

Nationalist Propaganda During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939):  
Appeals for International Support and the Western Fear of Communism

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HIS 194V

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23, March, 2018

### Abstract

This research project focuses on Nationalist propaganda aimed at American and British citizens during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The paper's main argument is that Nationalist pamphlets, most printed by Catholic publishing houses, aimed to maintain American and British non-intervention in the Spanish Conflict. To do this, these pamphlets presented the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939) and those that fought on its behalf as a threat to Western Civilization. Portraying the Republican forces as communists, atheists, and thus as anti-West served as a vital tool to foster hostility towards the Republic and sympathy for Francisco Franco's forces by the American and British populace. This propaganda attempted to contribute to Republican difficulties in attaining sufficient military and economic aid to fight the Nationalist army. Most of the primary sources analyzed in this paper were found in the Spanish Civil War collections at University California, Los Angeles and Loyola Marymount University. To my knowledge, select pamphlets studied in this paper have not been used in published works relating to the Spanish Civil War. Thus, this paper aims to fill a gap in the existing historiography on the War, a conflict that is largely overshadowed by the Second World War that followed it.

## Introduction

The Teachers Union chapter of the Works Progress Administration published a poem in 1937 by I. L. Kissen, a soldier who died fighting in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade for the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Their poem captures the emotional and ideological commitment of soldiers who fought in defense of the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939). It illustrates the conflicts they faced in the battle against the Nationalist forces led by Francisco Franco. Kissen writes,

It is not such an easy thing to die,  
 To trade the breath of life for some ideal,  
 Some vision of a better world you feel  
 Deep in your heart; and yet how sure am I,  
 You did not falter once—you did not try  
 One backward step—though death was sure and real—  
 You met that last pink slip of fire and steel  
 With vision still unblurred and head held high.<sup>1</sup>

This passage reflects not only the ideals of the soldier who wrote it, but also the larger beliefs that the Abraham Lincoln brigadiers fought for. That one of the most studied aspects about the Spanish Civil War in historical scholarship is the involvement of American and British civilians in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade indicates the contemporary ideological identification with the Republican cause. However, propagandists for the Republic did not exclusively use prominent Western figures such as American president Abraham Lincoln. Instead, his name and values were used by *both* sides of the conflict. By presenting the conflict in this way, this paper highlights the war as not simply a domestic civil battle fought between the government and rebels, but rather as

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<sup>1</sup> Poem “In Memoriam” in “WPA Teachers in Spain”, published by the W.P.A. Teachers Union Chapter of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Pro-Communist, Democratic and non-Interventionist literature, ca. 1937. Col. 205, Collection of material about the Spanish Civil War. Box 1 Folder 3. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

an international battle fought by both sides for the realization of their respective interpretations of Western ideals. Kissen writes about their struggle as a fight for “some vision of a better world you feel.” Abraham Lincoln figures prominently in this fight as both the Nationalists and the Republicans held him up as an example of their identification with Western ideology.

Major General J.F.C. Fuller, prominent British Fascist and supporter of the British Fascist movement, wrote in the Nationalist supporting Catholic publication, “The Conquest for Red Spain,”

Once that great democrat [Abraham Lincoln] said: “Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that sits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right—a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Fuller’s assertion that Lincoln’s thought justified the Nationalist cause indicates the lengths that the Nationalist cause went in presenting themselves as the “true” defenders of the West. Fuller’s attempt to legitimize the rebel cause served as a crucial method of acquiring international sympathy for Franco’s forces. However, Lincoln is perhaps most famous for *suppressing* the biggest rebellion in United States History; the secession of the southern states from the Union and the formation of the Confederate States of America. Further, Fuller’s reference to Lincoln as “that great democrat” critically overlooks that Lincoln figured as a prominent member of the American Republican party. However, Fuller’s use of Abraham Lincoln’s thought in “The Conquest of Red Spain” served to advance the important goal of maintaining non-intervention by the United States and Britain. By creating a connection between the Nationalist cause and the

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<sup>2</sup> “The Conquest of Red Spain”, by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD, 1, June, 1937, Pro-Communist, Democratic and non-Interventionist literature, ca. 1937. Col. 205, Collection of material about the Spanish Civil War. Box 1 Folder 3. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

familial Western values of Abraham Lincoln, Fuller fulfilled that goal. The Nationalist propaganda of the period aimed to portray the Republic as a threat to Western civilization while simultaneously presenting itself as the “true” representer of the West.

The chaos of the Spanish Civil War demanded international attention for both the Republican forces as well as the Nationalist rebels. Since the war’s conclusion, the conflict had been largely popularized during the Cold War period as a struggle between communists and fascists and is often overshadowed by an emphasis on the study of the Second World War that followed the turbulent period. However, rationalized ideological convictions served as the foundation for both of the conflict’s predominant combatants. The Republican movement, supported by groups that included democrats, socialists, anarchists, and communists, contrasted with the Nationalist movement, which had its foundations in a conservative, religious, and national narrative that stressed its connection to a mythical Spanish homeland. Both the Republicans and Nationalists justified their fight to a world audience, which illustrates the importance international sympathy played in the development of the struggle. The Nationalist army, led by general Francisco Franco, benefited from wide support from the international Catholic community. And although his movement pressed Catholic support for the perpetuation of a mythologized Spanish history based on a Catholic imaginary, the intellectual framework of the Nationalists cannot simply be reduced to mere Catholicism. Franco’s supporters described the Republican supporters as atheists, depicting in detail the incompatibility of Republican alleged anti-religiosity with the Spanish “nation”.

The left had significant political clout during the 1930's, which had been especially visible in Spain in the years prior to the start of the Civil War. Although the Second Spanish Republic was not a revolutionary leftist republic, Spanish leftist parties played a major role in shaping Spanish politics. The Popular Front, which was the coalition of leftist groups organized by General Secretary of the Communist International Georgi Dimitrov, figured prominently amongst the different leftist groups. The workers strike in Asturias in 1934 is but one example of leftist organizing during this period, which Francisco Franco and his Army of Africa violently put down.<sup>3</sup> Following the Spanish-American War (1898), Spain lost its remaining colonial holdings in Latin America and the Philippines. In addition to territorial loss, Prime Minister Miguel Azaña's lowered many of the Spanish military officers' ranks in June 1931 due to the belief that "promotion should be the result not merely of courage in battle but of efficient command."<sup>4</sup> This provided the groundwork for general frustration amongst Spanish military officers. Sebastian Balfour, author of *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* characterized Azaña's measures as a main contributor to the development of the military officers' anxieties and anger.<sup>5</sup> These frustrations culminated in the July 1936 military coup led by Franco, which initiated a movement that framed the conflict based on a multifaceted argument against the Republic, accusing it of being especially anti-patriotic and anti-Western.

Nationalist propaganda, at the helm of which sat leaders of Catholic institutions, justified the Nationalist rebel uprising against the democratically elected Republic using pamphlets

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<sup>3</sup> The Army of Africa was a militia composed of predominantly Moroccans. It had been trained and formed in that country and was widely considered one of the most ruthless military units in the Spanish army.

<sup>4</sup> Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 242.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, 245.

distributed abroad in terms that would simultaneously encourage international sympathy and support non-intervention policies held by the USA and Britain. Nationalist pamphlets were aimed at a literate Christian and globally invested population. The Nationalists legitimized their struggle to a Western audience arguing that the Republican forces were fundamentally anti-Spanish and invaders of the “true” Spanish homeland. The architects of the Nationalist movement in Spain thus portrayed themselves as redeemers of Western identity, juxtaposed against the atheist foreigner that the Republic allegedly represented. In an attempt to appeal the British and American Catholic audiences, the Nationalist supporters used pamphlets to frame communism as not only inherently anti-Spanish but by extension as anti-Western. Evident throughout Nationalist discourse is a message that emphasized the supposed foreignness of the Republican supporters as puppets of Soviet imperialist desires, tied to the ideology of Bolshevism. The existential nature of communism as a threat to the West served as the Nationalists’ main tool to prevent the United States and Britain from intervening on the side of the Republic.

Historiography of the Spanish Civil War generally presents the war within an international framework that emphasizes the impact that a domestic conflict had on the global community. Historiographical sources provide substantial literature on the involvement of leftist groups in the Republican brigades and global support for them. Scholarly emphasis on the study of the motives of the Republican campaign during the Spanish conflict appears to outweigh studies of the Nationalist perspective. This may be due to the censoring of anti-Nationalist information following the establishment of the Spanish New State, erected following the Republican defeat in 1939. Further, overwhelming international support for the Republican side

before, during, and after the war has established a dominant narrative from the Republican perspective. Notwithstanding, the Nationalist army and its sympathizers had a powerfully organized propaganda campaign aimed at an international audience. Several publications have been released in the last several years that illustrate the methods adopted by Franco's supporters in attaining global support.<sup>6</sup> These secondary sources are a part of a growing body of literature that has, in recent years, begun to capture the complexity of Nationalist propaganda during the Civil War. As these works attest, the Spanish Civil War cannot be examined using the binary that the war was a conflict fought between leftists and fascists. This paper aims to flesh out in greater detail this complexity, by emphasizing the intellectual arguments that the Nationalists used to justify their movement.

Professor Xosé-Manuel Nuñez Seixas writes that the Nationalist overthrow required justification as the Second Republic of Spain (1931-1939) was a legitimately voted-in government with Niceto Alcalá-Zamora at its head. Thus, an uprising against the Republic needed to legitimize itself to both a national and international audience as the “true” representative of Spain. Seixas notes that the Nationalist movement could not depend on the government in office for its justification and that its, “legitimacy had to be based on the *nation*.”<sup>7</sup> Conceptions of the Spanish “nation” has been analyzed by several other Spanish Civil War scholars as a concept inseparable from the Catholic church. Julián Casanova, Spanish historian and author of *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*, writes that, out of this necessity for justification, “emerged Franco’s Church, by God to re-establish the consubstantiality of

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<sup>6</sup> One major work is Christopher Othen, *Franco’s International Brigades: Adventurers, Fascists, and Christian Crusaders in the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* edited by Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 55.



traditional Spanish culture with the Catholic faith.”<sup>8</sup> The Nationalist side, as with nationalist movements generally, needed a mythical historic past to legitimize its uprising.<sup>9</sup> César Simón Rina, in her book, *Los imaginarios franquistas y la religiosidad popular (1936-1949)*, analyzes the interconnectedness between popular religious belief and the Francoist regime during and after the war. She writes that, “nationalcatholicism got its strength from a providential and teleological reading of the history of Spain, which facilitated the legitimization of the regime and its appropriation of the imagery of popular religiosity for its mobilizing capacity.”<sup>10</sup> Seixas’s largely historical analysis contrasts with Rina’s, whose approach uses a more sociological perspective as a tool for critically assessing the period. The authors above have skillfully identified the dependency that the Nationalist propaganda campaign had on the Catholic church. Rina’s work provides an elaboration on the legitimization that the church provided the rebels, a theme evident in the pamphlets below.

Hugo García’s work, *The Truth About Spain: Mobilizing British Public Opinion, 1936-1939*, best captures one of the dominant themes of this paper. His work, argues that the propaganda campaign in Spain during the Civil War aimed at winning support of a British audience.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the message had to, “translate the Spanish problem into terms that would

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<sup>8</sup> Julián Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War translated by Martin Douch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 274.

<sup>9</sup> Loyola Marymount’s William Hannon library holds a small collection of Nationalist Propaganda and post-war material donated by the Spanish Consulate in Los Angeles. University of California’s Charles E. Young Research library houses several collections with both Nationalist as well as a significant amount of Republican propaganda.

<sup>10</sup> El nacionalcatolicismo se nutrió de una lectura providencial y teleológica de la historia de España, lo que facilitó la legitimación del régimen y la apropiación de los iconos de la religiosidad popular por su capacidad movilizadora. In César Simón Rina, *Los imaginarios franquistas y la religiosidad popular(1936-1949)* (Badajoz: Diputación de Badajoz, 2015), 23.

<sup>11</sup> Hugo García, *The Truth About Spain: Mobilizing British Public Opinion, 1936-1939* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 3.

be intelligible for the average Englishman.”<sup>12</sup> And as I explain in this paper, this aim at a traditional, religious, and international audience created a rationally constructed style of propaganda that aimed beyond just a Catholic audience. Several scholars have noted that Nationalist propaganda took aim at the left as the antithesis to the mythical Spain.<sup>13</sup> Fewer authors, however, have made the explicit connection that the “communists” represented that antithetical vision for the future of the country. Alberto Rodriguez Peña, author of *Salazar y Franco: La alianza del fascismo ibérico contra la España republicana: diplomacia, prensa y propaganda* (2017) appears to be one of the first to emphasize this connection. Peña’s quote, while it relates to the Nationalist movement in Spain perfectly, deals instead with António de Oliveira Salazar, Prime Minister of Portugal from 1932-1968. Peña writes, “Communism[...]was public enemy number one of the society and its fatherland. It hung the communists up with a sanbenito [the clothing used during the Spanish inquisition to identify and shame heretics] for fomenting soluble and revolutionary theories in its intention to subvert the fundamental traditions of Portuguese culture, of dividing the country and selling it to foreign interests.”<sup>14</sup> Although Peña’s quote does not deal with Franco directly, the archival material analyzed in this paper suggests a conclusion similar to that of Salazar’s; that the Nationalist movement presented communism as the major threat to the traditional ideals of the “nation.” by presenting the communists as such, the Nationalists were able to instill international sympathy and non-

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 103

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, 104.

<sup>14</sup> Alberto Rodriguez Peña, *Salazar y Franco: La alianza del fascismo ibérico contra la España republicana: diplomacia, prensa y propaganda* (Asturias: Ediciones Tres, 2017), 115.

intervention to their audience using an anti-communist, Christian, definition of Western Civilization.

### **International Non-Intervention and the Nationalist attempt to Maintain It**

The majority of the pamphlets released by the Nationalist propagandizers aimed at fostering and maintaining sympathy for their cause in order to prevent intervention by the democratic nations; Britain, France, and the United States. These liberal governments would have made a win for the Nationalists a much more difficult task. And it was for this reason that Republican propaganda consistently sought support from the international community by portraying the Republican as a threat to Western civilization. Spanish historian Julián Casanova notes the importance of the involvement of non-Spanish governments to the duration of the war, despite the conflict starting as a civil one.<sup>15</sup> Nationalist pamphlets published by several British and American religious publishing houses, including the “National Catholic Welfare Conference,” (NCWC) the “Catholic Truth Society,” (CTS) “Burns Oates & Washbourne,” (BOW) and the Paulist Press, argued that the Nationalist side represented the values of Western civilization. To do this, the pamphlets adopted a tone that reflected principles of civility, peace, law, and constitutionalism, to juxtapose their movement against the Republicans. While these pamphlets were all published by religious institutions, religion was not the only method of convincing its international audience, albeit it permeates throughout all of their arguments. The importance of upholding international non-intervention was of supreme importance to the Nationalist cause. British and the United States financial support for the Republican government would have proved to be disastrous for the Nationalist rebellion.

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<sup>15</sup> Julián Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War translated by Martin Douch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 212.

British military general Sir Henry Page Croft writes in a foreword to a pamphlet published by Bournemouth Guardian, LTD, titled, “Spain: Truth At Last” (June, 1937) that he, “from the start endeavored to give full support to neutrality and non-intervention.”<sup>16</sup> His writing style is hyperbolic in tone, which is evident if one compares his work to the other American and British Nationalist pamphlets. He continues that, “there has been a holocaust of murder and a welter of cruelty on the part of the Red Governments which if realised would rouse every lover of freedom and defender of decency to the heights of indignation.”<sup>17</sup> His audience is made explicitly apparent as he writes that this “holocaust” is, “as great as the whole either of Cornwall, Wiltshire or Northamptonshire, and greater than that of Bradford of Newcastle-on-Tyne.”<sup>18</sup> It is during this period in British history that the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain’s (1937-1940) official position on international involvement was non-intervention, which may have been the foundation for Croft’s “endeavor.” Croft’s status as a general in the British military accredits his stance on British non-intervention and evidences his intention to convince the English population from deciding to intervene. Croft’s intention in this document is clearly an attempt to raise anger against the Republican cause, which he views as antithetical to the preservation of Western civilization.

William Montavon and J.F.C. Fuller, writers for the NCWC and BOW respectively appeal directly to an American—thus Western— audience by justifying the rebellious aims of the Nationalist movement using figures from American history. Montavon, addressing an audience at

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<sup>16</sup> “Spain: The Truth at Last” by Brig.-Gen Sir Henry Page Croft Bart., C.M.G., M.P., House of Commons, Bournemouth Guardian, Ltd., 194 & 196, Page 2, Commercial Rd., Pro-Fascist Literature, Collection of Material About the Spanish Civil War, Col. 205, Box 1, Folder 2. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, 3.

St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore on November 10, 1936, and later published in a pamphlet in 1937 that,

as Americans, [we must] remember the fact that at the very foundation and root-stem of our own political independence, lies the doctrines that a people has the right to defend itself against an unjust aggressor, even when that aggressor is the legally constituted government. A just war of defense is not rebellion.<sup>19</sup>

Montavon's tone, although he does not specifically support either side publicly, appears to be defensive, as if he were in need of explaining himself before a jury. Montavon preemptively answers potential questions by the American audience at St. Mary's college on why the Nationalist are justified in overthrowing the Republic. J.F.C. Fuller's perspective on the war is similarly defensive as he finds himself in need of explaining why the Nationalist cause is justified in overthrowing a democratically elected government. He writes:

General Franco raised his standard of revolt against the anarchy which was rendering law and order impossible. True, he rebelled, and with him millions of his countrymen, and in doing so he did no more than give life to the words of Abraham Lincoln. Once that great democrat said: "Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that sits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right—a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world."<sup>20</sup>

Fuller's passage highlights his views of Western values and uses them as the basis for legitimizing the revolt against the Second Spanish Republic. Abraham Lincoln's quote comes

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<sup>19</sup> "Insurrection in Spain" by William F. Montavon, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1937, Pro-Fascist Literature, Collection of Material about the Spanish Civil War, Col. 205, Box 1, Folder 2. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>20</sup> "The Conquest of Red Spain", by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD, 1, June, 1937, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

from an 1848 speech about the US war with Mexico.<sup>21</sup> Lincoln, for many American—and English—minds, was a household name. Using Lincoln’s words as opposed to *simply* those of the author creates a stronger connection between the reader of the pamphlet and the perception that the Nationalist fight is for a larger cause. Fuller does not explain the Spanish conflict in Spanish terms, but rather appeals directly to an international audience by using an ideological conviction that most American ears would have been receptive to. The use of Lincoln’s quote to capture the goal of the Nationalist movement as the, “liberation of the world,” is an example of the perpetuation of the Spanish Civil War as a globalized conflict. The Spanish conflict, according to Nationalist propaganda situated their movement as one where its believers would justly overthrow “anarchy” as doing so represented the carrying through of an ideal larger than the conflict itself. The motivation for converting the Spanish conflict into an international one must be viewed from the perspective of geopolitical strategy employed by the Nationalists to prevent the United States and Britain from intervening on the side of the Republic.

Marquis Merry Del Val, who wrote in one of the CTS’s pamphlets in July, 1937, justifies Franco’s rebellion in civilizational terms. He writes that the reader must,

recognize that General Franco and his national movement[...]represent the principles of morality and justice, the essential foundations of civilization. It is in their name that they exercise not *reprisals* or acts of revenge (another equivocation) but the right and duty of *punishment* and *vindication* of justice, or in other words the repression of crimes committed by morally inferior beings.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> “Civil War Era,” Teaching American History, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-war-with-mexico-speech-in-the-united-states-house-of-representatives/>.

<sup>22</sup> “The Conflict in Spain: Communistic Mis-statements Refuted”, by The Marquis De Merry Del Val, July 1937, Page 12, Pro-Fascist Literature, Collection of Material about the Spanish Civil War, Col. 205, Box 1, Folder 2. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

Similar to Fuller's passage, Del Val appears to be responding to a questioning of the Nationalist movement's actions. He writes that the Nationalist movement exercises "not reprisals." Del Val would only include this phrase with "not" if he believed there were lingering doubts in the minds of the audience regarding Nationalist justification for their use of violence. Additionally, the Nationalist army's "punishments and vindications" had already been documented by several journalists who covered the Spanish Civil War. By September 1936, reports of Nationalist atrocities such as the bombing of civilians had already made the major American press. A New York Times article dated September 26, 1936 ran the headline, "Bilbao Massacre Follows Bombing," which depicted the Nationalist rebels as guilty of the slaughter of civilians.<sup>23</sup> Crimes committed by the Nationalist forces had certainly been known in London and the United States by the time of "The Conflict in Spain's" publication. However, Del Val took care to frame the Nationalist violence within a narrative of a civilizational clash, with Nationalist representations of civilization on one side and the Republicans on the other. By downplaying Nationalist atrocities, Del Val hoped that American and British audiences would not feel the need to intervene on the side of the Republic.

The attempt to legitimize the Nationalist movement as a rationalized argument aimed at a literate and educated Western populace is evident in the publications by "Berryer"<sup>24</sup> in London and with William Montavon in the United States. Their intention to draw support from the community of lawyers and intellectuals in 1936-7 is evident in two pamphlets that stand out for their in-depth analysis of the Spanish situation. Montavon's speech, published as "Insurrection in

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<sup>23</sup> Copyright, 1936, "Bilbao Massacre Follows Bombing." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Sep 26, 1936. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/101757369?accountid=14523>.

<sup>24</sup> "Berryer" may be attempting to remain anonymous and thus uses this pseudonym.

Spain,” was initially delivered in the United States at the start of the war. It highlights an early analysis of the Spanish Civil War as a conflict where the Republic is seen as a major threat to Western values. Montavon’s speech differs with “Berryer’s” publication, which is addressed to the “Lawyers of the British Empire,” and argues in support of the Nationalist cause from the perspective of the traditional Western legal system. However, even with a separate American and British audience, the argument that the Nationalists represented the ideals of classical Western civility is consistent throughout both of these works.

By the end of Montavon’s speech, there appears to be no direct call for action or support for either side of the conflict. This is an important point to highlight as Montavon’s speech to the American audience in 1936 focuses on deeper ideological themes rather than on narratives of violence that Republican propaganda and Western news organizations had surfaced by 1937. As his speech was delivered early on in the war, Montavon’s choice to not fully support either side of the conflict is less important than *how* he describes the Nationalist movement. This is because following his delivery of the speech in November 1936, Nationalist propaganda will have further publicized supposed massacres by the Republican army such as that described by Frederico de Echevarria the following year in 1937. Echevarria writes,

[a] wind of madness is blowing over Spain. Shaken by the most devastating passions, Communists, Socialists, and Anarchists are united in hatred and cruelty. It is the complete unfolding of murder, robbery, incendiarism, torture, rape, and destruction, pure and simple.<sup>25</sup>

It is unclear whether or not Montavon’s audience would have known about allegations such as those described by Echevarria by 1936. However, these revelations—which would have probably

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<sup>25</sup> “Spain in Flames” by Frederico de Echevarria, Nov. 1936, Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD. Pro-Communist, Democratic and non-Interventionist literature, ca. 1937. Col. 205, Collection of material about the Spanish Civil War. Box 1 Folder 4. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.



been more widely known by 1937—would undoubtedly have changed the structure of Montavon’s speech to one that would emphasize Republican violence as a way to minimize focus on Nationalist violence. Thus, it is because his speech is made so early on in the conflict, and that it is less emphasized on Republican violence, that makes it an important example that Nationalists were portrayed as the example of civilized within the larger civilizational narrative. Montavon addressed the crowd in 1936 by saying that,

[t]o find full explanation of what is happening today in Spain, one must turn back the pages of history; study the attempt made more than a century ago to embody the doctrine of the French Revolution into the constitution of Spain; one must go even further back to the attempt made half a century before to embody the doctrine of the encyclopedists into the educational program of Spain and to the suppression at the same time of the Jesuits and their schools.<sup>26</sup>

Montavon argues that the constitution of Spain had been ideologically crippled by the Second Spanish Republic, and that it is Franco who, although staging the overthrow of a democratically constituted government, represents the ideals of what the constitution *should* contain. For him, this includes the ideals of the French Revolution, which to an American audience, he may have thought would have been interpreted as the overthrow of a “legitimate” leader based on popular support. By connecting the struggle of the Franco movement to the French revolution, which promoted the ideals of freedom, equality, and liberty, Montavon is perhaps able to instill legitimacy to the Nationalist movement.

In 1937, “Berryer” writes to the lawyers of Britain and explains to them the Spanish situation from the perspective of Western intellectual thought. “Berryer” writes below on the

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<sup>26</sup> “Insurrection in Spain” by Montavon, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Page 16.

court system adopted by the Republican forces, which he claims go against the principles of “European thought.” The author writes at length:

Hatred of law and order, contempt for *les gens de loi* [people of the law] have been translated into the suppression, pure and simple, of justice. [...] Presumption of the *retrospective force of the laws* as a basis for the gravest injustices, with application of the capital penalty for defenceless victims; primitive inquisitorial procedure, with its iniquities, tortures and secrecy; in a word the barbarism of the oldest penal systems, branded as reactionary by the leaders of European thought, have inspired the juridical reforms of the Spanish Revolution.<sup>27</sup>

Similar to Marquis De Merry Del Val, “Berryer” claims Nationalist moral superiority over the Republican side. “Berryer” writes that the Republican system of law is barbarous and primitive, and equates them as the antithesis for how a civilized group should be. By presenting the Republican legal system as one that uses an “inquisitorial procedure”, the author raises them-self—and the Nationalists—as possessors of higher knowledge and thus the example of Western superiority. Like the argument by Montavon, “Berryer” appeals to an intellectual audience, evident by their direct calls to “*les gens de loi*.” Evidently, Nationalist propaganda did not simply appeal to the religious sensibilities of the populace. Rather, as evident with Montavon and “Berryer,” intellectual claims to Western jurisprudence played an important role in gaining support for Franco’s rebellion.

The theme of civilizational clash is near constant throughout all of the Catholic church pamphlets in the UCLA and LMU archives that uphold the Nationalist side. The American press publication, “Joint Letter of the Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the World: The War in Spain,”

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<sup>27</sup> “Revolutionary Justice in Spain” By Berryer, Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD., Page 11, Pro-Communist, Democratic and non-Interventionist literature, ca. 1937. Col. 205, Collection of material about the Spanish Civil War. Box 1 Folder 3. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

characterized the conflict as, “*barbarous*, inasmuch as it destroyed the civilizing work of centuries.”<sup>28</sup> According to the Bishop of Salamanca, who wrote a short statement of his thoughts on the actions of the Republicans in “The Voice of the Church in Spain,” the Republicans view the, “monuments of art and culture [as] also *de trop*. They want humanity to be flattened, ignorant, its very appetite satisfied, lacking not only spiritual but also the most pure earthly loves.”<sup>29</sup> The above quotes perpetuate the theme of Western civilization’s creations, including its art, as at threat from the Republican argument. The “Joint Letter” authors’ choice to write that the conflict destroyed the civilizing *work* of centuries is indicative of including structures, as opposed to simply art. That “civilizing *work*” is at threat suggests the loss of more than just the physical, but that the *ideals* of years of, among many, cultural, ideological, moral works are at risk of being lost. The bishop of Salamanca explained that under threat lay culture and humanity, and by doing so identifies himself—and by extension the Nationalist side—with a larger cultural history of the West.

### **Perpetuation of Nationalist Mythologies**

The foundations of the Nationalist side, according to Catholic-Nationalist propaganda, lay atop a proud national Christian history that is portrayed as at threat from the Republican movement. The pamphlets urge the reader to accept that the conflict between the Republicans and the Nationalists is a conflict rooted in the potential loss of a deeply historic Spanish—and Western—greatness. In the “Joint Letter”, the authors write that, “[t]herefore the church, while

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<sup>28</sup> “Joint Letter of the Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the World: The War in Spain”, Page 15, (New York: The America Press, 1937) Box 1:8 Col. 035. Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>29</sup> “The Voice of the Church in Spain”: London, Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD. Pro-Communist, Democratic and non-Interventionist literature, ca. 1937. Page 7, Col. 205, Collection of material about the Spanish Civil War. Box 1 Folder 3. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

she is the daughter of the prince of peace, blessed the emblems of war, has sounded the military orders, and has organized the crusades against the enemies of the faith.”<sup>30</sup> The passage elevates the conflict as something beyond a contemporary civil conflict; for the war contains the important element that it aims for the defense of peace in the name of faith and culture. The key term in this letter, however, is “crusades,” which contains a powerful meaning for the mythologized Spanish national identity. The writers compare the fight against the Republicans as parallel to the crusades that aimed at the reconquest of Christian territories circa the 12th century following their loss to the Moors in the mid-eighth century.<sup>31</sup> The author continues, “it is true that thousands of her sons, obeying the promptings of their conscience and patriotism and under their own responsibility revolted in arms to safeguard the principles of religion and Christian justice which had for ages informed the nations life.”<sup>32</sup> The decision to write of the Civil War from the perspective of a powerful historic event—the Crusades—is to argue to the reader of the importance of the war's ideological significance. The authors argument that “religion and Christian justice[...]had for ages informed the nations life” sets up the Republican forces as an opposing ideological belief. The Republicans are made out to be a force that is antithetical to the Spanish national Christian history. The Christian faith that the author invokes is inseparable from the larger Nationalist view of Spain’s idealized past. As a result, the reduction of the enemy to a simple category of “anti-faith” allows the Nationalists to destroy potential Republican legitimacy for a British and American Christian audience.

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<sup>30</sup> “Joint Letter of The Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the Whole World Concerning the War in Spain”, London, Catholic Truth Society, July 1, 1937. Page 5.

<sup>31</sup> Marshall W. Baldwin, Gary Dickson, and Thomas F. Madden, "Crusades," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, January 17, 2018, accessed February 23, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Crusades>.

<sup>32</sup> “Joint Letter of The Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the Whole World Concerning the War in Spain”, London, Catholic Truth Society, July 1, 1937, Page 6.

William Montavon, who had not fully embraced one side or the other by 1936, argued in his speech before the St. Mary's audience that, “[t]he Spanish nation has a history, a glorious record. The Spanish nation stood, the bulwark that saved Europe, Christian civilization from the invasion of an alien culture.”<sup>33</sup> Montavon, similar to the Bishops in the “Joint Letter,” already imposed a deep history onto the Spanish conflict. He goes further and writes that the “glorious record” saved not only the Spanish people, but also the European people. Doing this, he connects the Spanish conflict to a larger ideological battle between the anti-European and European. The conflict’s significance is taken outside of the borders of Spain and thrust into one where American and European audiences can truly identify with it. He, like the Bishops above, reduces the Republican movement to possessing an, “alien culture,” and writes that they are invaders of the “true” Spanish nation. Perhaps his words served to legitimize the rebellious nature of the Nationalist history. Or he could be establishing the ideological



Figure A

contradistinction that a fight between the Nationalists and the Republicans represents. Regardless, his words play a crucial role in the creation of a belief that the Spanish national history—and thus the West—is best represented by the Nationalist side.

Religion during the Spanish Civil War embodied, as evident with several sources above, the major defining element of Spanish Civilization, and above all, Spanish identity. This is evident in the “Del Amo Collection”. One photo of a Valladolid—city in Northern Spain that

<sup>33</sup> “Insurrection in Spain” by Montavon, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1937, Page 3.

supported Franco from the beginning—newspaper, dated July 19, 1936 exclaims on the first page (Figure A), “No longer is it a crime to shout Live Spain! Live Spain! Spain Above, Spain above everything, and above Spain, God!<sup>34</sup> The heading exclaims that thanks to the coup staged the 17th July against the leadership of the Second Spanish Republic by Francisco Franco and his army, the Spanish people no longer had to worry about ‘committing a crime’ when shouting, “long live Spain!” Here, it is evident again, the juxtaposition of the “Spanish nation,” represented by the Nationalists against the Republicans, who according to the newspaper, repressed feelings of admiration for the genuine Spanish nation. Further, *Diario Regional’s* decision to include the latter part of the headline phrase, “above Spain, God,” illustrates the elemental importance of God in the Spanish nationalist narrative. The Spanish nation, according to the newspaper, had been set free due to the movement of Franco. The one thing that encapsulates the Spanish Nation’s identity is, once again, God and the Catholic church.

An example of the importance of religion to the Nationalist cause is highlighted by two revealing photos. The first photo (Figure B), undated but during the war, depicts a military chaplain blessing the soldiers prior to going into battle.<sup>35</sup> Picture two, (Figure C) dated the 29th of March, 1939, following the Nationalist take-over of one of the final



Figure B

<sup>34</sup> “Ya no es delito gritar, Viva España!” *Diario Regional*, Valladolid Año XXIX No 9293, Domingo 19 de Julio de 1936, Collection 2012 Del Amo Foundation Spanish Civil War Collection, box 002, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>35</sup> “Un Capellá castrense bendice a una unidad de Requetés poco antes de entrar en combate.”, Collection 2012 Del Amo Foundation Spanish Civil War Collection, box 004, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

Republican strongholds, Madrid, shows the importance of religion even by the wars end.<sup>36</sup> Taken together, the newspaper article, photo of the Chaplains blessings, and the photo taken at the church in Madrid highlight the enduring importance of Catholicism to the Nationalist cause. That one of the first things the Nationalist supporters would do is hold mass and that the photographer found the moment important enough to take a photo is testament to the importance of the scene.

Propagandists on the Nationalist side used Catholic faith as the juxtaposing element of defense against the threat of atheism. Arnold Lunn, popular propagandizer for the Nationalist



Figure C

cause in London, wrote in a 1937 pamphlet published by the CTS that, “five per cent. [sic] of his battalion are protestants who enlisted on Christian principles to defend Christianity against atheism.”<sup>37</sup> He continued, “that all men of good will must realize that Franco is fighting for religion and decency against rapine, anarchy and militant Atheism.”<sup>38</sup> The framing of the Nationalist cause as a defense for Spain against the anti-Christian enemy is a constant theme in the propaganda studied in this paper. In maintaining the pandering to the British

<sup>36</sup> “Madrid, 29 de marzo. Primera misa pública oficiada en la capital tras la entrada de las fuerzas nacionalistas.”, Collection 2012 Del Amo Foundation Spanish Civil War Collection, box 002, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>37</sup> “Spain: The Unpopular Front” by Arnold Lunn, Catholic Truth Society, 1937, Page 2, Pro-Fascist Literature, Collection of Material about the Spanish Civil War, Col. 205, Box 1, Folder 2. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, 3.

audience, Lunn identifies one of Franco's battalions as containing Protestants. He does this to emphasize the international scope of the conflict and to affirm that Protestants must side with the Catholics against the greater evil; atheism. The Civil war is thus portrayed as a war of ideology; the West versus anarchic and militant atheism.

International pleas for non-intervention played such a vital role in the entirety of the conflict that the Nationalist attitude of who could support the Spanish nation went beyond only those who were Catholic. Rather, the Nationalists sought support in England with the protestant community, and as Ali Al-Tuma so pressingly notes in his work, "Moros y Cristianos: Religious Aspects of the Participation of Moroccan Soldiers in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)," Franco's forces even made an exception for the supposed historical enemy of Spain, the "Moors."<sup>39</sup> When it came to gaining global support, the Nationalists appealed to its audiences by presenting itself as the defender of Western principles. Above everything, to ensure that the United States and Britain remained wary of entering in support of the Republicans, Spanish Nationalists had to make concessions.

### **Nationalist Portrayal of Communism: Communism as the Embodiment Evil**

The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs Fernando Maria Castiella gave a speech at Georgetown University on March 24, 1960, where he espoused an historically simplistic—and wrong—version of the history of the Spanish Civil War. Still under the censorship and control of dictator Francisco Franco, Castiella's account of the conflict highlights the enduring mythology that persisted following the Nationalist victory in Spain. The document itself, a gift from the Los

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<sup>39</sup> Ali Al-Tuma, "Moros y Cristianos: Religious Aspects of the Participation of Moroccan Soldiers in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)" in Agai Bekim, Umar Ryad, and Mehdi Sajid, eds. *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Transcultural Historical Perspective*. (Brill: 2016).



Angeles Spanish consulate to Loyola University, is an example of the careful perpetuation and curation of the Nationalist version of the conflict, even after the war's end. The speech allows us to better situate the different narratives that emerged, changed, and remained the same, following the end of the war. Castiella's speech, aimed at—once again—an international audience, had to first correct the potential ideas held towards the Nationalists. He writes that the narrative of the war in the West often takes up the argument that, “the Spanish Republic, incarnating liberty, right and progress, was defeated by reactionary and ecclesiastical military forces of oppression supported by the oligarchy of landowners, all all these were bolstered up by German-Italian Nazi fascism.” He continues, “The truth was very different. The Nationalist forces fought against the chaos into which the socialist-anarchist parties had plunged Spain, and which Soviet Communism used to deprive the Republican Government of all vestige of power, sacrificed to the overpowering influence of Moscow.”<sup>40</sup> The idea that the revolution had been initiated by Moscow persisted throughout the war. This narrative by a Spanish official over twenty years after the war allows us insight into the prevalence of the argument that communism and the Republic were held up by foreign agents. Castiella's narrative, unlike the propaganda during the period, had time to solidify and thus represents a more concretized version of propaganda that had already existed during the war.

In contrast with the 1960 presentation of “socialist-anarchist” problem described by Castiella, the 1913 Paulist Press<sup>41</sup> publication, “Why the Catholic Church Cannot Accept

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<sup>40</sup> “Spanish Foreign Policy (1898-1960) The address of His Excellency: D. Fernando Maria Castiella, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, March 24, 1960, at Georgetown University, Washington D.C., Page 23, in “1 Castiella, Spanish Foreign Policy”, Box 1:1 Col. 035. Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>41</sup> The Paulist Press is a Catholic publication that was active during the Spanish Civil War and remains active today. It propagandized on the side of the Nationalist forces.

Socialism,” presents the problem of socialism in an entirely different way. One of the most emphasized aspects of the Republican movement by the Nationalist press is the idea that “Marxism” is entirely incompatible with a Christian Spain. Nationalist pamphleteers, as analyzed above, advanced Christian Spain as the “true Spain,” which was antithetical to what the Republican forces allegedly represented. The connection between anti-socialism and the enduring Spanish national mythology began prior to the start of the Civil War in at least this one case. In its 1913 publication, Rev. George M. Scarle argues that Socialism is an ideological belief that is incompatible with the human condition on the basis that humans are naturally selfish.<sup>42</sup> Further, he writes that the Catholic church even “sympathizes” with their goal to alleviate some of the vagaries in society.<sup>43</sup> However, the most important element of this document is what it does not contain. The pamphlet is a great primary source tool that is free from many of the geopolitical restrictions put on socialism after 1917. As the Soviet Union and the “red wave” of socialist activism had not yet come into full swing by 1913, Scarle engages with socialism as a theory more than as an encroaching political movement. Scarle writes, “[h]uman nature cannot be expected to undergo a complete and radical change.”<sup>44</sup> This is entirely different from how the Catholic church, through its pamphlets, views socialism following the start of the Civil War. Instead of engaging with socialism as a theory, it is forced to respond to the violence and international influence that socialism takes on. Scarle’s concern, as evident in the quoted sentence, is mainly that he does not see socialist ideology as a practicable option for humanity.

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<sup>42</sup> “Why the Catholic Church Cannot Accept Socialism” by Rev. George M. Scarle, Page 20, (New York: The Paulist Press, 1913) Box 1:16 Col. 035. Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, 20.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, 12.

And although he is in disagreement with socialism as an ideology, his explanation for why the Catholic Church opposes it differs drastically from pamphlets published after 1913.

By 1937 certainly, communism as an argumentative category had been inextricably made to be the embodiment of the larger threat against the nationalist Western identity. Arnold Lunn writes in “The Unpopular Front,” “the manure of communism has fertilized the stricken fields of Spain, and from that bloody soil has sprung the glorious flower of heroic faith.”<sup>45</sup> Lunn’s poetic analysis of the Spanish conflict sublimates the Spanish nationalist feeling as it identifies the fight against the atheist communists as a fight for a larger human project. In his quotes above, the fight is for the maintaining of the ideals of Spanish civilization. Lunn’s description of the Spanish land takes on a characteristically Nationalist style. One, in effect, does not *die* for the Nationalist values. Rather, they live on as a martyr; forever becoming a part of the soil. Many of the pamphleteers studied in this paper view communism and atheism as a threat so great, Spain—and the West by extension—are at threat. For this reason, Lunn elevates the importance of the conflict by using the language of heroism and blood. Nationalist Spain is thus given elements of nationalist heroism, in order for pamphleteers to juxtapose the Republican’s supposed foreign intentions against the “true” Spain.

In the “Joint Letter,” the Spanish Bishops write, “in God lies the deepest foundation of a well ordered society—as was the case with the Spanish nation—the Communist Revolution, allied to the Government armies, was, above all, anti-divine.”<sup>46</sup> Monsignore Antonio Garcia, Bishop of Tuy writes in “the Voice of the Church in Spain (1937),

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<sup>45</sup> “Spain: The Unpopular Front” by Arnold Lunn, Catholic Truth Society, 1937, Page 11.

<sup>46</sup> “Joint Letter of The Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the Whole World Concerning the War in Spain”, London, Catholic Truth Society, July 1, 1937. Page 13.

It is a conflict where one civilization, which is Christian and Spanish, is fighting against Communistic barbarism, a barbarism backed by all the energies of hell and the ghosts with which the Prince of Darkness wages earthly war against Jesus Christ, His Holy Church, and all those who have distinguished themselves by a high Christian spirit and civilizing influence.<sup>47</sup>

Antonio Garcia appeals to the deepest of religious emotions in this passage by writing that the communists are backed by the “energies of hell.” This passage contrasts profoundly with the 1913 publication, “Why the Catholic Church Cannot Accept Socialism,” where Scarle even finds common ground with the basic concerns of the socialists. The quotations and passages selected in this essay so far have dealt with the themes of tradition and the perpetuation of a national mythology of Spanish history by the Catholic church. As this passage shows, the communists were presented as the embodiment of all that the Nationalists hated. The impressive prose adopted in Garcia’s writing is not the quite the norm with all of the other pamphleteers. However, Garcia’s theme that the communists—and thus the Republicans—represented barbarism certainly permeate throughout all of the pamphlets studied here.

The Nationalist press saw the threat of communism, while tied to the themes of barbarism and devilishness, as also stemming from a non-Spanish origin, usually from the Soviet Union. Communism thus was rarely seen to be a stand-alone ideology as it was in the pamphlet published in 1913 by Scarle. G.M. Godden writes in, “Communism in Spain,” “International Communism aims at creating a new life, spiritual as well as social and economic, on the shattering ruins of Christian Civilization.”<sup>48</sup> Marquis De Merry Del Val continues in the same

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<sup>47</sup> “The Voice of the Church in Spain”: London, Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD. Pro-Communist, Democratic and non-Interventionist literature, ca. 1937. Page 9, Col. 205, Collection of material about the Spanish Civil War. Box 1 Folder 3. University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>48</sup> “Communism in Spain: 1931-1936” by G.M. Godden (New York: The America Press, 1937), Page 22, Box 1:6 Col. 035. Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

vein, “for its own sake the whole civilized world should stand behind, if not with, general Franco, for Bolshevism in all its varied forms breeds contagion. It is a spreading and gnawing canker from within.”<sup>49</sup> Godden’s painful image positions communism to be, rightly so, an international political force, and wrote that it threatens Christian civilization—a theme covered above. The “Joint Letter” refers, presumably, to the change in hierarchical power structures in factories controlled by the Republican forces, as “the Sovietisation of industries.”<sup>50</sup> Del Val, like the “Joint Letter”, connects “international Communism” with the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that the use of terms “Sovietisation” and “Bolshevism” refer to his perspective that the Soviet Union imposed—or controlled—the communists that fought on the Republican side. This intention of “sovietizing” the Republicans is consistent with other attempts to disqualify the Republicans for being anti-tradition and anti-religious.

The “Joint Letter” provides a full description of how many Nationalists pamphlets viewed the Republican movement, writing,

The revolution was essentially “anti-Spanish.” The work of destruction was carried out to cries of “Long live Russia!” in the shadow of the international Communist flag. The mural inscriptions, the propaganda of foreign personages, the military commands in the hands of Russian leaders, the spoliation of the nation in favor of foreigners, the Communist hymn—all are abundant proofs of hatred towards the national spirit and towards the feel of the mother-country.<sup>51</sup>

This passage outlines in great detail a theme that is constant throughout the larger collection of Catholic pamphlets that supported Franco. Even at the start of the war, William Montavon wrote,

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<sup>49</sup> “The Conflict in Spain: Communistic Mis-statements Refuted”, by The Marquis De Merry Del Val, July 1937, Page 28.

<sup>50</sup> “Joint Letter of The Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the Whole World Concerning the War in Spain”, London, Catholic Truth Society, July 1, 1937, Page 40.

<sup>51</sup> “Joint Letter of The Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the Whole World Concerning the War in Spain”, London, Catholic Truth Society, July 1, 1937, Page.

“[t]oday, Spaniards are destroying each other in mortal combat, unable to achieve union in defense against the invasion of an alien culture that threatens to engulf them.”<sup>52</sup> Nationalist propaganda emphasized the role that the Soviet Union played as a tool to scare off not only the Spanish population from joining or supporting the Republican cause, but also as a message to the international community that the war had been initiated by “foreign” Republicans. This argument served to undermine the Republic as non-Spanish while simultaneously providing the Nationalist movement legitimacy as truly Spanish. By writing that the revolution had been carried out under the, “shadow of the Communist flag,” the Nationalist movement could argue to its international audience that the rebel cause was an effort to re-establish Spanish-ness to Spain. Arguments such as that in the “Joint Letter” above illustrate the Nationalist preoccupation with preventing support for the Republic.

An undated newspaper clipping with the headline, “La Tragedia de el Escorial” presents the war, which it writes had “gloriously ended in March” as a war between foreign agents and pro-Spanish anti-communist. The paper’s audience is almost certainly to a Spanish audience write:

The War of Spain, gloriously finished at the end of March, has had a principally religious character and that the war has been in reality a global war with one side, atheist, materialist communists, supported by the syndicates of Nations captained by the consortium of Soviet-Masonic-Jews, and the other, Spanish Catholics supported by all the anti-communists of the world.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> “Insurrection in Spain” by Montavon, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1937, Page 3.

<sup>53</sup> La guerra de España, gloriosamente terminada a fines de Marzo, ha tenido principalmente carácter religioso y que la lucha ha sido realmente mundial entre el bando de comunismo ateo y materialista, apoyado por los sindios de todas las naciones capitaneados por el consorcio Judío-Masonico-Sovietico, por una parte, y el bando de los Catolicos Españoles apoyados por todos los anti-comunistas del mundo por otra. In “La Guerra en España: La Tragedia de el Escorial,” Undated, Box 1:10 Col. 035. Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

This quote exemplifies the argument of much of the historiography on the Spanish Civil War in that it argues that the war had been one with a “principally religiously characterized” conflict. Its accusation that the Republican cause had been “captained” by an international conspiracy of Soviet-Masonic-Jews is reminiscent of the larger message of the pamphlets studied in this paper. Ultimately, this paper illustrates the beginnings of a creation of a post-war narrative of the conflict similar to what Castiella explained to the Georgetown audience in 1960.

### **In Conclusion**

Nationalist supporter Manuel Machado wrote a sonnet titled “Francisco Franco.” It illustrates the deep feelings that Franco’s supporters had towards the Nationalist movement. In the undated poem, he writes,

Leader of the new Reconquest/  
 Lord of Spain, who with his faith is reborn/  
 knows how to win and smile/  
 and makes field of bread the land that conquers/  
 He knows how to win and smile...his brilliance  
 Military campaigns in glorious battle/  
 confident and faithful. And to make History  
 God wanted to give him much more: brilliance.<sup>54</sup>

It highlights the war as not simply a civil conflict or one fought between advocates of democracy and fascists but rather as a conflict that aroused passionate feelings that represented themes larger than the battle itself. Machado’s words capture the aspiration for a “vision of a better world,” certainly a major motivation amongst Republican brigadists for going to fight a war

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<sup>54</sup> Caudillo de la Nueva Reconquista./Señor de España, que en su fe renace/Sabe vencer y sonreír, y hace/Campo de pan la tierra de conquista./Sabe vencer y sonreír...su ingenio Militar campa en la guerrera gloria/Seguro y fiel. Y para hacer Historia/Dios quiso darle mucho más: el genio.  
 Manuel Machado, "Francisco Franco," Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, accessed March 11, 2018, <http://www.fnff.es/HtmlRes/Files/Francisco%20Franco.MMachado.pdf>.

overseas. The historiography of the internationalism of the Republican side of the conflict has been well researched. For this reason, I focused my research on the propaganda of the Nationalist supporters. As this poem—and paper argues, the Catholic church played a tantamount role in the dissemination of the Nationalist argument against the Republicans.

Pamphlets published by the Catholic Truth Society, Paulist Press, National Catholic Welfare Conference, The America Press, and, London, Burns Oates & Washbourne all played a major role in shaping public opinion. These pamphlets mainly targeted a British and American audience, and wrote about the Civil War as if it were a part of a larger conflict between defenders of Western civilization and those aimed at destroying it. It defined the Republicans and its supporters as militant atheists supported by international Soviet communism that had been planning from the beginning to destroy Spain and Western Christian culture. Their propaganda specifically emphasized the foreign aspect of the Republican movement to gain international credibility from mainly the United States and Great Britain, who it feared may have seen the Nationalists as rebels rather than defenders of its homeland. Intervention by the United States and England would have been disastrous for the Nationalist movement. For this reason, the Nationalists justified their movement in terms that would be receptive to a Western audience and demonized the Republic as an example of the anti-West. The most effective way to prevent British and American military intervention, it seemed, was to use communism as the defining element of all that Westerners should fear; barbarous, devilish, and hateful.



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