groups who threatened the unity of Spain.⁴⁹ In short, the army was set to practice a domestic colonialism, in which national unity was placed above all and the Spanish populace,

⁴⁷ Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire, 1898-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 164.

⁴⁸ Balfour, *Spanish Empire*, 186-187.

⁴⁹ Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2002), 314-316.
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playing the role of the colonized, was subject to the will of its military masters. However, it was not the veterans of the Spanish-American War who were to be the sole colonial masters. A war to recapture a part of Spain's past colonial glory began a series of events that led to the reassertion of the Army as political force and its re-birth as a fearsome domestic-colonial force.

The *Africanista* Trinity and the Politicization of the Officer Corps

The road to a distinct political identity for the army did not begin in Spain. As Spain expanded its control over Morocco in the early twentieth century, the army's imperialist ambitions and desire for redemption reawakened. After 1909, Spain continued its expansion, in conjunction with the French, into the Moroccan interior. Beginning in 1920, Spanish colonial forces launched an offensive against the native Rif to further expand the eastern regions of the protectorate. The ensuing Rif War created a new generation of officers, known as the *Africanistas*, who, as generals and colonels, eventually led the coup against the Second Republic. During the early years of the conflict the unprepared Spanish colonial troops suffered humiliating defeats after underestimating the Rifian forces. The most infamous incident of the Spanish forces' ineptitude occurred at the battle of Annual. After underestimating the size of a Rif insurgent force, General Manuel Silvestre found his unit surrounded and ordered a disastrous retreat that caused a collapse of numerous undermanned Spanish military posts near the northernmost coast of the protectorate. In just eighteen days, the Rif killed

approximately ten thousand Spanish troops.⁵⁰ The Spanish colonial forces managed to regroup and launched a counterattack that regained the lost territory. However, as they advanced through fallen Spanish outposts, the colonial forces were greeted with the barely recognizable remains of their former comrades. The Rif had mutilated the captured colonial troops, and there was evidence that many troops had been either tortured or murdered after surrender.⁵¹ For the remainder of the war, the Spanish forces utilized massive artillery strikes, poison gas bombings, and post-battle mutilations of Rifian tribesmen to strike fear in the Moroccan population.⁵² The *Africanistas* learned first-hand the consequences of underestimating the enemy and how to use violence and terror to deter resistance. The Rif War turned the army “into a rifle without a target,” a brutalized combat force primed to unleash the methods learned in Morocco. During the civil war, the Spanish Foreign Legion, as well as other units comprised of Moroccan troops who had served on the Spanish side during the Rif War, attacked Republican cities, towns and villages with ferocity, then pillaged, raped, and murdered to deter resistance from other populations in the vicinity.⁵³ Though the experience in Morocco left the *Africanistas* with traumatic experiences and distorted views of military conduct, the attrition rate among colonial officers meant those who survived received quick promotions to high ranks. Thus, the highest ranking officers, who had the means and reputation gained in Morocco to incite an uprising against the Second Republic in 1936, were once the captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels whose first experience with war was the bloated

⁵⁰ Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 69-71.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 125-135, 160-161.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 184-187.

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and decapitated bodies of their comrades. To respond in kind to such brutality was not only acceptable but it also became standard procedure.

In order to understand better the significance and practices of the *Africanistas*, and how this later affected their conduct during the civil war, we must examine the experiences of the three primary commanders of the Nationalist forces at the onset of the civil war, Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, Emilio Mola, and Francisco Franco, during their service in Morocco. Consider the case of the first and oldest of these three *Africanistas*. Gonzalo Queipo de Llano was born in Tordesillas, Spain in 1875. After he graduated from the Royal Cavalry Academy, he served as an officer in Cuba during the Spanish-American War and in Morocco. It was in Morocco where he earned the reputation for outlandish, and often reckless, cavalry charges and learned the importance of striking fear into the heart of the enemy.⁵⁴ Despite charging directly into entrenched gun positions, he believed that a thunderous cavalry attack bearing down on the Rif insurgents had just as much a psychological effect on their morale as an artillery bombardment. Thus, Queipo's radio broadcasts during the first months of the civil war, in which he boasted of the violent exploits of his troops and threatened adjacent towns with the terror he was describing, were merely an extension of his methods learned in Morocco.

Known as "the Director" for his role as the head conspirator in the plot against the Second Republic, General Mola's experience during the Rif War conditioned him to the use of extreme violence as standard military procedure. Emilio Mola was born in Cuba in 1887 and, after his graduation from the Infantry Academy in Toledo, received his commission in 1907. Soon after, Mola was sent to Morocco where he rose through the

⁵⁴ "Gonzalo Queipo de Llano," *Spartacus Educational*, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/SPllano.htm>, 17 November 2013
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ranks to become Brigadier General in 1927. Mola gained a prominent reputation in the Spanish Army for his service with African mercenaries (*Regulares Indígenas*) during the Rif War. But reputation and prestige came at a cost for the young officer. The scenes of fellow colonial troops and Rif insurgents left him with a warped sense of common military practices. Mola wrote of one incident in which his unit came across a recent battleground in which the Spanish mutilated Rif corpses to intimidate the local populace:

Dead and more dead, in the water, between the rocks, tangled in the shrubs, buried under the debris at the bottom of the trenches they had made; all nude or almost nude, with horrible wounds, smashed skulls, arms and legs separated from the body, cut open bodies showed repugnant guts of indescribable color...Never in my years of war had I seen so many enemy dead.⁵⁵

The extermination of enemy personnel after surrender, violence against civilian populations, and wholesale destruction of the enemy's means to wage war were procedures ingrained in Mola's psyche. At the same time, the performance of native Moroccans in the *Regulares* convinced him that such troops, hardened by colonial warfare and feared by the Spanish populace for their North African heritage, had the potential to be used with devastating efficiency throughout Spanish territories.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most decorated among the three Nationalist commanders for his service in Morocco was Francisco Franco. His service with the Spanish Foreign Legion and the Army of Africa, like Mola, provided him with a set of tactics that he used against the Spanish civilians during a 1934 miners' strike and, later, the civil war. Francisco Franco y Bahamonde was born in Ferrol, Galicia on December 4, 1892. In 1907, Franco

⁵⁵ Emilio Mola, *Obras completas*, (Valladolid: Librería Santarén, 1940), 195-8, 200-2.

⁵⁶ Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 314-315.
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passed the necessary examinations and entered the Military Academy at Toledo. Just two years after his graduation in 1910, the Army, desperate for officers in its war of attrition against the Rif, approved Franco's request for transfer to Morocco.⁵⁷ During the period between 1912 and 1926, he spent most of those years in Morocco. In that time Franco earned a reputation for bravery among his troops. After the creation of the Spanish Foreign Legion in 1920, Franco, second-in-command as major, helped build the unit into a fearsome force. One of the defining events of Franco's time in Morocco occurred during the Spanish offensive at Nador, one of the outposts overrun after Annual. During the first day of combat, the Legion's commander was shot. As medics carted him away, he handed over command of the unit to Franco. After his forces overran the Rif positions, Franco's forces entered the city and found the mutilated, rotting corpses of the Spanish garrison whom the Rif had killed six weeks earlier. The young major never forgot the sight of the "enormous cemetery" at Nador. At a firefight near the Spanish fortifications at Dar Drius, Franco and the Legion found an opportunity for revenge. After a unit of Rif fighters had surrounded a Spanish garrison near the city, Franco and twelve volunteers broke the siege and relieved the garrison. The next morning, Franco and his men returned to their base with twelve decapitated heads, bloody trophies taken from the dead Rif soldiers. The press in his native Galicia praised Franco and his twelve volunteers' bravery.⁵⁸ The incident at Dar Drius was only one of many acts of reprisals that conditioned Franco to adopt these methods, such as mutilations, as part of *his* standard tactics. Furthermore, the Legion developed a reputation during the war as a terrifying

⁵⁷ Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography*, (Harper Collins Publisher: London, 1993), 1-15; *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

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force through its many acts of rape, mass murder, and pillaging. At the end of the Rif war, Franco was promoted to Brigadier General in 1926, making him, at age 33, the youngest general in Europe. Franco's superiors also commended him for his "effective" methods and courage.⁵⁹

General Franco employed these methods to suppress the 1934 workers strike in Asturias. In September 1934, radical leftists proclaimed a nationwide strike in response to the appointment of three CEDA ministers to the prime minister's cabinet. The Spanish army was able to end the strikes in most the country. The miner's union in Asturias, however, was able to occupy several towns and army barracks in the province in early October. Although General Eduardo López was placed in official command of the troops sent to stop the Asturias revolt, Minister of War Diego Hidalgo informally put Franco in charge of the operation. One of his first decisions as unofficial commander was to ship troops from the Army of Africa, the name of the Spanish Army stationed in Morocco, to Spain for combat in Asturias. These forces included units from the Foreign Legion and groups of Moroccan mercenaries. Franco's units entered working class districts with ferocity, shooting the armed and unarmed indiscriminately. The Moroccan mercenaries added to the chaos by looting houses, raping women, and torturing prisoners.⁶⁰ General López Ochoa strongly disagreed with Franco's methods, though he could do little given Hidalgo's support of Franco. López Ochoa recalled the methods of Franco's African units during the Asturias uprising:

⁵⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁶⁰ Bernardo Diaz Nosty, *La Comuna asturiana* (Madrid: Zero, 1975), 355-369.
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The legionaries took twenty-seven workers from the jail at Sama. Only three or four were shot because, as the shots echoed in the mountains, they were afraid that guerrillas would appear. So, to avoid an ambush, they acted even more cruelly, decapitating or hanging the prisoners...A few days later, one of my most trusted officers told me that there were legionaries wearing wire necklaces from which dangled human ears from their victims...I also had to deal with the deeds of the [Moroccan mercenaries]: rapes, murders, looting...I ordered the execution of six [mercenaries]. [Hidalgo], in a fuss, demanded explanations: "How can you dare order them to be shot without a court martial?" I answered: "I have subjected them to the same procedures of which they subjected their victims."⁶¹

In many ways, Franco's methods were a rehearsal for the civil war two years later. During the civil war, however, he utilized the entire Army of Africa, including units of the Foreign Legion and Moroccan Mercenaries, with a proportionate increase in death and destruction.

Although he earned the title during the civil war, Franco's actions during the Rif War and the 1934 strike in the Asturias helped to build him into the legend and man who became the *Caudillo*. That his comrades and troops called him *Caudillo* rather than *jefe* (boss or a general leader) was significant and, based on his position, appropriate. In English, *Caudillo* also literally translates to "leader." Words, however, often derive their significance from the unspoken connotations that come with them. Although *Caudillo* directly translates to "leader" or "head," it is not entirely synonymous with *jefe*. The true translation of *Caudillo* is "*military leader*" or "chieftain" or one who derives their authority from military actions.⁶² This title was highly suitable for Franco, and his name

⁶¹ Vidarte, *El bienio negro y la Insurrección de Asturias* (Grijalbo, 1978), 360-362.

⁶² Eric R. Wolf and Edward C. Hansen, "Caudillo Politics: A Structural Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 9, no. 2 (January 1967).
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would forever be tied to *Caudillo* as *Fuehrer* was to Adolf Hitler and *Duce* to Benito Mussolini.

Perhaps the definitive event that united the *Africanista* officers and turned the forces under their command into a political force were the reforms of the Second Republic. With the formation of the republic came the policies of leftist Prime Minister Manuel Azaña. His reforms were directed at the reduction of what he believed was an oversized officer corps. First, Azaña, aware of some of their allegiances to the monarchy and reactionary views, made all officers take an oath of loyalty to the Second Republic. Second, he offered voluntary retirement with full pay to all officers. Third, Azaña dissolved the eight historic military regions and, thus, the rank of Captain-General. This act was particularly unsettling because the new Major-Generals in charge of the now “organic regions” no longer possessed legal authority over civilians in their sectors. Finally, what was perhaps the breaking point for the *Africanistas*, Azaña enacted the “review of promotions” decree that stated some of the promotions on merit given during the conflicts in Morocco were to be reexamined and subject to demotion.⁶³ These reforms divided the army among those who showed loyalty to the Republic in order to gain promotion and keep their position and those, particularly the *Africanistas*, who feigned loyalty but harbored a growing resentment that pushed them farther right. Despising the republic from the onset, the *Africanistas*, influenced by far-rightist literature such as Tusquets’ book and furious at subsequent attempts at social reform, became a potential anti-Republican force.

⁶³ Preston, *Franco*, 74-78.

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The Nationalist Ideology: A Synthesis of Fear and Destruction

It was through a synthesis of the above beliefs and experiences that the Nationalists' violence and concentration camp system was possible and became a reality. For the rightists, the creation of the Second Republic was a complete shock to a system that had been in place for centuries with very few substantial reforms. The secularization of Spanish society, reforms to the old agrarian system, and socialist policies were signs to the rightists that an old glory was gone and Spain, without their intervention, was about to disintegrate with it.

The creation of the Nationalists' ideology was not a singular event, but rather the result of different political and intellectual developments in twentieth century Spain. First, Franco combined ultra-nationalism with Catholic extremism to create a political doctrine for "new" Spain. Second, radical rightist anti-Semites spread their ideas of conspiracy and called all those who supported the Republic "Jews" and "foreigners." Contemporary theories of eugenics provided the rightists with another excuse not only to destroy the Second Republic, but also to exterminate all those subhuman parasites who spread radical leftism. Third, the loss of Spain's overseas territories utterly traumatized the army and stripped them of their centuries old duty of serving as guardians of the empire on which "the Sun never set." As a result, the army turned their imperial attentions to Spain itself. Their imperial ambitions and ventures were dedicated to keeping Spain unified and defending the *Patria* (fatherland) against the "Jewish-Masonic" conspiracy. Fourth, the Rif war produced the *Africanistas*, a set of young, high ranking officers whose experiences during the war conditioned them to the use of

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tremendous violence in order to subdue the enemy forces. For the *Africanistas*, such as the three future commanders of the Nationalists forces, mass murders, pillaging, rape, and mutilation were standard practices and methods of waging an effective war. These tactics were perfectly fit for a war of extermination.

Thus, the Nationalists' ideology, the system of beliefs and ideas on which the rightist based their hatred of leftism and justified their uprising against the Second Republic was a synthesis of fear and destruction. In order to create a new state, the current one must be dissolved. This process could be completed through a peaceful and bureaucratic transition, a violent war, or through a combination of the aforementioned points. Given the choice between the destruction of their fatherland or its regeneration, the Nationalists chose some of the most violent means possible to dissolve the Second Republic. Equally important in the Nationalists' ideology was fear. The rightists feared the "Jewish-Masonic" conspiracy, the degeneration of Spanish glory, the leftist infestation of the fatherland, and, above all, the destruction of Spain. Fear transformed political disagreement into an existential conflict. Among the Nationalists, fear manifested itself into a form of paranoia or, given the biological language, hypochondria. The Nationalists needed to treat those who were infected and had to physically exterminate those who spread it. During the early months of the civil war, the Nationalists began the extermination.

Chapter 2: The Nationalists' Ideology in Practice

A conflict against a human enemy often has definitive military objectives, such as territorial gains. The means to achieve these objectives are the military high command's strategic decisions. A struggle against an infestation of vermin has one objective in mind: extermination. The means vary, but they must be effective. During the early stages of the civil war, the Nationalists waged a campaign in which standard military objectives were the means and the physical extermination of the promulgators of the "Bolshevik virus" was the ends. The extermination of the leftist "parasites" was one of two objectives of the Nationalists' use of violence in the early stages of the civil war. The other was the intimidation of the Spanish populace. The Nationalist unleashed terror in order to ensure that there would be little civilian resistance. Through changes in the military circumstances, and with the necessary ideological imperatives in place, the physical extermination of the leftist leadership turned into a war with ideological objectives aimed at radical leftist ideas. Toward the end of the war of extermination, the creation of military concentration camps signaled the beginning of the ideological war.

The Plot against the Second Republic

In the early stages of their plot against the Second Spanish Republic, the military conspirators planned a harsh and swift campaign. The core of the plan was simple: a quick coup against the government and the establishment of a military dictatorship under the leadership of General José Sanjurjo. In 1932 General Sanjurjo led an uprising against

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the Second Spanish Republic. Though the rebellion achieved some success in Seville, it eventually failed and Sanjurjo turned himself over to Republican officials. The government initially sentenced him to death, which was later reduced to life imprisonment. In 1934 the government granted Sanjurjo amnesty and he fled to exile in Portugal. While in exile, the military plotters contacted him to join their coup. Though Sanjurjo would head the military government, General Emilio Mola was primary planner and organizer of the conspiracy. In April 1936, Mola issued several secret instructions to the military conspirators for the upcoming coup. First, he ordered the officers to use the modes of violence used in Morocco against leftist sympathizers. This order was founded on the assumption that the shock of mass public executions and humiliations would break the will of the supporters of the Republic to resist.⁶⁴ Mola sent Lieutenant Colonel Juan Yaguë, commander of the uprising in Morocco, more instructions on June 24 that outlined the specific measures of repression to unleash on the colony. The measures included the use of Moroccan mercenaries, the elimination of suspected leftists, prohibition of strikes, and the execution of anyone attempting to stop these measures.⁶⁵ Mola ordered the officers to enforce similar measures against the Spanish populace. The Nationalists carried out particularly brutal measures against the agrarian populace of southern Spain.

The Southern Campaign

⁶⁴ Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-century Spain*. 1st American ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2012), 132.

⁶⁵Ibid.

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As General Gonzalo Queipo de Llano commenced the eradication of the leftists who spread “Bolshevik” virus to the masses, it was clear he had not forgotten the methods learned during the Rif war. In southern Spain, he honed these tactics against Republican sympathizers with a keen ferocity only a man driven by the fear of the destruction of his fatherland could have mustered. After the successful uprising in Morocco and the capture of Seville, the Nationalists’ next objective was the important port city of Cádiz. Helped by the arrival of Moroccan mercenaries, the Nationalists easily overran the Republican forces. General Quiapo de Llano, commander of the Nationalist troops in southern Spain, ordered the executions of Cádiz’s leftists. His troops systematically swept through the city in a house-by-house operation. Most freemasons, socialists, and other leftists were forcibly extracted from their homes and shot in the street. Others endured unspeakable torture, such as the forced ingestion of a liter of castor oil, before their captors bludgeoned them to death.⁶⁶ Trials for the leftists, or any semblance of due process, were completely beyond Quiapo and the Nationalists’ agenda. There was no semblance of justice in the Nationalists’ executions of those leftists supposedly guilty of “treason.”

The murders in Cádiz foreshadowed the terror that would soon spread across most of southern Spain. In Seville, Quiapo’s forces descended on the working-class districts with the same viciousness that Franco’s forces had used in the Asturias. In addition to artillery bombardments, Quiapo’s troops used women and children as human shields to advance against Republican positions. After the city was subdued, Quiapo enacted a severe martial law: any strike leaders or strikers would be shot and any leftists who

⁶⁶ Francisco Espinosa, *La justicia de Quiapo: violencia selectiva y terror fascista en la II División en 1936: Sevilla, Huelva, Cádiz, Córdoba, Málaga y Badajoz* (Seville: Centro Andaluz del Libro, 2000), 68-71.
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committed “cruel acts” against rightists were also marked for execution. Quiepo added that if the perpetrators of the act could not be found, his men would shoot an equal number of their party members.⁶⁷ Quiepo’s forces then advanced into Huelva where the Republicans had stopped the initial army uprising. His forces scoured the countryside and, aided by local *latifundio* masters, shot leftist sympathizers. In keeping with the shock tactics, the Foreign Legion brought back bodies of leftists shot in Huelva and dropped them in the streets of working class districts in Seville to maintain the fear they had already instilled. As the Nationalists carried out their systematic process of executions, Quiepo gave daily radio broadcasts that recalled the exploits, though mostly exaggerated, of his forces in order to terrorize leftist supporters. Quiepo addressed cities and towns as his columns advanced on them, boasting of the violence that would descend on the populace if they did not surrender. He also described, and even relished, highly explicit scenes of rape that his troops perpetrated.⁶⁸ The Foreign Legion and other colonial forces were the main executors of these acts of assault and mayhem. A chronicler of a Spanish commander wrote that the Moroccan troops “had brought with them, as well as the determination to fight for Spain’s salvation, the deadly, terrible, murderous, and efficient principles of Qur’an justice.”⁶⁹

While Quiepo’s columns swept through Huelva, the violence reached the province that was the last Muslim kingdom to fall during the *Reconquista*, Granada. Throughout August, Quiepo’s forces battled stiff resistance in the city of Granada, the

⁶⁷ Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 142.

⁶⁸ Arthur Koestler, *Spanish Testament*, (London:Victor Gollancz, 1937), 34.

⁶⁹ Cándido Ortiz de Villajos, *De Sevilla a Madrid*, (Libreria Prieto, 1937), 45.

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namesake of the province. The suppression of resistance in the city and province took longer than expected, as the military commander of the region, General Miguel Campins, remained loyal to the Second Spanish Republic. After Quiapo's forces arrived, they arrested Campins and, despite pleas from his friend General Franco, he was executed for treason in Seville. Unlike Cádiz and Seville, the local fascists, the *Falange* party, led the violent repressions in Granada.⁷⁰ In Granada, as well as Seville and Cádiz, capture and imprisonment were only temporary; execution was soon to follow. Quiapo's only concern was the suppression of leftist resistance. To build a "new Spain", any semblance of the current one had to be eliminated. If Quiapo's campaign can be described as one of shock and intimidation, General Mola's campaign in northern Spain was one of wholesale annihilation.

The Mastermind in the North

A plane crash on July 20 drastically altered the conspirators' plans. As part of the timetable of the uprising, General Sanjurjo was scheduled to return from exile in Portugal on July 19. However, due to overweight luggage and strong winds, the small aircraft that extracted him from Estoril crashed after takeoff, killing Sanjurjo. With the arrival of the African Army from Morocco, Mola and Franco remained the only two Generals, based on rank and popularity, in a position to emerge as leaders of the Nationalists. Most of the rebel officers remained suspicious of General Quiapo's connections to the Republic.

⁷⁰ Ángel Gollonet Megías and José Morales López, *Rojo y azul en Granada*, 2.ed (Granada: Librería Prieto 1937), 115-122.
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Thus, despite his higher rank than both Mola and Franco, the Nationalists did not consider him an acceptable leader.

After Sanjurjo's death, Mola pressed forward with his war of extermination in northern Spain. Two days after the uprising began in Morocco, General Mola began his campaign in the province of Navarre with a proclamation of martial law in Pamplona. Mola declared that:

Once more the Army connected to the remaining forces of the Nation is compelled to go fulfill the desire of the great majority of the Spanish. It is to restore the rule of order, not only in its outward appearance, but also in its very essence of being...Reclaiming the principle of authority inescapably requires that punishments be consummate in terms of both their severity and the speed with which they will be carried out, without skepticism or hesitation.⁷¹

Mola dedicated himself to the idea that the uprising was in the best interest of the Spanish populace and presented his forces as cleansers, the exterminators that would remove the "parasites" from Spanish society. Mola once boasted, "This war can only end with the extermination of the enemies of Spain...A war of this kind has to end with the domination of one side and the total extermination of the defeated."⁷² Still, Mola's fervent rhetoric of the dire struggle between man and "parasite" belied the ease of his conquest of Navarre. In fact, the northern uprisings succeeded with little to no resistance from the deeply Catholic population. The Nationalists captured large areas or entire provinces in the north within a few days, and even a few hours, of the uprising. The support of the vast majority of the populace, combined with Mola's plans for

⁷¹ Emilio Mola, *Obras completas*, (Valladolid: Librería Santarén, 1940), 1173.

⁷² José María Iribarren, *Con el general Mola: escenas y aspectos inéditos de la guerra civil* (Librería General: Zaragoza, 1937) 168-169, 222-223.
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extermination, facilitated widespread persecutions and massacres. Mola also received sizeable support from the clergy in spite of ruthlessness of his campaigns. The clergy viewed the uprising as an apocalyptic crusade in which the Nationalists battled for the soul of Spain. One clergyman remarked, following the capture of Toledo from Republican forces, that the war was a “clash of civilization with barbarism, of Hell against Christ.”⁷³

Las columnas de la muerte

While Mola’s campaign in the summer of 1936 was swift and harsh, Franco’s march on Madrid can only be described as a slow, thunderous march of intimidation designed to cement his place as *Caudillo* among the Nationalists and a butcher among the Republicans.

In his waging of the war against the “parasites,” Franco combined the methods of extermination and terror with elements of “total war.” In late July, Spanish emissaries secured the support of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. During the first week of August, German and Italian planes airlifted over fifteen thousand troops of the Army of Africa, the Spanish colonial army stationed in Morocco, into southern Spain.⁷⁴ Beginning on August 2, three columns under Franco’s commander advanced north from Seville toward Madrid. Franco’s plan for the march was reminiscent of General William T. Sherman’s

⁷³ Cardenal Isidro Gomá, *Por Dios y por España 1936-1939* (Barcelona: Editorial Casulleras, 1940), 306.

⁷⁴ Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 119.
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infamous March to the Sea during the American Civil War: to carve a wide path of destruction that would break the will of the enemy to fight. Still, Sherman's use of total war aimed to destroy the Confederacy's strategic and economic means to fight the war; Franco's path of destruction had a far higher human cost. As they pressed toward Madrid, the units of the Foreign Legion and elite Moroccan *regulares* unleashed the only tactics they knew: complete and unwavering terror. It is not an exaggeration to state that legionaries and *regulares* not only embraced the terror but also found joy in it. John Whitaker, an American journalist covering the war, wrote:

I can never forget the first time I saw the mass execution of prisoners. I stood in the main street of Santa Olalla as seven trucks brought in the militiamen. They were unloaded and herded together...Suddenly an officer took me by the arm and said, "It's time to get out of here"...I ran into the ruins of a wrecked café. There a Moorish soldier had found a battered player piano. It had roll music and his feet worked the pedals frantically. He cackled and shrieked with delight and the piano tinkled out a popular American theme song from Hollywood, "San Francisco," as the two [machine] guns suddenly roared in staccato.⁷⁵

For the leftists in Franco's path, death came from the ground and air. The aerial support of German and Italian dive-bombers added a different dimension of destruction and fear to the march. Word of the African Army's tactics often reached the cities in their path before the actual army. The landless peasants of southern Spain, sometimes armed with only knives and hatchets, attempted to slow the advance but had little success.

For Franco and his officers, one of the objectives of the march included the harsh suppression of peasants in the southern agricultural estates, known as *latifundios*. With memories of rebellions and attempts at reform of the *latifundio* system, Franco exacted a

⁷⁵ John T. Whitaker, *We cannot Escape History*, (New York: MacMillan Company, 1943), 112.
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ruthless revenge against peasants during his march to Madrid. Prior to 1918, a paternalistic relationship existed between the landless peasants and their *latifundio* masters. However, a series of uprisings of southern peasants between 1918-1921 forever changed the relationship. The peasant rebels, inspired by the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia, were eventually put down, but the landowners did not forget the experience of what was known as the *trienio bolchevique* (the three Bolshevik years). After the three-year insurgency, the estate owners regarded their peasants with contempt, and the view of the peasant as “sub-human” began to spread among the upper classes.⁷⁶ After the Bourbon King Alfonso XIII abdicated in 1931, the leftist leaders of the new Republic passed several decrees that sought to reform the agrarian system in the south and alleviate the poverty of the peasants. The Republic, however, did not have the sufficient means to ensure that landowners adhered to the reforms. Instead, *latifundio* masters treated the peasant with even harsher contempt. They employed beatings and lockouts, with acres of land left uncultivated, to ensure that the workers had only the smallest provisions to survive.⁷⁷ As news of the uprising in July 1936 reached the *latifundio* master, reactions varied. Some fled their estates in fear of peasant reprisals; others executed a handful of their workers to deter the rest from rebelling. While the Army of Africa advanced toward Madrid, landowners joined the columns in order to reclaim their estates. The result was devastation. The legionaries and *regulares* executed hundreds without trial, left bayoneted corpse on roadsides, and mutilated corpses beyond recognition. The superior

⁷⁶ Paul Preston, “The Answer Lies in the Sewers: Captain Aguilera and the Mentality of the Francoist Officer Corps,” *Science and Society*, Vol. 68, No. 3, (Fall 2004), 277.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 278-279.

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weaponry and training of the African Army, as well as their reputation, often sent peasant militiamen fleeing during battles.⁷⁸ Consistent with the methods of his fellow Generals, Franco sought to break the will of the peasants to fight and seek reforms that would improve their conditions. For Franco and the landowners who accompanied his march, the landless peasants were sub-human and nothing more. On some estates, landowners, with the help of legionaries, executed rebellious peasants with the same technique used to slaughter their cattle.⁷⁹

In war, memory is a potent weapon; fear is just as powerful. For the southern landowners who returned to their estates with Franco's columns, the memory of the *trienio bolchevique* instilled in them the fear that inside their peasants' emaciated bodies boiled the fevers of communism and rebellion. Above all, the fear of losing their way of life, as masters over their sub-human servants, drove the landowners to extraordinary lengths. In an unfortunate way, the means were consistent with the ends; sub-humanity was dealt with by inhuman methods. These methods continued after death. As a hunter may take the foot, tail, or horns of a prized kill, the legionaries often cut off body parts of dead Republicans to keep as prizes or to distort the corpse in a perverse way. Along with mutilations, dead leftists were often kept where they died to terrorize the local population or thrown into mass graves. The Nationalists did make attempts, though rare, to bury the dead in local cemeteries. However, most cemeteries could not accommodate the hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dead.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 253-256; Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 313.

⁷⁹ Preston, "The Answer lies in the Sewers," 280.

One city in the path of Franco's death march incurred a particularly harsh repression, so much so that its very name would serve as a reminder to the fate that awaited a populace if they attempted to resist. On August 14, a column under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Juan Yagüe moved against the city of Badajoz in southwest Spain, near the border with Portugal. The move diverted over three thousand troops from the most direct path to Madrid. However, the decision was in keeping with Franco's overarching goal of purging the territories in his wide path. He also wanted to sweep wide and westward in order to protect his left flank and link up with Mola's forces in Salamanca.⁸¹ Yagüe left a path of destruction on his march to Badajoz, leaving *Falangist* committees in charge of the execution of all leftist leaders in villages and towns outside the city. As Yagüe's forces surrounded the city, an aircraft dropped leaflets in Badajoz that read, "Your resistance will be useless and the punishment that you will receive will be proportionate...to salvage Spain, we will eliminate any obstacles in our path...tomorrow will be too late." Each message ended with Franco's signature.⁸² On the morning of August 14, the final assault began. Artillery barrages and aerial bombings pounded the city's defenses. By the afternoon, the legionaries breached the walls of the city and began the standard procedure of looting, rape, and execution of the vanquished. One of the most infamous atrocities committed at Badajoz involved the transformation of the local bullfighting ring into a literal bloodbath. From afternoon till nightfall, Yagüe's

⁸⁰ Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, 104.

⁸¹ Juan José Calleja, *Yagüe: un corazón al rojo*, (Madrid; Juventuz, 1963), 97.

⁸² Alberto Reig Tapia, *Memoria de la guerra civil: los mitos de la tribu* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1999), 146-147.

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troops herded approximately two thousand leftists into the ring and mowed them down with machine guns.⁸³

The massacres on the march to Madrid, such as the one at Badajoz, were just as important to Nationalist ideological goals as they were to Franco's military strategy. The reputation of Franco's African Army spread much more quickly than its legionaries and *regulares*. Every massacre and pillaging was simultaneously a product of the "destruction" side of the Nationalist ideology *and* a message to Madrid: surrender or suffer the same fate. In the long-term, Spain would be cleansed of socialism, communism, and any notions of reform. By late September, Franco's army was in a position to capture Madrid as the Republicans scrambled to assemble a defense of the city. However, Franco faced a difficult decision. One path led to victory, the other to glory. If his army continued north to Madrid, they could capture the Republican capital with relative ease. His army could also turn east and capture Toledo where the Republican had besieged a Nationalist garrison, trapped in a local castle, since the early days of the uprising. If Franco diverted his troops to Toledo and relieved the garrison he could increase his standing among the Nationalists. On September 21, all the leading Nationalist Generals met at a base in Salamanca to discuss the appointment of a new commander in chief after Sanjurjo's death. They decided on Franco, and that same day he made the decision to divert his forces toward Toledo. In six days, the Army of Africa marched to Toledo and captured the city, liberating the garrison. After the legionnaires plundered the city, Franco had the capture of Toledo restaged for newsreel cameras. Drawing on the Toledo's history as the first major city the Christians recaptured from the

⁸³ Justo Villa Izquierdo, *Extremadura: la guerra civil* (Universitas Editorial, 1983), 54-56.
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Muslims during the *Reconquista*, Franco reaped the political benefits of association with the Spanish heroes who drove out the foreign infidels.⁸⁴ Though Franco cemented his position as *Caudillo* of the Nationalists forces, the war dragged on. Franco's Army of Africa spent October pushing north towards Madrid. By early November the armies of Mola and Franco were on the edge of Madrid. The assault began on November 8 and did not cease for the rest of the war as the stiff resistance of the defenders bogged down the Nationalists troops. The three-year siege of Madrid saw the Nationalists battle in and around the city, in an attempt to find weak spots in the defense. As the fronts solidified in late 1936, the first aspects of the future concentration camp system began to emerge.

Early developments of a system

During the early stages of the civil war the Nationalist commanders were focused on the extermination of the leftists who, in their positions as political party leaders or Republican officers, spread the "Bolshevik" virus. They were not concerned yet with the eradication of the virus itself and, based on the unsystematic nature of earliest concentration camps, it was doubtful they had the means to even undertake such a task.

For the commanders of the columns of the Army of Africa, prisoners presented a unique problem. Consider the common situation after the capture of a city or town in the path of the march on Madrid. The legionaries and *regulares* would rampage through the city, shoot whoever they happen to see for a shock effect, and continue in the general mayhem. As part of this methodical mayhem, the Nationalists would sweep through the

⁸⁴ Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 128-132.

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city looking for the leaders of local trade unions and leftist parties. The legionaries executed the leaders first. But what of leftist organization members or locals who fought out of fear of reprisals from leftists if they did not defend their city? As has been shown, large massacres were very common after the Nationalists captured a city. Complete exterminations of a populace, however, did not occur. Legionaries sometimes gave the remaining men of a city the option of execution or joining the Legion; they often chose the latter.⁸⁵ Still, the Nationalists had to deal with hundreds of prisoners, and this raised numerous problems. First, Franco's columns could not spend weeks classifying them by rank and affiliation with leftist organizations, and executing prisoners. Second, the local Carlists (a far right, pro-Church and pro-Monarchy party) and *Falangist* committees whom Franco's commanders left in charge of the municipal government could not manage such large numbers of prisoners without military assistance. Third, the columns could not leave the prisoners at the rearguard for fear of rebellions that could disrupt the march. Finally, though Franco did not rush to capture Madrid, he also did not want the march to slow to a crawl. Marching captured prisoners of war with his forces would undoubtedly cost time that the *Africanistas* did not want to spend. For example, when Jay Allen, an American reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* who accompanied Yagüe's forces into Badajoz, first reported the bullring massacres, many thought his story was exaggerated fiction. In an interview with John Whitaker, Yagüe responded to the denials with the remark, "Of course we shot them...what do you expect? Was I supposed to take four thousand reds with me as my column advanced, racing against time?"⁸⁶ The number

⁸⁵ Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 310.

⁸⁶ Whitaker, *We cannot escape history*, 113.

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of “reds” is exaggerated but clearly the commanders did not want to be slowed down. The temporary solution was to use already existing prisons or any large abandoned building to confine the prisoners. Franco’s decision to capture Toledo greatly affected the Nationalist forces’ ability to capture and intern prisoners in a more systematic, yet still unorganized, manner.

The Nationalists established the first concentration camps for prisoners of war following the battle of Toledo. After the Army of Africa relieved his forces, the commander of the Nationalist garrison, Colonel José Moscardó, was assigned to the city of Soria in northern Spain to oversee the executions and internment of prisoners from the northern front. This site at Soria was the first real concentration camp. Prior to its expansion in the winter of 1936, Soria served as a center for a few hundred political prisoners.⁸⁷ As the logistical arrangements, however crude, for the sites were made, the military courts of Mola’s Northern Army began to order the mass transfer of prisoners from sites in their zone. In just a few months, Mola’s army transferred approximately two thousand prisoners from Logroño, Valladolid, Segovia, and Ávila. In order to discourage escape and thoroughly intimidate the internees, the unit in charge of Soria executed twenty-five of the first prisoners to arrive in November 1936. This was a direct continuation of the tactics of fear and intimidation used against the Spanish populace. These executions had little effect. In May 1938, the prisoners organized a mass escape in which nearly eight hundred fled; only six hundred survived.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Report of headquarters of the Army of the North, 18 December 1936, *Archivo General Militar de Ávila* (AGMA)-*Zona Nacional (ZN)*, A15, L5, C35; It is important to note the formatting of the archival sources. For the remainder of this project I will cite the archival sources in the following order: the author(s), then date if one was found, archive, section of the archive, shelf, shelf subsection, and finally the box number.

As the number of camps and prisoners expanded, an ideology began to form about how to reform the prisoners. During the early months of the war, and particularly in the northern territories, the Nationalist forces ran into the problem of Republican deserters who defected to their cause. General Mola remained apprehensive about the use of ex-Republicans on the frontlines but eventually decided that the defectors could serve after demonstrating “absolute proof of loyalty” to the Nationalist cause. Mola sent a more specific order of how to determine such loyalty to the camp at San Pedro de Cardeña. The instructions read:

The head of the camp regulates the life and activity of the prisoners checking the schedule that he will periodically send to Division headquarters for its approval. The prisoners will have eight hours of work, which they will dedicate to the betterment of [the camp’s] premises, courtyard, and paths. They will have one hour of rest at the exterior or courtyard. The regimen of the prisoners will be of rigorous military discipline in all of its forms, communication is prohibited with persons outside the camp or with the guards. The military unit assigned to the camp will guard the interior and exterior.⁸⁹

There are two significant aspects of these instructions. First, and what would become a common theme of Nationalist rhetoric regarding prisoners, hard labor was seen as the means to attain “absolute proof of loyalty.” Through work the prisoner could redeem himself to the Nationalists and the *Patria*. Second, these instructions constitute the first attempt to systematize the camps. In them, we find that the Division headquarters must approve a daily schedule, the prisoners are to have a set number of work hours, and guards must enforce rigid discipline. Just as interesting is the use of the word “camp”

⁸⁸ Report of ICCP office at Logroño, June 1938, AGMA-ZN, A32, L9, C1.

⁸⁹ Mola to Division Headquarters at San Pedro de Cardeña, 2 November 1936, AGMA-ZN, A40, L5, C4. 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

(*campo* in the original). Prior documents only referred to them as “centers” or “depots.” Although Mola added order to the camps, there remained the issue of classification. In order to create a new society, the Nationalists needed to uncover how involved the prisoners were with Republican forces: were they volunteers or had they been conscripted? In response, the Nationalists created the “commissions of classification.” The commissions, however, were small and, given thousands of prisoners, inefficient. At the same time, the commissions were not centralized. Each one acted in conjunction with orders from the commander of the military unit they were stationed with. In their first six months of existence, the commissions would only process one hundred twenty four prisoners.⁹⁰ By December, the Nationalists began to send prisoners to camps at Soria, Zaragoza, and San Pedro de Cardeña.⁹¹ For the Nationalists, the prisoners of war at these camps had a unique status. They were neither the leaders of leftists organizations nor, despite defections, “loyal” Spaniards. In many ways, they could not even be considered simply prisoners of war, but rather political prisoners of war or socio-political enemies of the state.⁹²

At the early camps the prisoners experienced different conditions. Since the Nationalists had to quickly find areas for the camps, there never was a prototype, as Dachau had been to the Nazis, which served as a model for subsequent installations. Mola’s forces used a local military academy as the basis for the camp at Zaragoza. The

⁹⁰ Report of headquarters of the Army of the North, April 1937, AGMA-ZN, A41, L6, C19.

⁹¹ Report of headquarters of the Army of the North, January 1937, AGMA-ZN, A15, L16, C34; AGMA-*Cuartel General del Generalísimo*, (CGG), A1, L46bis, C3.

⁹² Javier Rodrigo, *Cautivos: Campos de concentración en la España franquista, 1936-1947*, (Barcelona: Crítica Contrastes, 2005), 21.
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use of the academy was described as “excellent.”⁹³ The camp at San Pedro de Cardeña was situated around an old monastery that possessed churches with “spacious and numerous naves with good ventilation.” The camp was set to hold approximately one thousand prisoners. San Pedro de Cardeña seems like an anomaly when compared to the camps that would come in later years. It had running and drinkable water, and enough water overall to supply a working sewage system. The camp was also one of the very few to establish an infirmary, complete with seventy-five beds.⁹⁴ It remains unclear whether or not the religious nature of the site affected the Nationalists’ policy toward the camp. It is plausible that the unit in charge of the camp did not want to further desecrate the monastery with disease and human filth. The camp at Cedeira stood in stark contrast with San Pedro. Situated near a beach on Spain’s northern coast, the camp had many problems with sanitation and disease.⁹⁵

With the formation of concentration camps in northern Spain, the Nationalist war effort *behind* the frontlines began a gradual transition into a phase of consolidation of ideological motives and military objectives. The creation of concentration camps marked the second step in the “cleansing” of Spain. Still, the formation of these early camps did not mean that the executions ceased. On the contrary, northern concentration camps, such as those at Irún and Pamplona, were the exception to Mola’s fierce ongoing campaigns against the Basque Country. It is also no coincidence that the first camps opened in the north instead of the south. Franco had the disadvantage of sweeping through territory that

⁹³ Lopez to Mola, December 1936, AGMA-CGG, A2, L46bis, C5.

⁹⁴ Headquarters at San Pedro de Cardeña to General Headquarters, 28 January 1937, AGMA-CGG, A1, L46bis, C6.

⁹⁵ Headquarters at Cederia to General Headquarters, date unknown, AGMA-ZN, A40, L4, C18.
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had not fallen during the initial uprising. The uprisings in the north, however, had had great success. Thus Mola was able to solidify Nationalist authority and carry out executions without the time-consuming task of long marches. He also had been carrying out purges for nearly a month before Franco's Army of Africa arrived in numbers sizable enough to march on Madrid. In many ways, the campaigns of Mola and Franco constantly blurred the lines between military and ideological objectives. This is what separates the Nationalist concentration camps from classification as military prisons. The latter is a containment facility that punishes soldiers for acts committed in violation of military law. Furthermore, the accused actually faces a military court and is sentenced. The former, especially in the Nationalists' case, almost always bypassed the trial and punished the accused for crimes against the *Patria*. As will be shown in the following chapter, it was not a matter of innocence or guilt but rather to what degree one was guilty. Classification of guilt, along with military events, affected the transition from mass executions to concentration camps. Along with the transition to internment, the objectives of the war of extermination began to shift from the elimination of the leftists who spread the "Bolshevik" virus to the eradication of the virus itself.

Chapter 3: The Northern Front and the ICCP

Although the halt of Nationalist forces at Madrid facilitated the creation of the early concentration camps, there were simply not enough prisoners to necessitate the formation of a bureaucratic system. As winter turned to spring in 1937, and the Nationalists began an offensive against the last Republican territories in the north, more camps began to emerge there. Just weeks before Mola launched the offensive, the Nationalists created the *Jefatura de Movilización, Instrucción, y Recuperación* (MIR) to oversee the creation of forced labor battalions consisting of Republican prisoners. Around the same time the office of Franco's military headquarters issued the "General Order of Classification" to categorize prisoners and determine their sentences. In the operations against Asturias, Biscay (a province in the Basque Country), and Cantabria, the Nationalists captured tens of thousands of prisoners. With the increased number of prisoners, the Nationalists saw an opportunity to ensure the creation of a reformed society, a "new" Spain. The Nationalists had already begun to "clear" the land to lay down a foundation on which their Spain would rest. The foundation needed a novel Spaniard, one loyal to the values of the fatherland and not to ideas of foreign socialists and communists. Rather than eliminate all Republicans that they captured, the Nationalists would attempt to reutilize the prisoners deemed salvageable. How the Nationalists determined if a prisoner could be reutilized in the framework of their new society leads us to the creation and evolution of the *Inspección de Campos de Concentración de Prisioneros* (ICCP). The development of bureaucratic institutions, as

well as classification methods, marks the definitive point at which the concentration

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camp *system* emerged. This system was, indeed, a large part of the foundation of a “new” Spain. Though the means began to change the ends had not. The elimination of “anti-Spanish” elements no longer was a singular synonym for the physical eradication of leftists, but the full-fledged attempt to destroy the infectious ideas and treat those affected with the “Bolshevik” virus.

The Battle and Siege of Madrid

Despite the construction of the early camps, the creation of a concentration camp system, was of little concern to Franco and Mola in the winter of 1936. By November, the Nationalist zone stretched out in two directions from the northwestern-most region of Galicia: south along the border with Portugal and east toward Navarre and the border with France. Each branch curved slightly toward central Spain and Madrid, primed to crush the capital in pincer movement. In addition to most of central Spain, the Republicans occupied eastern regions such as Valencia, Catalonia, and most of Aragon. Republican forces also controlled the northern regions of Cantabria and Biscay. For the remainder of 1936 and the first two months of 1937, these two regions were not the focus of a Nationalist offensive. Instead, the Nationalists focused their attention on Madrid. November and December 1936 were two months of arrivals and departures. The Nationalists had arrived at the gates of Madrid on November 1 and, consequently, the Republican government departed for Valencia on November 6. In mid-November, Italian troops and the German Condor Legion arrived in Spain as the winds off the Sierra de Guadarrama signaled the beginning of a cold and wet Castilian winter.

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With the help of Italian and German aircraft and troops, Franco was able to provide the Nationalist forces with a decided technological advantage over the Republicans. At the same time, air superiority allowed Franco to add a different aspect to the continued use of terror against civilian populations in Republican territories. In the early phase of the conspiracy against the Second Republic, Mola planned to use Spanish naval ships stationed on the Mediterranean Coast to transport the Army of Africa across the Straits of Gibraltar from Morocco into Spain. The plan for the uprising had counted on the ability of the aristocratic officers of the Spanish Navy to convert their crews to the Nationalist cause. However, on the day of the uprising the junior officers and middle-class crewmen of the Navy remained loyal to the Second Republic. Once orders from Madrid reached the ships to not allow the Army of Africa to cross the straits, the crewmen mutinied against their rebellious superior officers. Thus Franco and his army were stuck in Morocco. In response, Franco sent diplomats to Rome and Berlin to ask for assistance. Though Mussolini was reluctant at first, the possibility of another fascist ally in the Mediterranean appealed to the *Duce*. Bombers and transport aircraft were subsequently sent in early August. An escalation of Italian military activity during the civil war began on October 24, 1936 when the Italian air force in Spain, known as the *Aviazione Legionaria*, bombed Madrid. As will be discussed further below, Franco's repeated failure to capture Madrid after several attempts convinced Mussolini to send a detachment of Italian volunteer troops. By January 1937, the number of Italian troops, made up of regular soldiers and fascist militiamen known as "black-shirts," swelled to

over forty thousand.⁹⁶ The detachment of troops came to be known as the *Corpo Truppe Volontarie* (CTV).

Their German counterpart, the Condor Legion, would have a more infamous role in the conflict. At the same time as the negotiations with Mussolini, Franco sent emissaries to ask senior members of the Nazi party, including Hitler, for transportation aircraft. After a long meeting, Hitler gave orders to Herman Göring, commander-in-chief of the *Luftwaffe*, to send transportation aircraft, fighter-bombers and anti-aircraft guns specifically to Franco's forces. For Hitler, the civil war was an opportunity to test the latest equipment in the *Luftwaffe*'s arsenal and facilitate the creation of another fascist state and ally in Mediterranean.⁹⁷ The Spanish Civil War was simply a testing and training ground for the Nazis, a readiness evaluation for the war to come. Luftwaffe General Hugo Sperrle, who would go on to be an important figure in the 1940 German invasion of France, was assigned to command the unit. His successor in command of the unit, Lieutenant Colonel—later Field Marshal—Wolfram von Richthofen, would implement the tactics learned in Spain during the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. The creation of a German military unit in Spain, however, was not part of the original agreement. At first, the Germans only sent equipment, such as tanks and bomber aircraft, to Franco's forces. As with the Italians, Franco's inability to capture Madrid led to the decision to send detachments of the *Luftwaffe* and ground troops to Spain in November.

⁹⁶ Brian Sullivan, "Fascist Italy's Military Involvement in the Spanish Civil War," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 59, no.4 (October 1995), 706-710.

⁹⁷ Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 137.
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The failure to capture Madrid set in motion the decision to advance against the northern Republican territories, a move that was critical to the growth of the concentration camp system. Through the winter of 1936 and into early 1937, Franco launched several offensives against Madrid. None, however, were able to break the Republican defenses. Neither the heavy aerial bombardment of the Luftwaffe nor the reputation of the Army of Africa broke the morale of defenders either.⁹⁸ It is important to note that, though the Nationalists had the technological advantage, the Republican defenders outnumbered Franco and Mola's troops nearly two to one. After frontal assaults failed, Franco attempted to cut the capital off from its supply lines and encircle the city. The first assault began on November 29 near the Corunna Road, northwest of Madrid, and ended in a stalemate. On December 13, the Nationalists launched a second offensive in the same area. Though they captured the road in January 1937, they failed to encircle Madrid. Bad weather and poor planning hampered Franco's attempt to cross the Jarama River and encircle Madrid from the south. Thus, Franco was unable to capture Madrid before the spring as he had planned.⁹⁹ With the spring came better weather but similar plans. This time Italian troops, who had recently helped capture the Málaga province in southern Spain, were set to lead an attack against Guadalajara. The plan was once again to cross the Jarama River and connect with Mola's forces southeast of the capital. The battle lasted from March 8 to March 23 and had the same result as Franco's previous attacks: his forces initially broke through the Republican lines and then retreated to their original lines after a counter-attack. The debacle at Guadalajara forced Franco to

⁹⁸ Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 189.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 208.

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change his strategy. The Nationalists decided to direct their forces against the last Republican territories in the north: Cantabria and the Basque country. Franco understood that if the Nationalists could quickly capture Cantabria and the Basque Country he would be able to use the troops that had previously been on the northern front against Madrid.

The MIR and the General Order of Classification

Though the failure at Guadalajara spurred a change in the Nationalist war plans, Franco had already issued an order to create the MIR, a department that would manage the organization of forced labor battalions. The establishment of the MIR also signaled the beginning of a series of decisions in 1937 that involved the centralization of the management of prisoners of war. In early March, Franco wrote to Mola and Queipo about the need to consider a more organized system for the management of prisoners of war used for slave labor. According to Franco, this would allow more Nationalist troops to be used on the frontlines as opposed to being utilized as the primary labor force in the rearguard. At the same time, this would help to avoid the possible problem of overcrowding in the few concentration camps that did exist.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the *Jefatura de Movilización, Instrucción, y Recuperación* (MIR) was the first institution created to manage the activity of Republican prisoners. The MIR was designed, as is apparent in its name, to mobilize prisoners for forced labor projects. Franco placed General Luis Orgaz in charge of the MIR. Orgaz was one of the original officers who had joined Mola's conspiracy movement back in March 1936. He was also a member of Franco's entourage

¹⁰⁰ Franco to Mola 5 March 1937, *Archivo General Militar de Ávila* (AGMA)- *Zona Nacional* (ZN), A35, L1, C2; This dispatched notes that a duplicate message was sent to Queipo de Llano. 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

and enjoyed the *Caudillo's* support until the defeat at Jarama, at which Orgaz was the commander of the Nationalist forces.¹⁰¹

The creation of the MIR was a sign that Franco was beginning to prepare for a long war, but also that he was not satisfied with simply incarcerating the prisoners. As in any drawn out conflict, there is a need for a labor force to maintain and repair important infrastructures, particularly roads and supply lines. In most campaigns, the military force in question has a corps of engineers or a similar unit to attend to such matters, but the Nationalist had no such forces because of inadequate numbers of troops. Franco also had to pay the Germans for the costs of their intervention. Since he lacked the financial capital needed to pay for the Condor Legion, Franco agreed to let the Germans have the minerals of Spain's northern mines. The Nationalists had no troops to spare for the task of road-building and maintenance of fortifications. But they did have prisoners of war, and as Franco remarked, it would be neither prudent nor efficient to leave the potential labor force unexploited.¹⁰² It is also possible that, on the eve of the attack on Guadalajara, Franco was preparing to deal with the influx of thousands of prisoners from the fall of Madrid. Even in that scenario Franco still had to conquer Catalonia and Valencia, where the Republican government had fled. The war would continue and the Nationalists would still need a labor force. By April, the MIR began to organize and create forced labor battalions that were assigned to a range of tasks. The majority of prisoners were used for the repair and upkeep of roads, railways, mining, and aircraft.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 142.

¹⁰² Franco to Mola, 28 March 1937, AGMA-CGG, A1, L16, C3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

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In keeping with the centralization and bureaucratization efforts, Franco issued the *Orden General de Clasificación* (the General Order of Classification) of March 11. With the General Order, issued from his headquarters in Salamanca, Franco provided some clarity and centralization to the question of how to categorize prisoners, a problem which had troubled the Nationalists since the early stages of the war. The actual order was distributed in early April just days after Mola launched the northern offensive and continued what Franco had begun with the creation of the MIR: a means to organize prisoners of war. The introduction to the Order revealed much about how the Nationalists viewed their role in the reformation of Spain. The Order begins:

We undertake the current war in order to pull Spanish sovereignty and the fatherland from the claws of the Marxist International. The varied nature of responsibilities of captured individuals...forces us, for the sake of true efficiency and the pursued ends of the National Army, to suitably discriminate between the prisoners taken from the enemy and of persons who voluntarily deserted the enemy on our frontlines. Given the considerable number of some and of others,...[this order] gives rapidity to the classification of prisoners of war...This order will be applied by the senior heads of the [Army] Divisions and by the military officers that have the correct authority.¹⁰⁴

This introduction contains several important points that need comment. First, it provides crucial evidence about the Nationalists view of the Republicans soldiers. The struggle against the Second Republic was not a war of fratricide, but rather a war against the impure Spaniards infected by Marxism. Second, the Republicans had committed an act of high treason by declaring allegiance to the Marxists rather than to Spain. The Nationalists were to act as the judge, jury, and, above all, the executioner of the traitors. Third, the need to classify prisoners of war is ultimately justified as a military necessity; the ends

¹⁰⁴ *Orden General de Clasificación, de 11-3-1937*. Quoted in Rodrigo, *Los Campos de Concentración Franquistas: Entre la historia y la memoria*, 226.
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are to rid Spain of the “Marxist International” but the means must be efficient because the ends cannot be achieved without such thoroughness.

The Order, divided into six subsections, described how Nationalist military officials were meant to classify and organize prisoners. The first section listed the different categories of prisoners and designated each with a letter. Category “A” persons were prisoners of war, either captured or deserters, who defected to the Nationalists and pledged their loyalty *without* compulsion. “B” prisoners were those who had voluntarily joined the Republican forces but had no obvious “social or political responsibilities” (i.e. regular soldiers). Category “C” prisoners consisted of Republican officers, political party leaders, and officials who had committed “acts of noted...hostility against our troops.” This was the only category of prisoners who were automatically charged with treason and rebellion. Finally, “D” prisoners were captured individuals who had committed “ordinary crimes or [crimes] against the law of nations” before or after the Nationalists began their uprising. Thus, the Nationalists felt it was within their duty and sense of justice to correct the “wrongs” of both the past and present. Category “A” and “B” prisoners were mostly taken for further interrogation. “C” and “D” prisoners had to go before a criminal or military court for sentencing, usually to a long prison sentence or death.

The second section of the order outlines how the high command wanted the Nationalist troops to record certain information regarding the prisoners. For example, the interrogators were required to ask the prisoners for name, age, profession, whether their enlistment had been voluntary or conscripted, whether they had been captured or deserted, personal addresses, and their unit. The significance of the prisoner’s profession may not stand out to the reader, but it was important in the sense that a white collar

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professional was not looked on with the same amount of suspicion as a factory worker or agricultural laborer. Remaining sections of the order focus on the consequential bureaucracy of organizing the information. In essence, the local commission of classification would sort the personal information of the prisoners and send a classification notice for each prisoner to the unit that had captured them and one to the military tribunal of the same unit for their records.¹⁰⁵

The capture of the Biscay and its consequences

In spite of the Order, the need to create a centralized department to oversee the incarceration of prisoners had not arisen. The local commissions of classification and the MIR were enough, for the moment, to deal with the flow of deserters and captured prisoners. Mola's northern offensive, however, created the need to build more concentration camps and a department to oversee them. Though the bombing of Guernica and the battle of Santander would become the most well-known events of the "War in the North," the capture of tens of thousands of Republican prisoners set in motion the creation of the ICCP and a full-fledged concentration camp system.

In the early stages of the "War in the North," the Nationalists planned their campaign around the use of terror, this time from the air, but also aimed to "redeem" the inhabitants of the territories. With the aid of bombers and troops from the Condor Legion, General Mola's army began the northern offensive on March 31. The Nationalist forces, over forty thousand strong, planned to sweep from Navarre into Biscay and continue

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 227–229.

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westward across Cantabria and then Asturias. Mola began the campaign with a message, via radio broadcast and leaflets, to the people of the Basque Country, which read, “If submission is not immediate, I will raze all [Biscay] to the ground, beginning with the industries of war. I have the means to do so.”¹⁰⁶ The means included the increased reliance on the air power of the Condor Legion. It was in Biscay where the *Luftwaffe* honed the tactic of terror bombings against civilian populations in order to break morale, which they used in 1939 and 1940 in Poland and the Netherlands. The Condor Legion, however, did not act without orders from the Nationalist High Command, and the orders were to crush the northern Republican territories. After a four-day bombardment against eastern Biscay had begun the offensive, Franco discussed the Nationalists’ methods with the Italian Ambassador to Spain, Roberto Cantalupo. According to him, Franco remarked that:

Others might think that when my aircraft bomb red cities I am making war like any other, but that is not so...in the cities and the countryside which I have already occupied but still not redeemed, we must carry out the necessarily slow task of redemption and pacification, without which the military operation will be largely useless...I am interested not in territory but in inhabitants. The reconquest of the territory is the means, the redemption of the inhabitants the end.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps this emphasis on “redemption” helps to explain why Franco would decide to expand the concentration camp system and not exterminate the tens of thousands of prisoners who were about to come into his possession. For Franco, the military operations were just the start of the war. The real campaign was the consolidation of Nationalist

¹⁰⁶ Paul Preston, “The Answer Lies in the Sewers: Captain Aguilera and the Mentality of the Francoist Officer Corps,” *Science and Society*, Vol. 68, No. 3, (Fall 2004), 284.

¹⁰⁷ Roberto Cantalupo, *Fu la Spagna: Ambasciata presso Franco: Febbraio–Aprile 1937* (Milan: Mondadori, 1948), 231-232. Quoted in Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 434
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authority (the pacification) and the reformation of the inhabitants of the “unredeemed” territories.

In stark contrast to the notion of redemption, Mola certainly attempted to raze all of the Basque Country to the ground in a continuation of the terror used early in the war. Though the bombings and artillery strikes against Biscay were ordered with a certain disregard for human life and military practicality, the use of terror had short and long-term objectives. Consider the case of Guernica as an example of a short-term objective: to demoralize the defenders of Bilbao. The city itself was not very large or populous, but it derived its strategic significance from its location between the Nationalist front and Bilbao, the capital of the province of Biscay. The Condor Legion’s bombing of Guernica was at once a message to Bilbao and to the rest of the Biscay province: surrender or suffer the same fate. And it was a cruel fate to suffer, as one witness wrote:

The German Air Force bombarded the populace for almost three long hours. Fighter planes and bombers...hurled bullets and incendiary bombs while the desperate people fled from the roads and the aerial machine gun fire...Three hours of terror and of scenes out of Dante. Children and women buried by debris on the sides of the roads, mothers praying aloud, a town murdered by criminals who lack human compassion. The whole village caught fire and the poor people that had taken refuge in bomb shelters were forced outside and were gunned down...[t]he sick burned alive, the wounded were buried [under the rubble] and were reduced to ashes.¹⁰⁸

Though Mola and Franco made attempts to keep the bombing secret from the international press, the rest of Biscay heard of the incident.¹⁰⁹ General Hugo Sperrle, head

¹⁰⁸ Alberto Onaindia to Isidro Goma, 28 April 1937, Document 5-211, *Archivo Goma: Documentos de la Guerra Civil*, vol. 5, (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: Madrid, 2003), 282-283.

¹⁰⁹ One issue that has been contested is the number of civilians killed in the bombing of Guernica. Some sources say thousands. The Basques stated that approximately one thousand six hundred people perished. More recent research has shown that around two to three hundred may have died. In fairness to the less recent sources, and even the eyewitnesses who often spoke of thousands dying, it is somewhat difficult to 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

of the German forces and the Condor Legion had certainly fulfilled their end of the bargain during the campaign in Biscay, but the success on the battlefield did not lead to a stable relationship between Mola and the German commander. In short, the two men disagreed over long-term planning during the campaign. Mola wanted the Luftwaffe to bomb industrial sites in the Basque Country, which Sperrle thought was absolutely absurd. Richthofen recalled one meeting between the men in which Mola stated that:

If half of all Spanish factories were destroyed by our aircraft, the subsequent reconstruction of Spain would be greatly facilitated. However, the Nationalist government could not just destroy industry once victory was assured...Spain is dominated in a totally sick way by the industries of Catalonia and the Basque Country. For Spain to be made healthy, they have to be destroyed.¹¹⁰

Sperrle and Richthofen could not understand this ideology; it made no sense militarily or economically. Though military necessity was important to the Nationalists, it remained subordinate to ideological imperatives, such as the “new” Spain Mola and Franco wanted to build. Only Franco would live to see the possibility of their joint vision realized. Just two weeks before Bilbao fell to the Nationalists, Mola died in a plane crash. Though he did not live to see the end of the war, the progress of his army set in motion the official beginning of the concentration camp system.

Between April and May 1937, the number of prisoners captured on the northern front forced the Nationalists to develop further legislation to manage them. The decree marked the final move toward the centralization of the organization of Republican prisoners and the creation of the ICCP. Given the urgent need of a labor force for the

examine pictures of the utter destruction and burnt ruins of Guernica and not think that thousands perished in the attack.

¹¹⁰ Wolfram von Richthofen, “Spanien-Tagebuch, 1975. Quoted in Preston, *Sewers*, 284
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Nationalist Army, the *Decreto que concede el derecho al trabajo* (the Concession of the Right to Work) was announced in May 1937 and it declared that prisoners of war would be “allowed” to work:

The victorious and continued advance of the Nationalist forces in the reconquest of the fatherland has produced an increase in the number of prisoners...that the regulation of their use and treatment constitutes an urgent matter...The right to work, that all Spaniards have according to the basic principles of the [Nationalist] program, has not been refused by the new state to the prisoners of war...The right to work is conceded to the prisoners of war...for non-communal crimes...and under the conditions that...those prisoners are able to work as laborers.¹¹¹

The Order of Classification established a concrete set of socio-political traits that the Nationalists used to classify and sentence prisoners. The Concession of the Right to Work was, in essence, a decree to justify the use of prisoners of war as slave labor for the army. The Nationalists now had a uniform way to classify prisoners and the ability, in doctrine and institution, to mobilize them into forced labor battalions.

The creation of the ICCP and how it functioned

The Concession of May 1937, for all that it represented, was more a declaration of Nationalist doctrine than a tangible solution to the increasing number of prisoners. The Nationalists had to face the reality of tens of thousands of prisoners, captured in April and May, for whom there were inadequate facilities. The local commissions of classification could no longer handle such a large influx of men. With the groundwork for the abuse of

¹¹¹ “Decreto que concede el derecho al trabajo de 25-5-1937. Quoted in Rodrigo, *Los campos de concentración franquistas*, 227-228. 2013-2014 Penn Humanities Forum Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Final Paper, May 2014

prisoner labor established in the “Concession,” Franco’s “redemption” manifested itself in a concentration camp system. As the Nationalists had centralized the organization of forced labor and classification, they would now consolidate the concentration camps under a single department. That department was to be known as the *Inspección de Campos de Concentración de Prisioneros* (ICCP). This department transformed the existing camps and shaped the new ones into centers of classification, labor, and reeducation.

By July 1937, Bilbao had already fallen and the Nationalists had begun their advance against Cantabria. With the thousands of Republican prisoners awaiting classification and internment, the time had finally arrived to expand the number of concentration camps and form a department to oversee the camps and their prisoners. Thus, on July 5, 1937, the creation of the ICCP was formally declared. The decree began:

The Generalissimo [Franco] of the Nationalist Army has arranged the formation of a commission that...with maximum urgency, [is] designed to oversee and preside over the prisoners of the concentration camps, and under the leadership of Colonel D. Luis de Martín Pinillos y Blanco de Bustamante, who will leave his post as Military Governor of Cáceres.¹¹²

In terms of its place within the structure of the Nationalist Army, the ICCP was technically a sub-department within the MIR. However, it took orders directly from Franco headquarters and thus stood on equal, if not higher, ground than MIR. What was *not* stated in the decree also requires comment. There was no mention of the reformation,

¹¹² General Headquarters of the Generalissimo to Headquarters of Army of the North, AGMA-*Cuartel General del Generalísimo* (CGG), A1, L88, C17; Rodrigo, *Los campos de concentración franquistas*, 231-232.
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reeducation, or any information related to treatment of the prisoners in the camps. The ICCP was simply meant to manage the camps. Though it left the camps unorganized at times, such ambiguity allowed the department to possess a certain flexibility that Franco and the Nationalists' ideological imperative helped to mold into the foundation of their new state.

Before the end of July 1937, the creation of the ICCP catalyzed the construction of new camps. Now that Franco had the department he so urgently needed, camps were established at Cáceres, Plasencia, and Trujillo in Extremadura. One of Pinillos' first tasks was to organize the logistics for the trials of over four thousand prisoners from Vitoria and another one thousand five hundred from Bilbao. But after the trials, where were the prisoners supposed to go? General Queipo suggested locations within his zone in southwestern Spain.¹¹³ The logic behind such a long distance move of prisoners, from the northeast to the southwest, rested on the Pinillos' assumption that "purification" of the prisoners would be uninterrupted at such a distance from the frontlines.¹¹⁴

The ICCP also faced the difficult task of classifying and finding space for the thousands of prisoners taken in the northern offensive. Pinillos responded by creating temporary camps dedicated to classifying and increasing the number of permanent camps. Since the Nationalist built the concentration camps during the war, and thus had little time and few troops to build formal camps, the earliest concentration camps were often small and often built around a monastery, an old university, or an abandon hospital. Thus they could not house a great number of prisoners. At the time, the largest of these

¹¹³ Queipo to Pinillos, 3 July 1937, AGMA-ZN, A15, L3, C33.

¹¹⁴ Pinillos to Franco, 15 July 1937, AGMA-CGG, A1, L87, C16.
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camps, such as those at Lerma ad Miranda de Ebro, struggled to house close to one thousand prisoners. Prior to the start of the northern offensive, the total number of prisoners in camps was roughly three thousand. By the end of July, it had increased to approximately eleven thousand.¹¹⁵ Thus, around eight thousand prisoners needed to be classified. At the same time, the ICCP was under pressure from Franco's headquarters to hasten the classification process in order to form more forced labor battalions.¹¹⁶ Pinillos found a solution to both issues with the creation of the "classification concentration camps" that would provisionally hold prisoners until the military court classified them.

As the ICCP developed, a clear relationship and chain of organization emerged between the department, the MIR, and the Nationalist Army. The process began when the Nationalist forces captured Republican prisoners. The prisoners were then sent to concentration camps where the ICCP classified them. Based on the result of their tribunal and subsequent classification, the prisoners were either executed or marked for forced labor. The MIR would then organize labor battalions and distribute them to military units that required their labor. The battalions would then be housed in permanent concentration camps during non-working hours.¹¹⁷

In spite of the complex structure of classification and interment, the ICCP was able to manage large influxes of prisoners quickly as the campaign against the northern Republican territories ended. In mid-August, after the occupation of Biscay, the Nationalists launched an offensive against Cantabria. In less than two weeks, Nationalist

¹¹⁵ Pinillos to General Headquarters of the Generalissimo, 28 July 1937, AGMA-ZN, A18, L8, C17.

¹¹⁶ Lopez to Pinillos, AGMA-CGG, A1, L56, C16.

¹¹⁷ General report written by Pinillos, 17 July 1937, AGMA-ZN, A40, L4, C47.
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and Italian forces captured Santander, the capital of Cantabria. The campaign was not over, but by the fall of Santander the Nationalists had captured over fifty thousand Republican soldiers. In less than a week, the ICCP officials in Santander classified and transferred the prisoners to new camps such as those in Santoña, Laredo, and Corbán.¹¹⁸ While the department and its officials were able to classify prisoners with great rapidity, they had little control over the deteriorating sanitary conditions in the new camps. Some new camps, such as the six hundred-prisoner facility at La Magdalena and the three thousand prisoner camp at Corbán, had “excellent” sanitary conditions. However, the camps at Estella, Orduña and Santoña had problems with contaminated water that led to frequent outbreaks of gastrointestinal infections.

As the number of camps and the population of prisoners expanded, Pinillos’ own views began to guide the department’s development. The decree that created the ICCP lacked any sort of direct ideological goals for the department but the selection of Pinillos as its head made the ICCP into an institution of systemized terror. For Pinillos, the ICCP was a means to regulate and focus violence and repression against an enemy that Spain had rarely experienced. And it was a war unlike any other, as Pinillos remarked in a report:

[We must] also calculate the special nature of the war in which we are engaged, different in many aspects from an international war, and from a majority of civil wars that have bloodied the ground of our fatherland, and that of other nations, since one cannot describe our case as merely a political conflict...in which both sides, like in other wars, are formed of honorable men who show their good faith and that fight while maintaining respect for human dignity and the gentlemanly laws of war, but unfortunately in the case of Spain, the Nationalist Army fights not another army but a horde of murderers and outlaws.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Gomez to General Headquarters of the Generalissimo, 23 September 1937, AGMA-CGG, A1, L16, C3.

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This mob of criminals, as Pinillos described the Republicans, had to be brought to justice. For him, these prisoners had no honor and lacked even the basic aspects of civilization inherent in most contemporary armies. Thus, the enemy could not even be called an army, but rather a horde of bloodthirsty criminals. Just as interesting as Pinillos' thoughts on the Republicans were his thoughts on the nature of the war. The conflict was unlike any other in Spain's history. A title of "civil war" or "political war" did not suffice. The nature of the struggle between Nationalist and Republican was one of civilization against barbarism.

An unconventional war warranted equally uncommon means to wage it. Franco, Pinillos, and the rest of the Nationalists had to fight the enemy on the military and ideological front. The Army of Africa or the Condor Legion could exterminate men but they could not kill the "Bolshevik" idea that compelled those men to commit acts of "treason" and "rebellion" against the fatherland. The Nationalists would kill the idea in the concentration camps. As seen with the Order of Classification, the officers and political party leaders, those false prophets of Marxism who had misled the masses, had to face the harshest punishment for spreading such ideas. Those that had been misled, however, could be saved, and they *needed* to be saved. The "new" Spain that the Nationalist wanted to construct could not be completed without the collective effort of Nationalist and prisoner alike. As the inmates of the camp at La Magdalena in Santander learned, "[i]n order to make Spain great, Imperial and free, and which is being built by the architect of the New Imperial Spain, *el Caudillo* [Franco], we all have to contribute

¹¹⁹ Pinillos' report for September 1937, 3 October 1937, AGMA-CGG, A8, L25, C17.
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our grain to the field.”¹²⁰ But how would the prisoners learn to plant such a grain, and what sort of Spain would grow out of the sown field? The answer lies in the reeducation programs in the camps.

¹²⁰ Report of ICCP office at La Magdalena, 13 November 1937, AGMA-CGG, A1, L56, C22.
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Chapter 4: Reeducation and the Elimination of the “Bolshevik” Virus in the Camps

In their attempt to construct a “new” Spain, the Nationalists first had “cleansed” the country of leftist leaders, men considered infidels and parasites who threatened the existence of Spanish society and led the masses away from traditional values. With the offensive against the northern Republican territories, the Nationalists were now in possession of these masses of men who had been led astray. Though the numbers overwhelmed the few camps that existed in the early spring of 1937, the Nationalists eventually centralized and expanded the concentration camp system. This system included a uniform means of classification, the General Order of Classification, and a department, the *Inspección de Campos de Concentración de Prisioneros* (ICCP), to oversee the camps and prisoners. As the system began to stabilize, the Nationalists began to realize the potential of the camps as centers of filtration and purification.

For the Nationalists, the Republican prisoners were a mass of diseased men, infected with the “Bolshevik” virus that compelled them to turn against the fatherland to foreign, radical, and secular leftist ideologies. The reeducation of the Republican prisoners was the second step in the process of building a “new” Spanish society. This “new” society was based on traditional values that had long since lost their primacy in Spain. “New” Spain was, above all, a Catholic country and a state that fully embraced the role of the Church. In order to construct this society, however, the Nationalists needed to make “new” men out of the Republican prisoners.

The answer lay within the reformation of the individual and elimination of the “Bolshevik” virus. In order to ensure the stability of the grand project that was “new”

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Spain, the Nationalists had to build a foundation that could support the structure. As with any construction project, the strength of the concrete that forms the base depends on the quality of the cement and the aggregate. The cement or binder, in this case the idea of “new” Spain, may be strong, but if the aggregate, the individual Spaniard, was weak the whole structure would collapse. In the state that they entered the camps, the Nationalists considered the Republican prisoners weak. The treatment was, in keeping with the reeducation process, a healthy dose of Catholic education. To treat the virus remained a short-term imperative, but the Nationalists were once again concerned about the future.

There emerged, however, two arguments for the biological nature of Marxism. For the Nationalists it was a virus, spread through contact with “the leaders.” For the Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera, the psychiatrist assigned to find the biological cause for turning to Marxism, it was innate. In the studies emerged a trend that neither Vallejo nor the Nationalists had foreseen and, without a doubt, had not desired. The examinations on whether the prisoners had changed their political views since entering the camps revealed that a vast majority, up to seventy-five percent, continued to support leftism.

Reeducation, “Spaniardization,” and Catholicism in the Camps

As the war drew to a close, the Nationalists began to focus on the implementation of reeducation programs in the camps. By October 1937, the “War in the North” was over and the Nationalists had resumed operations against Republican territories in eastern

Spain.¹²¹ A Republican attack against Teruel, however, interrupted the Nationalist offensive. Between December 1937 and February 1938, both sides fought over the city in some of the fiercest and brutal combat of the war.¹²² After the Nationalists repelled the offensive, they began an offensive in March 1938 to capture Aragon. By April 1938, Franco's forces completely occupied the province. This, in turn, led to a further influx of Republican prisoners. It was just after the fall of Aragon that the discussion and implementation of reeducation programs began to emerge. This raises the question as to why in May 1938 the Nationalists began to make a concerted effort to reeducate the prisoners. In the evidence this author has examined, there was no explicit statement which explained the reasoning behind starting in May 1938. One possible explanation is that the Nationalists believed that they had achieved a decisive victory with the capture of Aragon. With Catalonia cut off from the large Republican zone in central and southeastern Spain and the failure of several Republican offensives, the Nationalists must have believed that complete victory was near. Thus, it was prudent to begin the process of assimilating the prisoners into the new world of Francoist Spain.

And it was through reeducation in the concentration camps that the Nationalist intended to incorporate the prisoners into their new society. Before the discussion of *how* reeducation functioned, there must be a discussion of *what* the Nationalists hoped to accomplish in this process. As part of the program of reeducation, the Nationalist sought

¹²¹ This work has examined military events of the Spanish Civil War insofar as their course and outcome affected the development of the concentration camp system. By 1938, the system was fully established. Therefore this section, and the remainder of the chapter, has a strong focus on the camps and the process that developed within them. The military events of late 1937 through the end of the war in 1939 will not be absent, but will not be discussed in great detail.

¹²² Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 320-327.
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to apply and ingrain their notion of national identity onto the prisoners. Within the system of concentration camps this process became known as “Spaniardization.” For Franco and his forces, Spanish national identity involved the rejection of “foreign and false” ideologies, such as Marxism and other forms of radical leftism. Furthermore, it was an identity that embraced Catholicism, Christian morality, hard work to reconstruct Spain, and the revival of Spanish glory.¹²³ This “new” Spanish identity reflected an attempt to restore the dominance of traditional values in Spanish society. One statement that pervades the dialogue among Nationalist officials was *españolizar a esos equivocados* (to Spaniardize those [who are] mistaken).¹²⁴ To “Spaniardize” the “mistaken”, the Nationalists forcibly applied their version of Spanish identity to the Republican prisoners. In a way, “Spaniardization” was more than a just means of reeducation. It was also the ideological manifestation of all the physical violence that the Nationalists unleashed on Spain in the early and middle phases of the war. As Mola revealed in discussions with the commanders of the Condor Legion, the future of Spain lay in the rejection of modern values. Modernity was secular, industrial, and liberal. For the Nationalists, modernity and Spain, as they once knew it, could not coexist. From the onset, the civil war had been an existential conflict of the nation against “foreignness.” Since the Republican prisoners were infected with the “foreignness,” the only means of treatment was the “true national spirit.”¹²⁵

¹²³ Franco to Pinillos, *Archivo General Militar de Ávila (AGMA)-Cuartel General del Generalísimo (CGG)*, A1, L58, C22, 8 October 1937.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

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In spite of the variations in camp design, the ICCP enforced a uniform method for the reeducation and “treatment” of Republican prisoners. As Pinillos declared, every camp had an obligation “to Spaniardize those who are mistaken and to give those men who are fighting and are working for the enlargement of our fatherland peace in the future.” The head of the ICCP continued, in his dispatch to headquarters of the concentration camp at Álava, that “[the ICCP] should take care to emphasize a special interest in the use of the [Catholic] religion in order to form a solid moral base for the prisoners.”¹²⁶ For Pinillos, the ICCP had a duty to the Nationalist troops who had fought, suffered, and died for the sake of the fatherland. They, as well as the rest of Spain, deserved a long-lasting peace, one in which radical leftism had no opportunity to re-emerge. And the only means to create a sustainable peace was a fundamental change in the thoughts and beliefs of the Republican prisoners. The Nationalist needed to supplant Marxism in order to transform the prisoners’ hearts and minds. This was the logic behind the use of Catholicism. For the Nationalists, adherence to Catholicism produced a moral human being. Man, born with the stain of Original Sin and susceptible to all sorts of temptations, required the redemption of God. Marxism and other forms of leftism were simply human ramblings, words of fallible men who rejected the Church and the existence of God. Above all, the Nationalists planned a new society in which God, through the Catholic Church, was directly attached to the state *and* the nation. To be a true Spaniard, one had to be Catholic. The future of Spain and of the Spanish depended on a definitive marriage between Catholicism and national identity.

¹²⁶ Pinillos to Office of ICCP at Álava, 17 April 1938, AGMA-CGG, A1, L58, C35.
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To understand how the Nationalists attempted to educate the prisoners in Catholicism, in order to make them Spanish again, we must examine this process in practice. For this, the camp at Álava will serve as a case study. In keeping with Pinillos' objectives for reeducation, the mission statement of the camp outlined the importance of "an understanding by prisoners of the glory of the Nationalist movement and their place, as well as ours, in the mission to regenerate morality...[t]his mission can only be achieved through a healthy religious education which turns these treacherous youths against Marxist doctrine and warns them of its evils." Through a regimen of "moral, political, and religious education," the prisoners were forced to learn the principles required to function in "new" Spain. The lesson in "morality" involved a routine of physical activity roughly based on exercises completed in basic training for the Army. Through this activity, those who had been weakened with the disease of Marxism learned the "vitality and strength of the Hispanic race." The political reeducation involved daily lessons in the tenets of Francoism and the twenty-six points of the Falange doctrine.¹²⁷

Although the Nationalists believed in the importance of lessons in politics and morality, they placed the most emphasis on Catholic reeducation. According to First Chaplain D. Natividad Cabicol Magri, the ICCP coordinator of religious education in the camps, the Catholic faith was "inseparable from the Spanish character and race." Thus the Nationalists subjected the prisoners to a strict schedule, with daily mass and instruction in basic Church practices, such as the proper way to accept the Eucharist and how to recite the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary.¹²⁸ The Nationalists also emphasized

¹²⁷ Pinillos to Franco, 6 May 1938, AGMA-CGG, A2, L55, C14.

¹²⁸ Pinillos to Franco, 15 June 1938, AGMA-CGG, A1, L16, C3.
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the sacrament of penance, or the confession of one's sins and the prayer for forgiveness. There emerged within the education on penance a certain duality that reflected the Republican prisoners' betrayal of the Church and the fatherland. First, the prisoners needed to repent for sins against God and the Church. In their acceptance and defense of the Second Republic, the prisoners had dedicated themselves to a secular cause, but, more importantly, one that completely disregarded "the divinity of the afterlife and the body of Christ and had [chosen] atheist Marxism."¹²⁹ Second, the prisoners had sinned against Spain, the fatherland that the Nationalists had so connected to God that the prisoners might as well have betrayed Christ himself. The radical leftist and Republican leaders who committed the sin of wrath against Spain had been dealt the harshest punishments, but this left the misguided masses in a sort of limbo or Purgatory: they were neither condemned nor saved.

Still, there existed the possibility of redemption. Though they had to endure harsh conditions within the camps, demonstrations of loyalty to Franco and the Nationalist led some to obtain release. For example, a group of prisoners in the concentration camp at Santoña were able to convince the ICCP officials of their devotion. On July 17 and 18, the camp's officials held a celebration for the anniversary of the Army uprising. The devotion and sincerity of the prisoners in their forced participation impressed the camp's officials. The following day, the prisoners attended their daily Catholicism lesson. After the lesson ended, and the prisoners took communion:

[t]hey sang religious songs and the National Anthem with great enthusiasm...and then, as if it was Holy Week, officials paraded the prisoners down the streets

¹²⁹ Ibid.
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where they thanked the Caudillo for his kindness and justice. Next they repeatedly chanted [the Nationalist] slogan ‘Spain, ONE, GREAT AND FREE’ and prayed for the quick and final victory of our glorious Army.¹³⁰

That the prisoners showed such apparent faithfulness to the Nationalist cause may not be as surprising as the fact that, a few days after the parade, the camp’s official released an unspecified number of prisoners to serve as messengers in the trenches of Franco’s forces around Madrid.¹³¹ Redemption, through the acceptance of the *Caudillo* and Catholicism, was possible and the camp officials seemed thoroughly satisfied with the result. The story of the prisoners at Santoño reveals that the Nationalists neither intended to create a permanent slave labor force nor exterminate the prisoners. They truly believed that the creation of a new society rested on the reformation and loyalty of the masses, including former Republicans. Through a steady diet of religious propaganda, the Nationalists attempted to infuse this undying loyalty into the individual and collective psyche.

As the Nationalists emphasized the importance of Catholicism in the reformation of the prisoners, they also forced the prisoners to learn the mission and ideology of the FET-JONS. Thus, the prisoners learned the Nationalist dogma in conjunction with the Catholic education. The Central Office of Propaganda, a department within the Nationalist Army, worked in conjunction with the ICCP to ensure that the prisoners understood that “new” Spain was “an imperial Spain, and a state to be made by Spaniards and only Spaniards...they must understand the concept of unity within the fatherland.”¹³²

¹³⁰ Pinillos to Franco, 23 July 1938, AGMA-CGG, A1, L58, C34, 23 July 1938.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Gomez to Pinillos, 3 August 1938, AGMA-CGG, A1, L58, C46, 3 August 1938.
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Though there was much emphasis on the basic tenets (God, Fatherland, *Caudillo*) of “new” Spain, the Nationalists also forced the prisoners to learn of the “evils and crimes” of Marxism and, in short, why they were incarcerated. The ICCP considered this aspect of the “moral and social” education crucial for the “ideological regeneration of the prisoners.”¹³³ The ICCP forced the prisoners to learn that:

Marxism seeks to cause a disruption within our nation through class conflict; it was the leading cause of criminality before July 18; it aims to advance the causes of the Jews, Free Masons, and Communist International. This is why our Army takes on the task of saving the fatherland; Marxism will led to the destruction of our artistic heritage; it attempts to destroy all intellectual developments or scientific growth...and it aims to subordinate and enslave the politicians of the Popular Front (a left-wing political coalition of the Second Republic–SJP) to the cause of the Communist International and, thereby, infect you.¹³⁴

For the Nationalists, the destruction of the nation was an inherent trait of Marxism. Also, the inclusion of Jews and Free Masons within the Marxist conspiracy to destroy Spain recalled the theories of Juan Tusquets Terrats.¹³⁵ Through the ideas promulgated in the above excerpt, distributed as a pamphlet among the prisoners as part of a reeducation lesson, it becomes clear that “Marxism” and “Marxists” were simply blanket terms for radical leftism and perceived leftists. Furthermore, the Nationalists used the threat of a Jewish-Masonic-Marxist conspiracy to destroy Spain as a means to create an enemy or an “other” whom the Army needed to annihilate in order to ensure the existence of the fatherland. In this sense, the Nationalists sought to justify *to the prisoners* the many

¹³³ Pinillos to Franco, AGMA-CGG, A1, L58, C46.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

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purges and massacres of the early stages of civil war and the continued fight against the Second Republic. The prisoners had been contaminated with the Marxist element, nearly the cause of their own and Spain's demise, but the reeducation process could cure them and allow them to repent for their sins against the fatherland.

Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera and the “Psyche of Marxist Fanaticism”

The need to eliminate the “Bolshevik” virus for good compelled the Nationalist to turn to “science” to find a cure. Given that Marxism, socialism, communism and anarchism were ideas, the Nationalists considered those afflicted as mentally ill. The “Bolshevik” virus was a disease of the psyche and, thus, only a psychiatrist had the knowledge to find a cure and an answer to the question that had utterly confounded the Nationalists: why did an individual adopt leftist ideologies? Thus, Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera, chief of Psychiatry for Franco's armies, established the *Gabinete de Investigaciones Psicológicas* (Psychological Research Bureau) within the ICCP.

It was at the San Pedro de Cardeña and Málaga concentration camps that Vallejo attempted to find the link between the prisoners' genetics, psyche, and political affiliations. Though his studies on prisoners from the International Brigades and Spanish female prisoners produced a number of results, all which suggested the pointlessness of an attempt at psychological reformation, Vallejo never finished his proposed research on Spanish male prisoners.

Antonio Vallejo Nágera was born on July 20, 1889 in Palencia. He studied medicine at the University of Valladolid before he enlisted in the Spanish Army's health

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corps in 1910. Like Franco and Queipo de Llano, he served in Morocco (1912-1915). In 1917, the Army sent Dr. Vallejo to the Spanish Embassy in Berlin. During his time in Germany, and in the midst of WWI, Vallejo was part of a psychological investigation committee that examined prisoners of war. After the war, he returned to Spain where he worked in military psychiatric clinics in both Barcelona and Madrid. Vallejo taught psychiatry at the Military Sanitary Academy until the outbreak of the civil war.¹³⁶ Before his appointment as Army Chief of Psychiatry in 1938, Dr. Vallejo wrote two books that outlined his theories on the psychology of the masses and eugenics.

His first book, *Psicopatología de la Conducta Antisocial (Psychology of Antisocial Conduct)* begins with a broad outline of the “Hispanic” race’s future and the notion of “antisocial” behavior. The book was published in 1937, just as the Nationalists began their northern offensive. In the introduction of *Antisocial Conduct*, Vallejo offered a message of optimism for the Nationalist sympathizers weary of the civil war:

Sometimes we must hesitate with our pessimism about the future of Spain, though it was pessimism justified by the progressive advances that the [French] Revolution has been able to achieve since the eighteenth century and [nineteenth] century. Fleeting triumphs the liberals called ‘rights,’ like the elections of 1933 in which many reforms were passed, brought back the starvation wages...and reaffirmed our pessimism about the destiny of our Hispanic race...We, the faithful Spanish, have resisted the repeated attacks of...the Judaizers...reformers, the Illuminati, and all kinds of heterodoxy.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Javier Bandrés and Rafael Llavona, “Psychology in Franco’s Concentration Camps,” *Psychology in Spain*, no. 1, 3-9., vol.1, (1997).

¹³⁷ Antonio Vallejo Nágera, *Psicopatología de la conducta antisocial*, (San Sebastian: Editorial Española S.A, 1937), 7-8.
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For Vallejo, the civil war was simply another obstacle in the seemingly eternal struggle against radical leftism. As a nation, Spain had survived all of the revolutions and leftist movements since 1789, which had toppled monarchies and had diminished the role of the Church and religion in society. According to Vallejo, the reforms of the Second Republic were a dark time for Spain and the “Hispanic race.” Thus, he established a link between leftist reform and the decline of the Spanish racial community. In spite of such a pessimistic outlook, Vallejo offered a broad solution:

We believe in the clear way and efficient task of bio-psychologically studying the effect that the actions of the revolutionary agents have had on the masses. These agents, who are experts of the psychology of the villages and poor multitudes, took advantage of such knowledge in order to provoke and channel antisocial reactions that demolish all the foundations of Christian civilization and the established social order...The new Spain must be constructed on the strong foundations of a spiritualistic racial hygiene, with a distributive policy of work that conforms with the principles of selection based on ones’ abilities, and with a moralization of the people that lessens its natural disposition to antisocial actions. All future Spanish policy must establish solid biological laws that take into account the role of the psychological in the biological.¹³⁸

Vallejo posited, in a similar vein to Tusquets’ notions in *Origins of the Spanish Revolution*, that Spanish society and Christian civilization faced an existential threat from certain agents within Spain. For Tusquets, the enemy had been the foreign Jews. Vallejo, however, understood the enemy as “revolutionary agents,” people who had not only turned to Marxism but also sought to spread its radicalism to the masses. He proposed a chilling solution to this crisis of society in his later work. In a broad, and somewhat vague, statement, Vallejo proposed a policy that paired Spanish men and women together based on psychological markers. The “sane” couples (those who supported the

¹³⁸ Ibid., 10.
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Nationalists) were meant to produce more “sane” people to become the majority. Vallejo posited that a minority of “insane” (those who were prone to Marxism) would constitute less of a threat to Spanish society and, given the “sane” majority,” would not be exposed to radical or “antisocial” elements.¹³⁹

This study will return to Vallejo’s more direct thoughts on race in the next section. For now, it is essential to discuss Vallejo’s argument in *Antisocial Behavior* for the cause and spread of antisocial behavior and other “psychological contagions.” First, he shared his view of human nature and how “psychological contagions” spread. Vallejo wrote that the masses shared many qualities with flocks of animals, as they were prone to follow a “pack leader” and, ultimately:

The psychology of the multitudes differs little from that of the child, whose fear, hyper-excitability, and blind obedience to the orders of the leader...[T]he primitive psychology of the masses facilitated the “psychological contagion,” the true key to the success of the ideological movements...[H]ow is the psychological contagion produced?...It is produced through a lack of questioning and the absence of reason inherent in mass thought. The psychological contagion is an exaggerated idea, perhaps pathological, that preys, to the detriment of the masses and to the advantage of the psychopath, on human susceptibility.¹⁴⁰

For Vallejo, the masses were nothing more than mindless beings that lived to serve and followed whatever ideology the “psychopaths” disseminated among their numbers. That the masses lacked the ability to reason and question the “pack leader” remained the primary reason “psychological contagions” easily spread. The Nationalists were, therefore, completely justified in the policy of executing Republican and leftist leaders.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 14-23.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 103-105.

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These men, the “psychopaths,” were agents of moral destruction and false prophets who sought the destruction of Spain and understood the potential of the masses as a force for whatever ideological current reached them first. A paradoxical situation emerges, however, in this logic. If the unquestioning masses can be easily led, there existed the potential for the success of a reeducation process or mass support for the *Caudillo* in his role as the “pack leader.” At the same time, the Marxists could easily mislead the multitudes. Hence, the masses inherently carried a “Bolshevik” gene, an innate tendency for them to turn to “Bolshevik” ideologies. Whether this gene was activated had to depend, in part, on the environment. If the Nationalists eliminated radical leftism, they would eliminate the “psychological contagion” that ailed the Spanish masses. One means to accomplish this task had already been enacted: the mass purges in the early stages of the war. Vallejo’s long-term solution, as stated in *Antisocial Behavior*, was selective breeding.

In his work *Eugenesis de la Hispanidad y Regeneración de la Raza* (*Eugenics of the Hispanicness and Race Regeneration*), Vallejo expanded on his ideas of the “Hispanic Race” and proposed a plan for the “regeneration of the race.” *Eugenics* differs from *Antisocial Conduct* in its focus on race and discussion of how the civil war will impact the future of Spain. Vallejo argued that the civil war would serve as a means of natural selection and:

[w]ill create a lineage of gentleman who are necessary for new Spain, and will help to increase the numbers of the spiritual and faithful nobility. There will be distinctive signs between the two groups that often fight each other, those that are aristocratic in thought and gentlemanly in feeling, and are of the Hispanic race; and those Marxist laborers who are plebeian by nature...It would be a pity if the blood spilt on the altar of the fatherland would not fertilize the Spring of racial

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virtues and that on the land regained would emerge weeds and darnel. In order to avoid such a failure, we must unite the youth, and form them into selected groups—of gentleman of the Hispanic race to be precise—that were admired and remarkable in the war so that those qualities may spread in peacetime.¹⁴¹

In the Nationalist supporters was the blood and superior genetics that helped solidify “new” Spain. Through combat and the Nationalist purges, this new cadre of nobles would emerge and lead Spain. For Vallejo, the Nationalists needed to ensure the perpetuation of the Hispanic race’ desirable characteristics. The civil war was as much a fight for the survival of Spain as a “fight for the existence...of the Hispanic race and culture.”¹⁴² Vallejo’s defined the “Hispanic race” as a broad, international community that shared ethnic and cultural heritages. In *Eugenics*, he argued that:

What is important is not the purity of the race, but rather the strength of the people and their connection with the nation. When we talk of race, we refer to the Hispanic race, the Iberian genotype, that in the present has experienced the most varied mixes caused by the contact and connection with other peoples...We Spanish cannot talk of the purity of racial genotype...[b]ut the [Hispanic] race has overflowed territorial limits and has populated and repopulated many of the population of the [Central and South American] Indian nations, and filled them with not only our biological characteristics, but also our ideas, habits, language, religion, and culture so that the Argentines, Peruvians, Chileans, Mexicans, share similarities with the Castilian.¹⁴³

In short, Vallejo defined the *raza* as a shared biological, linguistic, and religious heritage. Within this all or nothing definition, the absence or rejection of these characteristics, particularly religion, removed one from this racial community.

¹⁴¹ Antonio Vallejo Nágera, *Eugenésia de la Hispanidad y Regeneración de la Raza* (Zaragoza: Editorial Española S.A, 1937), 5-6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 92-93.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

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Biologically, the “Hispanic race” consisted of Spaniards, those of two Spanish parents born in Spain, and the populations of Central and South America, many of whom were of mixed Spanish-Native ancestry or ethnic Spaniards born in the colonies. Therefore, the “Hispanic race” derived its strength from the size and international scope of its population. When the Spanish colonized the Americas, they spread the “Iberian genotype” and enlarged the racial community.

Vallejo’s presentation of the linguistic connection raised an important issue of uniformity within the “Hispanic race.” As seen in the quote, he stated that the South and Central Americans “shared similarities with the *Castilian* (my emphasis).” At the time of the colonization, the Spanish monarchy consisted of the unified territories of the “Catholic monarchs,” Isabel I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon. The discovery and colonization of the Americas was done in the name of the Crown of Castile. Thus Castilian Spanish was promulgated among the native populace. In Spain, there are several different dialects and languages, such as Catalanian, Basque, Aragonese, and Galician. In this point, Vallejo acknowledged the long and complicated history of regionalism in Spain. Many Nationalists, especially Franco, shared Vallejo’s view on the link between Castilian Spanish and its importance to the “Hispanic race.” In order to preserve the unity of Spain and the race, Franco applied this idea in a harsh and extreme policy. After the end of the civil war, he banned the use of regional dialects and languages, particularly Basque and Catalanian. For Franco and the Nationalists, the foundation of “new” Spain rested on unity *and* uniformity. The Catalanians and Basques, with their “foreign” languages and cultures, and populations of radical leftists needed to be either assimilated or exterminated for “new” Spain to stand.

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With this list of these “racial” characteristics, Vallejo intimated the threat that secular ideologies posed to the “Hispanic race.” For centuries, Spain had been one of the largest bastions of Catholicism in Europe. One of the justifications for the colonization of the Americas was the promulgation of the Catholic faith among the native population. Along with the *conquistadors* arrived numerous Catholic missionaries. Through the efforts of these missionaries, Catholicism was infused into the culture and social framework of the Spanish colonies. For Vallejo *and* Franco, Catholicism was one of the defining traits of “Hispanicness.” To be Hispanic, especially Spanish, was to be Catholic. The secularist policies of the Second Republic and its leading leftist policies created an existential crisis of “Hispanicness.” If socialism, communism, and anarchism continued to infect the masses, and subsequently turn them away from Catholicism, they threatened to sever the link between Spain and the larger “Hispanic race.”

Now that Vallejo had defined the parameters and characteristics of the “Hispanic race,” he outlined a plan for its preservation and “regeneration.” First, Vallejo equated the rise of Marxism to a diluting of the “Hispanic race.” Prior to the civil war, the Marxist contagion had spread among the masses and transformed them from Spaniards into foreigners. The Nationalist uprising was, in many ways, a response to the existential crisis of the “Hispanic race.” At the same time, the civil war presented an opportunity to begin the “regeneration” of the race. The reeducation process in the concentration camps represented an immediate response to the crisis. Vallejo proposed, however, a more permanent solution based on selective breeding:

We are not against the mixing of the superior and inferior castes of our race. We advocate, however, for the creation of a super Hispanic cast, ethnically improved,
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morally robust, vigorous in spirit...Our program attempts to place individuals of all social classes within a selected hierarchy, in which the aristocrats of body and spirit will rise to the top...The race that does not want to be dominated by the inferior and weak of mind and spirit must increase the biotypes of good quality until it is assured that they become the majority of the population. A race must reproduce its best elements, not annihilate them and suffocate them. We have to choose individuals of elevated bio-psyches and place them in the best conditions for growth.¹⁴⁴

Rather than a program of extermination, the solution to the problem of Marxism was caste system based on the quality of “bio-psyche.” He placed those of “inferior” psyches (i.e. the Marxists) at the bottom of the system and those of “superior” ability at the top. Though he claimed to have nothing against inter-caste breeding, such a hierarchal system indirectly discouraged intermarriage. Those at the top would likely enjoy special privileges, such as the “best conditions for growth,” and therefore would seek to maintain their position.

The Studies at San Pedro de Cardeña and the “Bio-psyche of Marxist Fanaticism”

In 1938, the ICCP created a sub-department entitled the *Gabinete de Investigaciones Psicológicas* (Psychological Research Bureau) to examine the psychological characteristics of the Republican prisoners and to find a cure for the “psychological contagion” of Marxism. Between November 1938 and October 1939, the magazine *Revista Española de Medicina y Cirugía de Guerra* (the Spanish Magazine of War Medicine and Surgery) published Vallejo’s studies on the concentration camp

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 117-118.

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prisoners in a series titled *Biopsiquismo del Fanatismo Marxista* (Bio-Psyche of Marxist Fanaticism).

The purpose of Vallejo's studies was twofold. First, he was tasked to find the biological and psychological factors that contributed to political fanaticism across a wide spectrum of subjects. Second, the Nationalists wanted to use his "scientific" findings as propaganda. In the first issue of the series, he directly stated his objective for the research and outlined his methodology. Vallejo conducted all the studies at the San Pedro de Cardeña concentration camp. Why he used this camp in particular remains unclear. It is plausible that the diverse population of prisoners, who ranged from Spaniards to members of the International Brigades, provided Vallejo with the best opportunity to make bold and wide claims about the nature of Marxism and its effects on the human, not just Spanish, mind. The primary objective for the study was "to uncover the relationship that may exist between the bio-psychologies of the subject and democratic-communist political fanaticism."¹⁴⁵ For this study, Vallejo listed three hypotheses for the project. First, that there existed a relationship between bio-psychological personality and a "constitutional predisposition to Marxism." Second, he believed that "mental inferiority" was prevalent in a large portion of Marxists. Finally, he argued that "antisocial psychopaths" were widespread among the Marxist masses.¹⁴⁶ Vallejo's methodology for the study involved a series of "diagnostic tests" that examined personality, nationality, religious affiliations, political affiliations, and intelligence. Through an examination of the aforementioned factors, Vallejo determined the "biotype" of the prisoners, the extent

¹⁴⁵ Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera, "Biopsiquismo del Fanatismo Marxista," *Revista Española de Medicina y Cirugía de Guerra* (November 1938), 189.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

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of the “fanaticism,” and how the examined factors contributed to the prisoners’ “condition.”¹⁴⁷ He also proposed an examination of five distinct groups: prisoners of the International Brigades, Spanish political prisoners, female Spanish prisoners, Basque separatists, and Catalanian Marxists. For reasons that remain unclear, however, Vallejo only published six studies. Five of the studies focused on prisoners of the International Brigades and one on Spanish female prisoners. The proposed studies on Spanish male prisoners, Basques and Catalanian were either never conducted or not published.

Vallejo’s findings related to the Latin American prisoners, surprisingly, disproved his hypothesis of the link between “political fanaticism” and socio-economic status. First, he discussed the origins of the prisoners. All the prisoners Vallejo examined for this study resided in Spain before the civil war but were born to Latin American nationals living in the country, except for a group of twenty-one Cuban prisoners who came with the International Brigades. In addition to “shared racial characteristics,” all prisoners, except the aforementioned group of Cubans, had received their education in Spanish schools. Among the prisoners were the recently arrived Cubans (group one), nineteen Cuban nationals who had lived in Spain before the war (group two), thirty-two Argentineans, three Chileans, two Mexicans, and one Uruguayan. The Chileans, Mexicans, and Uruguayan were grouped into one category, which Vallejo called the “South Americans.”¹⁴⁸ He observed that group one Cubans exhibited physical weakness and were largely introverted. They were the only group to exhibit “superior intelligence,”

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 191.

¹⁴⁸ Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera, “Biopsiquismo del Fanatismo Marxista: Grupo de internacionales hispano-americanos,” *Revista Española de Medicina y Cirugía de Guerra* (October 1938), 267-268.
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the highest category in the intelligence section of Vallejo's study. All the other groups were no higher than "good intelligence" and overwhelmingly exhibited intelligence of the "medium," "inferior," and "mentally disabled" categories.¹⁴⁹ The group two Cubans scored highest in athleticism while the Argentineans had the highest number of practicing Catholics. The "South Americans" distinguished themselves with the highest levels of "political fanaticism," "patriotism," and "preference toward their fatherland."¹⁵⁰ The examination of the prisoners' economic backgrounds, however, uncovered interesting results. A majority of *all* the Latin American prisoners were from the upper or upper-middle classes. So why did they turn to Marxism? Vallejo blamed poor Catholic educations. Based on the results of the religious examinations, atheism and "religious indifference" (belief in God but aversion to religious institutions) were highly prevalent among the Latin American prisoners.¹⁵¹ Vallejo stated that "[t]he economic position explains neither the antisocial behavior nor the existence of the Marxist ideology in the Latin American prisoners." It was, rather, their godlessness and blind patriotism that explained why, as Vallejo notes at the end of the study, a majority of all the Latin American prisoners did not respond to reeducation attempts. Over seventy-six percent of group one Cubans, approximately fifty-eight percent of Argentineans, about forty percent of group two Cubans, and over fifty-seven percent of the "South Americans" maintained their beliefs.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 269.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 268, 271, 273.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 271.

¹⁵² Ibid., 276-277.

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In his study of American prisoners, Vallejo concluded that the prevalence of low intelligence and democratic idealism reinforced a stubborn disposition that made it impossible to treat their “democratic fanaticism.”¹⁵³ In his research, he examined seventy-two American prisoners of various “racial origins,” including “Saxon,” black, Polish, Jewish, and Spanish.¹⁵⁴ Among his observations, Vallejo noted that a majority of the prisoners had little education, were of average to low intelligence, and came from the lower-middle and lower classes.¹⁵⁵ After examining the prevalence of suicidal thoughts while imprisoned, which he noted was high at around fifteen percent, and the sexual habits of American prisoners, which he stated were fairly liberal, Vallejo concluded that:

[c]onsidering these observations, we concluded aprioristically that the American Marxists will continue to cling to their ideas after they have lived in the Bolshevik zone [Republican territories–SJP] and after many of them have witnessed the repeated failure of Marxism in politics, society,...administration, and have noticed the crimes and barbarism of [the Marxists]. In effect, the American democratic small mindedness exists to such a degree that no one among the examined [Americans] displayed emotion at the photographic examples of Marxist criminality; but without fail they responded that they would continue to support democracy and antifascism.¹⁵⁶

Even after continued interrogation and reeducation (i.e. photographic displays of Marxist crimes), the American did not relent in their “fanaticism.” Out of the sample of American prisoners, a little over seventy-nine percent maintained their views after the examination.

¹⁵³ Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera, “Biopsiquismo del Fanatismo Marxista: Grupo de internacionales norteamericanos,” *Revista Española de Medicina y Cirugía de Guerra* (January 1939), 30.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

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For Vallejo, it was of the utmost importance to explain this devotion as a result of socio-economic factors. Among his sixteen conclusions for the study, he noted again that a majority of the prisoners were from the low and middle class, and “professional and social failures.”¹⁵⁷ Perhaps the most propagandistic function of this study was to maintain the illusion that the lower classes, even in countries such as the U.S, were prone to degenerate activity. Thus, the Nationalists believed that they needed to be kept down, crushed by terror, violence, and given no reforms to better their existence. Or, as Vallejo imagined in *Eugenics*, careful social engineering and selective breeding could eliminate the threat from the “deficiencies” of the lower classes and their tendency toward Marxism.

In the only study conducted on Spanish prisoners, Vallejo’s examination of female prisoners in the concentration camp near the city of Málaga was designed as an attempt to understand “female criminality” and its origins. The study, however, neither offered a direct solution nor had a list of conclusions like the previous studies. It was, in reality, merely a statement of findings. Vallejo co-authored the study with Eduardo M. Martínez, Medical Lieutenant and Director of the Psychiatry Clinic of Málaga. In the introduction to their study, Vallejo and Martínez directly state the purpose of the study and also what assumptions they had about women:

In order to comprehend such active participation of women in Marxist revolution, remember their characteristic psychic instability, the weakness of their mental equilibrium, their lower resistance to environmental influences, their insecurity of personality control and their tendency to be impulsive, all psychological qualities which in special circumstances lead to abnormalities in social behavior and which

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 44.

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drag the individual into psychopathological states... If women usually have a gentle, sweet and kind character, it is due to the brakes that socially restrain her... It is often observed that women who go into politics do not do so motivated by their ideas, but rather by their feelings, which attain immoderate or even pathological proportions, due to the very irritability of the female personality¹⁵⁸

Behind the many prejudices and false suppositions of this section lay an important assumption: that the Nationalists needed to establish sufficient barriers in order to keep women, so naturally inclined to follow the ideas of their environment, under control. Based on the assumptions in this section, as well his thoughts in *Antisocial Behavior*, women were the most prone to succumb to Marxism. Even more inclined to follow than the male masses, women, in a sense, could be “new” Spain’s greatest asset, as a potential legion of highly dedicated supporters, or an important weakness in its foundation.

Perhaps the most important finding of the study, though Vallejo and Martínez did not intend it, was substantial number of prisoners who resisted reeducation in the camps. Most of the female prisoners, eighteen out of fifty, were between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five with a tendency toward introversion and “inferior” intelligence.¹⁵⁹ Forty-one out of the fifty female prisoners came from the lower and working classes. Vallejo and Martínez postulated that, unlike the American prisoners who on average did not grow-up in poverty, the economic “misery” of the female prisoners’ youth and adolescence forced them to work at a young age, thereby increasing their potential to turn to Marxism. As one might expect, Vallejo and Martínez offer no answer and do not

¹⁵⁸ Dr. Antonio Vallejo Nágera and Dr. Eduardo M. Martínez, “Investigaciones Psicológicas en Marxistas Femeninos Delincuentes,” *Revista Española de Medicina y Cirugía de Guerra* (March 1939), 398-399.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 400-401.

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discuss the obvious solution of social reforms.¹⁶⁰ Toward the end of the report, Vallejo and Martínez noted that thirty-three of the fifty prisoners either had not yet changed their Marxist beliefs or refused to declare the nature of their beliefs. They offer no explanation for this phenomenon, only that the prisoners over thirty years old changed their political beliefs and supported the Nationalist cause.¹⁶¹

When “science” functions as propaganda, certain links must be maintained regardless of the evidence at hand or one’s previous assumptions. Through his studies, Vallejo posited that either socio-economic status and, after the study of Latin American prisoners, the absence of Catholicism were important factors in a person’s innate tendency to succumb to movements such as Marxism. Overall, the studies were filled with many propagandistic findings and conclusions, except for one. Throughout all of the examinations, a majority of each prisoner group had not changed their political views (ranging from antifascist, democratic, or radical leftist) after the reeducation process. As mentioned before, Vallejo stated he planned to conduct examinations of Spanish male prisoners, Catalanian Marxists, and Basque separatists. Although I cannot prove it with the evidence I have compiled for this project, I strongly suspect that, given the poor results of the political views examinations, Franco ordered Vallejo to stop the studies, as they no longer served the desired propagandistic function. Results showing that Spanish male prisoners had not responded to reeducation in the concentration camps would have been a propaganda nightmare.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 404.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 411.

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Conclusion

As the Nationalist forces launched their final offensives and occupied the last of the Republican territories, the increase in prisoners had serious consequences for the concentration camps. In the first two months of 1939, Franco's troops ended their campaign against Catalonia, which had begun in December 1938, and occupied the remainder of the province. Madrid still remained under Republican control. In March, a series of internal disputes among the Republicans finally led to the city's collapse. On March 4, Colonel Segismundo Casado, commander of the Republican Army in unoccupied central Spain, made the decision to form a military junta with the anarchists and socialists in an attempt to overthrow Prime Minister Juan Negrín and bring peace to the war weary populace. Casado's coup began a series of violent internal conflict that pitted the socialist and anarchists against the communists still loyal to Negrín and his idea to resistance until the bitter end. Casado's forces defeated the communists and, after attempts to negotiate a conditional surrender with Franco ended in failure, he went into exile as the last Republican forces around the city began to surrender. On March 26, the Nationalists made their final advance against Madrid and the next day entered the nearly abandoned city. By March 31, all of Spain was under Nationalist occupation and on April 1 Franco declared that the war was over, as thousands of Republican refugees who had avoided capture fled to southern France.¹⁶² Meanwhile, the concentration camps swelled with prisoners from Catalonia and the last of the Republican territories. Lack of food and

¹⁶² Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 294-300.
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unsanitary conditions made the camps into spaces of diseases and unspeakable hunger.¹⁶³ At the end of the civil war, thousands of Republican prisoners joined the nearly seventy thousand already in the concentration camps.¹⁶⁴

For almost a decade after the end of the war the concentration camps and forced labor battalions continued the internment and exploitation of leftist prisoners. At its peak, the Nationalists' system consisted of nearly two hundred camps and by the end of the war approximately four hundred thousand prisoners had passed through the concentration camp system.¹⁶⁵ In the post-civil war years, the concentration camps continued to serve their ideological function, but also as a deterrent to resistance and reform. The fear of internment or a sentence to forced labor kept workers from voicing their frustrations about low wages and economic exploitation.¹⁶⁶ The terror, reeducation, torture, and hunger of the wartime camps continued into the post-civil war years. The increased number of female prisoners led to more widespread cases of rape and resulting pregnancies. The victims had their babies taken and the newborns were sent to either religious institutions or families who had supported the Nationalists during the civil war.¹⁶⁷

While the concentration camp system began to downsize during the 1940's, its bureaucratic administration underwent a transformation. Still, the decrease in camps and

¹⁶³ Javier Rodrigo, *Cautivos: Campos de concentración en la España franquista, 1936-1947*, (Barcelona: Crítica Contrastes, 2005), 146-147, 166.

¹⁶⁴ Javier Rodrigo, *Los campos de concentración franquistas: entre la historia y la memoria*, (Madrid: Siete Mares)150.

¹⁶⁵ Rodrigo, *Cautivos*, 171.

¹⁶⁶ Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 312.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 314.

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prisoners did not stop Franco from using their labor for his own projects. Between 1940 and 1947, Franco reduced the number of camps to around one hundred with the last camp closing in 1947. The ICCP remained in existence until 1942, when it was combined with the forced labor departments. The new *Jefatura de Campos de Concentración de Prisioneros* (JCCBD) oversaw the camps and many forced labor battalions until 1947.¹⁶⁸ Perhaps the most forceful reminder of Franco's control over his defeated adversaries was the creation of the *Valle de los Caídos* (Valley of the Fallen). Franco planned the construction of this giant mausoleum as a tribute to the Nationalists killed during the civil war. In order to build the Valley of the Fallen, Franco used Republican prisoners as a slave labor force. Over twenty thousand prisoners were used to complete the monument that still stands today.¹⁶⁹

The Nationalist concentration camps, along with the Nazi concentration camps of the early 1930's, signaled the beginning of a new era in which systems of internment and slave labor were used on the European continent. Most internment systems previously had existed in the colonies of Western powers, such as German Southwest Africa, the Philippines under U.S control, and Spanish Cuba. These camps, however, served a military, not ideological, purpose. The Spanish forces in Cuba, under the command of the infamous General Valeriano Weyler, created the first modern concentration camps. As part of his "reconcentration" policy of 1896-1897, General Weyler relocated hundreds of thousands of Cubans in order to ensure that the insurgents were unable to blend in with the civilian populace. Poor planning led to unspeakable conditions within the camps.

¹⁶⁸ Rodrigo, *Cautivos*, 224-225.

¹⁶⁹ Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 313.
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Starvation and disease made the “reconcentration” centers virtual death camps. Approximately one hundred thousand Cubans died in these camps.¹⁷⁰ Just a few years later, British colonial forces created concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Their nearly identical purpose, to deny the Afrikaner insurgents a civilian populace to use as cover and a means of supplies, led to similar conditions within the British camps. At the end of the war, approximately thirty thousand people, mostly women and children, had perished due to disease malnutrition, and starvation.¹⁷¹

With the Nationalists, there was a clear and focused effort to break, punish, and reform the individual in order to build a new state. As Michel Foucault writes in *Discipline and Punish*, one principal aspect of early modern and modern discipline is the distribution of individuals in a particular space. Among the techniques of this distribution is enclosure, “the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself” and a place of “disciplinary monotony.” In this system, particular sites functioned as a way to supervise and also to break “dangerous communications.”¹⁷² The Nationalists’ camps functioned in a similar manner. It was a system designed to separate the victorious from the defeated, the “sane” from the “insane, the traditional from the foreign, and the “healthy” from the “infected.” The Nationalists, however, gave some Republican prisoners a means to “redeem” themselves and prove that they had accepted their reeducation and new place with “new” Spain. In short, the reeducation process was a form of corrective punishment.

¹⁷⁰ Joseph Smith, *The Spanish-American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and the Pacific, 1895-1902* (Longman: New York, 1994), 18-23.

¹⁷¹ Bill Nasson, *The Boer War* (The History Press: Gloucestershire, 2011), 242-247.

¹⁷² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (Pantheon Books: New York, 1977), 141-144.
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For the Nationalists, the prisoners needed punishment for their treason against the fatherland. Only internment, however, was not the sort of solution conducive to the creation of a new society. The framework and stability of a society rests on the willingness of the population to accept its norms and practices. The leftists wanted to change, through social reforms, certain practices within Spain. These reforms were, as the rightists understood it, designed to destabilize Spanish society as part of a larger global conspiracy. Punishment for these crimes came in two forms: death or imprisonment. Each was a response to a particular understanding of the Republican prisoner. The Nationalists sentenced to death, or killed without trial, the Republican prisoners who they understood as “revolutionary leaders,” transmitters of the infectious bacteria of Marxism. Imprisonment was meant for the prisoners who were, in a sense, the victims of the “revolutionary leaders.” Naturally inclined to follow, they had succumbed to Marxism. Although they had differing thoughts about the nature of the ailment, innate versus viral, Vallejo and the Nationalist believed that there were some sort of means to treat the prisoners. Through imprisonment and forced labor, the Nationalists punished the prisoners, but in the course of the reeducation process they “corrected” the Republicans’ behavior. My thesis, in summary, was a project to explain the seemingly inexplicable amount of horror, death, and suffering of the Spanish population in three years of civil war. I believe I have explained sufficiently why the Nationalists killed with such ferocity and why they interned thousands.

In the course of this research, I came upon evidence that struck me as almost uncanny—that is, the similarity in punishment between Franco’s concentration camps and the four grades of penalty used by the Spanish Inquisition. I found no evidence that the

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ICCP consciously used the Inquisition as model but the similarities cannot be ignored. The similarity, more specifically, is in the nature of their systems of classification. The Spanish Inquisition issued four types of verdicts, of increasing severity, to those accused of heresy: acquitted, “penanced,” reconciled, or death. An acquittal meant the case was pardoned, but the accused remained under suspicion. The verdict of “penanced” was the punishment given to those who had confessed their guilt. The Spanish Inquisition issued verdicts of “penanced” in two degrees, one light (*de levi*) and one heavy (*de vehementi*), based on the nature of the sin. The Inquisition issued the reconciled verdict for those already “penanced” under the *de vehementi* category who were accused and found guilty of another sin. The punishment for a verdict of reconciled ranged from floggings to a prison sentence. Finally, the Spanish Inquisition burnt at the stake the “heretics” sentenced to death.¹⁷³ If one recalls the ICCP’s four categories of classification for Republican prisoners, the resemblance is remarkable.¹⁷⁴

Furthermore, there was a resemblance in the function of each institution. Both the Spanish Inquisition and the tribunals of the ICCP sought to uncover the “heretics” within their spheres in order to create a homogenous society. Each was, in its own way, a form

¹⁷³ Helen Rawlings, *The Spanish Inquisition*, (Blackwell Publishing: Malden, 2006), 34.

¹⁷⁴ So that the reader does not have to turn back to Chapter 3, I have included a shortage version of the discussion in this footnote.

Category “A” – persons who were prisoners of war, either captured or deserters, who defected to the Nationalists and pledged their loyalty *without* compulsion.

Category “B” – prisoners who had voluntarily joined the Republican forces but had no obvious “social or political responsibilities” (i.e. regular soldiers).

Category “C” – prisoners who were Republican officers, political party leaders, and officials, accused of committing “acts of noted...hostility against our troops.” This was the only category that automatically charge the prisoner with treason and rebellion.

Category “D” – prisoners who committed “ordinary crimes or [crimes] against the law of nations” before or after the Nationalists began their uprising.

Category “A” and “B” prisoners were mostly taken for further interrogation. “C” and “D” prisoners had to go before a criminal or military court for sentencing, though it was usually a long prison sentence or death.

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of religious extremism. The Spanish Inquisition used interrogation, imprisonment, torture, and executions to *ensure* Spanish society remained uniformly Catholic. The ICCP, as an extension of the Nationalist ideology, utilized reeducation, forced labor, and, if necessary, executions in order to *create*, or perhaps *recreate*, a uniform and, above all, unified society and new state. In short, the Spanish Inquisition was designed to protect and maintain while the ICCP was meant to build, prisoner by prisoner, a foundation for a “new” Spain, one that, ironically enough, resembled the state that the Inquisition attempted to maintain.

Unfortunately, the evidence I gathered cannot explicitly substantiate this interpretation. The evidence I do have, however, seems to suggest implicitly that, given the Nationalists’ obsession with the period in which the Inquisition was formed and achieved the height of its powers, the ICCP was meant to function as Franco’s Inquisition. The Spanish Inquisition also continued to operate until 1834, which increases the plausibility of Franco’s awareness of how it operated. In order to determine the validity of my interpretation, one would need to conduct an in depth examination into the private papers of various camp officials and of Luis de Martín Pinillos y Blanco de Bustamante, head of the ICCP. In historical research, our answers often leave us with more questions than we had at the onset of the project. Rather than lament this, I fully embrace this new opportunity for someone, myself or another scholar, to undertake the research necessary to confirm the link between the Spanish Inquisition and the ICCP.

What I do know about the ICCP and the Nationalists concentration camps is that they were both, as an institution and system respectively, an attempt to build a new state that the Nationalists repeatedly referred to as “new” Spain. But how long was it meant to

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last? How long could it have lasted? One answer is that it was highly dependent on the man who brought about its existence, Generalissimo Francisco Franco. With his death ended the dream, or perhaps nightmare, of the perpetual existence of “new” Spain. Ironically, with the reestablishment of the Bourbon Monarchy, something old and traditional, returned as democracy, as something modern.

Perhaps it is best to understand “new” Spain in terms familiar to its creators. In a way, “new” Spain was the Nationalists’ heaven, God’s reward for their good work in purging the Spain of all its secular enemies. The concentration camps were, in their functions as centers of “redemption” where one was given the possibility to become a part of “new” Spain, similar to purgatory. In Catholicism, purgatory is a place of temporary punishment and, more importantly, purification so that the soul, who died without full payment of its transgression, can enter heaven. Such was the function of the concentration camps in “new” Spain. For the Nationalists, hell was the Second Republic. In reality, however, “new” Spain, with all the death and suffering needed to create it and the terror needed to sustain it, was hell. It was a utopian vision with an utterly dystopian implementation. If “new” Spain was hell, then the Second Republic was, perhaps, the leftists’ heaven: a paradise of reform and modernity. Though he had to create it himself, Franco believed, like John Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*, that it was better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 1, line 263.
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