

**Citizenship and Self-Representation in the Public  
Letters sent to General Primo de Rivera in Spain,  
1923-1930**

Thesis submitted to the School of Languages, Literatures and  
Cultural Studies at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, for  
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## Declaration

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Richard Gow

## Summary

This thesis examines the attitudes of the Spanish population towards the vision of citizenship promoted by the Spanish state during the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera (1923-1930). The weight of its original analysis is based on a previously undiscovered body letters of denunciation and petition that were sent by ordinary people to the government authorities during this period. In total, 118 separate correspondences are examined. The contents and findings of the thesis are as follows:

Chapter One begins with a theoretical exploration of the concept citizenship. It then applies these ideas to the Primo de Rivera regime and analyses the vision of civic life which it promoted. Following this, it inquires into the nature of the 'states of exception' created by modern dictatorships with reference to the work of Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben, and shows how the ambiguity of these situations undermines the foundations of citizenship. The Primo de Rivera administration is then evaluated in this light.

Chapter Two explores the culture of petitioning and situates the practice in the context of the spread of popular literacy in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It then considers the way in which ordinary Spaniards spoke of authority in their letters, before finishing with a discussion of the archival material consulted in this thesis.

The third chapter examines the manner in which the regime elicited denunciation from the population in its efforts to eradicate the clientelist politics of *caciquismo* from September 1923 to April 1924. After situating the practice in comparative context, it probes a number of key themes that appeared in these letters, while showing that the regime's language of national regeneration could also be appropriated by ordinary people in order to express dissatisfaction with its policies.

Chapter Four looks into letters sent about the work of the *Delegados Gubernativos* (Government Delegates), army officers sent by Primo to the towns and villages of Spain to carry out reform to municipal government and instil civic values in

the masses, from late 1923 to December 1925. This analysis reveals that not only were these figures grossly unprepared for their task, they were also deeply resented by the population.

Chapter Five discusses petitions relating to government repression during the Civil Directorate period of late 1925 to 1930. It explores how the concept of justice was invoked by the population, both when denouncing the enemies of the regime as '*malos españoles*' (bad Spaniards) and, equally, as a means of asserting rights in the face of this repression. It shows that the idea of what constituted a 'good citizen' was deeply contested by the population.

The final chapter delves into the petitions sent to the authorities by the female population of Spain from 1923 to 1930. It shows that these letter-writers were willing to appropriate and redeploy notions of femininity and female domesticity in order to make demands to the government. At a time when limited voting rights were also granted to Spanish women, such interventions were a powerful demonstration of an emerging culture of citizenship.

This thesis makes a valuable original contribution to the subject by showing that denunciation was not typically anonymous as was widely believed. Moreover, this could serve as a channel for making citizenship claims. Referring to the second category of letter examined in this thesis, petition, not only was this tolerated by the regime, it became an important channel for public opinion, even as the dictatorship imposed strict press censorship and restricted the freedoms of speech, gathering and association. Indeed, much of this was highly critical of the regime. This ensured the survival of a participatory political culture in Spain, which would re-emerge in full in the 1930s. Moreover, by engaging in claims-making processes with the authorities, ordinary Spaniards were able to challenge and alter the form that this new type of citizenship would take.

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## Introduction

On 13 September, 1923 General Miguel Primo de Rivera rebelled against the constitutional government of Spain and inaugurated a military dictatorship that would last until January 1930. Primo's actions effectively put an end to the Restoration political system that had been implanted in 1874. In so doing, Spain became one of the first European countries to fall to a counter-revolutionary dictatorship in the post-World War period. The nation had remained neutral during the conflict but the effects of the conflict on Spanish society were profound nevertheless. Regionalist and nationalist sentiment had grown in Cataluña and the Basque Country, while the state had become embroiled in a disastrous colonial war in northern Morocco, which was both deeply unpopular domestically and seriously damaging to the public finances. An increasingly militant workers' movement also found itself in conflict with an antagonist industrialist class, leading to eruption of street violence known as *pistolero*. The struggle to maintain public order led to the creeping intervention of an ultra-nationalist military into politics before it would seize power totally in 1923.<sup>1</sup> The Restoration system had been designed to facilitate the alternation of the two main political parties in government on the basis of rigged elections, the *turno pacífico* (peaceful turn). As popular demands for democratisation grew, Spain's nineteenth-century political institutions creaked and became unable to exert social control over the population. Primo staged his coup d'état as a response to this crisis and sought to overcome this by instilling a new, authoritarian national identity in the population.

There was a long history of military intervention in Spanish political life in the nineteenth century but the liberal-parliamentary regime established by the conservative statesman Antonio Cánovas del Castillo in 1876 had proved flexible enough to incorporate the military and its corporate interests into the ruling power block. Primo de Rivera's seizure of power was different. Whereas in the nineteenth century military officers had staged coups in order to install certain political groups or parties in power, the events of September 1923 led to the formation of a *Directorio Militar* (Military Directorate) which allowed the Army to govern Spain directly for the

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<sup>1</sup> Eduardo González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera: la modernización autoritaria 1923-1930* (Madrid: Alianza, 2005), 22–37.

first time. This administration would transition into a *Directorio Civil* (Civil Directorate), which incorporated civilian figures, in December 1925, but the military maintained a monopoly over government until the regime's collapse in January 1930 when Primo could no longer count on the support of the King, Alfonso XIII, or elements of the Army itself.

For all of its six-year duration the Primo de Rivera regime operated at the fringe of the law. Primo's coup d'état was illegal but received the backing of the King, an act that seemed to officialise it. The dictatorial edifice was constructed around a 'state of exception,' which largely freed the government from constitutional restraint. Primo's *Directorio Militar* was meant to last just 90 days initially but it was extended indefinitely once this period elapsed and as it subsequently moved towards the creation of the *Directorio Civil*. This would be followed by an overtly liquidationist phase from late 1926 onward when Primo began a process of replacing the Restoration Constitution of 1876, although this would never be implemented due, in part, to the resistance of the King. Unlike General Francisco Franco, who would later find some inspiration in the earlier regime, Primo did not intend the dictatorship to be permanent.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, he would never find an alternative to the state of constitutional exception which he created in 1923.

The regime made a considerable contribution to the Spanish political landscape by articulating a modernising, anti-liberal ideology, which had not previously existed in the Iberian nation. As Vincent writes, "for the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, political modernity was to be achieved largely on the basis of mobilisation."<sup>3</sup> To this end, the administration launched large-scale programmes of patriotic propaganda and civic education, and organised street demonstrations and mass rallies the likes of which had not been seen before in Spain. However, while the regime was certainly a mass dictatorship, it was not a totalitarian one. The Primo de Rivera administration is better described by what Roger Griffin refers to in ideal-typical fashion as an 'authoritarian

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<sup>2</sup> Eduardo González Calleja, "La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo: ¿un modelo a imitar de dictadura liquidacionista?," in *Novísima: II Congreso Internacional de Historia de Nuestro Tiempo*, ed. Carlos Navajas Zubeldía and Diego Iturriaga Barco (Logroño: Universidad de La Rioja, 2010), 53–54.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Vincent, "Spain," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945*, ed. Kevin Passmore (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 190.

mass dictatorship,' which, far from ruling through naked despotism, went to considerable lengths to legitimise itself by staging displays of public enthusiasm for itself and its leader, even if its aims were essentially reactionary.<sup>4</sup>

During this time, Primo de Rivera's administration engaged in a programme of 'mass nationalisation,' which aimed at indoctrinating the Spanish population in a national identity that was steeped in its authoritarian, National-Catholic values.<sup>5</sup> This process demanded a reconfiguration of the then-hegemonic liberal national identity in Spain.<sup>6</sup> While the regime came to define itself in opposition to much of the political tradition of liberalism, particularly its commitment to deliberative politics, it was also born of that system and bound by many of the same paradigms, like the need to foster loyalty to the nation-state. Citizenship, as a "legal vehicle that codifies and solidifies political identities," came to occupy a central position in the Primo de Rivera regime's nationalist discourse.<sup>7</sup> The anomie of the state of exception, however, placed the legal certainties usually offered by it in peril. Following from the work of Mabel Berezin, I argue that despite these evident contradictions, the concept and theory of citizenship can be employed fruitfully to describe both the political ideals of the Primo de Rivera regime and the manner in which the Spanish population experienced its programme of nationalisation. This is because it accounts for both ends of the relationship between the state and the political community which is attached to it.<sup>8</sup>

While the masses were a central concern for the regime, they have been largely absent from all but the most recent generation of historiography on the dictatorship. When they do feature, these analyses tend to be top-down studies in political history, which largely forget the experience of ordinary people. Following Margaret Somers' definition of citizenship as an "instituted process," that is, a set of institutionally

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<sup>4</sup> Roger Griffin, "Mass Dictatorship and the 'Modernist State,'" in *Mass Dictatorship and Modernity*, ed. Michael Kim, Michael Shoehals, and Yong-Woo Kim (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 36.

<sup>5</sup> This is the central thesis in Alejandro Quiroga, *Making Spaniards: Primo de Rivera and the Nationalization of the Masses, 1923-30* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> On the liberal identity as hegemonic see Edward Inman Fox, "La invención de España: literatura y nacionalismo," in *Actas del XII Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas 21-26 de agosto de 1995, Birmingham*, ed. Derek Flitter, vol. IV (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Department of Hispanic Studies, 1998), 1–16.

<sup>7</sup> Mabel Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 26.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–19.

embedded social practices, this study makes a valuable contribution to the field by demonstrating how ordinary members of the Spanish population represented themselves in their interactions with the dictatorial state, the other half of this 'instituted process,' in their everyday lives.<sup>9</sup> It breaks new ground on the subject by making use of a major body of never-before-examined petitions and denunciations sent by these people to the state authorities to explore the point at which local and personal ties intersected with national loyalties. This approach also offers significant insight into popular opinion in Spain at a time when the public sphere was severely truncated by state repression and represents an important step forward in our understanding of the dictatorship and the turbulent years that followed it.

### **The state of the question**

In this section I examine some of the main historiographical tendencies in the study of the Restoration period in Spain since the 1990s. This, in turn, will inform our understanding of parallel changes which have occurred in the study of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and offer new perspectives for current and future research. Respectively, these trends revolve around the place of state nationalism in the course of Spanish history from the nineteenth century onwards and the question of whether or not the Primo de Rivera dictatorship was a brief parenthesis in this history or a period that was essential to Spain's political evolution; what Radcliff has described as 'placeholder' or 'turning point.'<sup>10</sup>

### **The 'nationalisation of the masses' in Spain**

In the nineteenth century, the liberal nation-states of Europe engaged in programmes of 'mass nationalisation' as a means of legitimising themselves and supplanting the traditional identities associated with the *Ancien Régime* to which they were in opposition. This process was characterised primarily by attempts to foster feelings in their populations of belonging to a national community identified with that state. This meant shaping the 'subjects' who had once been loosely attached to monarchs into

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<sup>9</sup> Margaret R. Somers, "Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere: Law, Community, and Political Culture in the Transition to Democracy," *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 5 (October 1993): 587–620.

<sup>10</sup> Pamela Beth Radcliff, *Modern Spain, 1808 to the Present* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 145–46.



'citizens' that were loyal to the newly-emerged nation-state, which claimed to represent them and rule legitimately in their name. Though this process was slow and often marked by the persistence of strong ties to sub-national identities, it was achieved through the creation of state agencies, the emergence of 'national public' (through the spread of reading, rise of the press, etc.) and the development of communications networks. A considerable body of literature exists on how this process developed in Western Europe, although it is only recently that these methodologies have been applied to Spain.<sup>11</sup> The most recent developments in Spanish historiography have called for this process to be viewed from the bottom up.

Spanish state nationalism, a key pillar in both the Primo de Rivera and Franco regimes, remained largely unstudied until the 1970s and the Transition that followed Franco's death. This was due both to essentialist, and, indeed, widely accepted, claims that the national unity of Spain had been a given since the time of the Catholic monarchs and to the close link between nationalism and the dictatorship itself. The 1980s, in contrast, saw a boom of interest in the plurality of national identities which had been enshrined by the Constitution of 1978, even if Spanish state nationalism remained largely absent from the discussion.<sup>12</sup> By the 1990s, with the successful consolidation of the democratic State of Autonomies, academic interest in state nationalism began to grow in Spain, as it had elsewhere in the previous decade.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The emblematic statement on how this process developed can be read in Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). See also Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (1974; repr., New York: Howard Fertig, 2001); Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia. The Myth of the Nation in the 20th Century*, trans. Suzanne Dingee and Jennifer Pudney (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Fernando Molina Aparicio, "Modernidad e identidad nacional. El nacionalismo español del siglo XIX y su historiografía," *Historia Social*, no. 52 (2005): 151; Ferran Archilés Cardona, "Melancólico bucle. Narrativas de la nación fracasada e historiografía española contemporánea," in *Estudios sobre nacionalismo y nación en la España contemporánea*, ed. Ismael Saz Campos and Ferran Archilés Cardona (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2011), 290–302. An overview of historiographical production during this period in Justo Beramendi, "Aproximación a la historiografía reciente sobre los nacionalismos en la España contemporánea," *Estudios de historia social*, no. 28 (1984): 49–76. This was updated in Justo Beramendi, "La historiografía de los nacionalismos en España," *Historia contemporánea*, no. 7 (1992): 135–54.

<sup>13</sup> Archilés Cardona, "Melancólico bucle," 312–14. On developments outside Spain see Stefan Berger, "A Return to the National Paradigm? National History Writing in Germany, Italy, France, and Britain from 1945 to the Present," *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (2005): 657–72; Maarten Van Genderachter, "Nationhood from Below: Some Historiographic Notes on Great Britain, France and

A turning point in Spain came in 1990, when Borja de Riquer and Juan Pablo Fusi debated the origin and significance of Spain's peripheral nationalisms and regionalisms.<sup>14</sup> Both agreed fundamentally on the weakness both of Spanish nationalism and its ability to create social cohesion in the nineteenth century; yet they differed on the effects of this. De Riquer regarded the increasing interest in peripheral nationalisms as a natural response to the centralist tendencies which had dominated Spanish politics since the nineteenth century. Moreover, he argued that the blame for the emergence of these alternative nationalisms in Spain should not be placed solely on state institutions, but rather on the political class that had overseen the liberal revolution in the nineteenth century as well.<sup>15</sup> Fusi, on the other hand, maintained that there had been excessive interest in regionalisms and peripheral nationalisms, and called for a history that was "nationally neutral." He maintained that despite the weakness of the state in the nineteenth century, Spain had emerged a cohesive and well-structured entity, as evidenced by the prominence of 'nation' in the post-1898 crisis of identity. The emergence of nationalism was, in his view, a *process* which took place over the whole of the nineteenth century, before its culmination around 1900.<sup>16</sup> Predominantly theoretical as it was, the De Riquer-Fusi debate highlighted the need to analyse the development of peripheral nationalisms in Spain in conjunction with an examination of the development of the liberal state and its efforts at nation-building.

In 1994, De Riquer expanded his views in a new thesis on the weakness of state nationalisation in Spain during the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> It was his contention that the

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Germany in the Long Nineteenth Century," in *Nationhood from below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Marnix Beyen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 120–36.

<sup>14</sup> Borja De Riquer i Permanyer, "Sobre el lugar de los nacionalismos-regionalismos en la historia contemporánea española," *Historia Social*, no. 7 (1990): 104–27; Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, "Revisionismo crítico e historia nacionalista: (A propósito de un artículo de Borja de Riquer)," *Historia Social*, no. 7 (1990): 127–134. See also Fusi's earlier work: Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, "La organización territorial del Estado," in *España, autonomías*, ed. Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1989), 11–40.

<sup>15</sup> De Riquer i Permanyer, "Sobre el lugar," 106–15, 119–20.

<sup>16</sup> Fusi Aizpurúa, "Revisionismo crítico e historia nacionalista," 129, 131–34. This approach allows Fusi to avoid most of the reductionism which characterised the historiography that followed this debate. See also Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, "Centre and Periphery 1900-1936: National Integration and Regional Nationalisms Reconsidered," in *Élites and Power in Twentieth-Century Spain*, ed. Frances Lannon and Paul Preston (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 33–44.

<sup>17</sup> Borja De Riquer i Permanyer, "La débil nacionalización española del siglo XIX," *Historia Social*, no. 20 (1994): 97–114.

alternative nationalisms in Spain had arisen not only due to patriotic proto-nationalism, but also as a reaction to the process of *españolización* (the imposition of ‘Spanish-ness’) carried out by the state in the nineteenth century. The theoretical basis of De Riquer’s argument lay in an acceptance of the failure of the liberal revolution and the lack of a “bourgeois-liberal hegemony” in Spain, an idea which had been influential in Spanish historiography since the 1960s at least.<sup>18</sup> De Riquer considered the principal agents of state nationalisation identified by Eugen Weber (military, education system, etc.) to have been weak and insufficient in the Spanish case.<sup>19</sup> The political elites were also hostile to the *populacho* (mob) and loath to incorporate it into political collective and thereby socialise political life. Political, economic and linguistic localism were rife, while there was also little consensus amongst liberal leaders on the symbols of national identity. In short, “the Spanish nationalisation process was a failure because it did not put an end to the old regional and sectorial affinities and loyalties.”<sup>20</sup>

The weak-nationalisation thesis was given its mature expression in the work of José Álvarez Junco, whose prize-winning book, *Mater Dolorosa*, might even be regarded as a final summation of the weak-nationalisation argument.<sup>21</sup> In a preliminary study, Álvarez Junco had already highlighted how Spain’s absence from all the major European wars after 1814 meant that there was no process of ‘mass nationalisation;’ it was “a lost nation-building ‘opportunity,’” albeit one that might have ensured the long-term survival of as “weakly integrated” a state as Spain. Moreover, the “oligarchic

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 99–102. This new approach owed a significant debt to the work of Juan Linz, the Yale-based social scientist who, in the 1970s, had described the ‘crisis of penetration’ of the Spanish state in the nineteenth century. Linz’s study highlighted the challenge posed to the state-promoted identity by regional nationalisms, as well as the supposed failure of state agents (education system, military, etc.) to impose this. Juan J. Linz, “Early State-Building and Late Peripheral Nationalisms against the State: Case of Spain,” in *Building States and Nations: Models and Data Resources*, ed. Samuel N. Eisenstadt (Beverly Hills; London: Sage, 1973), 32–116. This theory would be taken up again in the 1980s, before reappearing in De Riquer’s work, in Javier Corcuera, “Nacionalismo y clases en la España de la Restauración,” *Estudios de Historia Social*, no. 28–29 (1984): 249–83. Molina Aparicio, “Modernidad e identidad nacional,” 154. On the impact of Linz’s study see also Archilés Cardona, “Melancólico bucle,” 262–64.

<sup>19</sup> See Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

<sup>20</sup> De Riquer i Permanyer, “La débil nacionalización,” 113.

<sup>21</sup> José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001). This has been published in English as José Álvarez Junco, *Spanish Identity in the Age of Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). Assessment in Fernando Molina Aparicio and Migel Cabo Villaverde, “An Inconvenient Nation: Nation-Building and National Identity in Modern Spain. The Historiographical Debate,” in *Nationhood from below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Marnix Beyen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 59.

coalition of landed nobility and newly enriched bourgeoisie,” in his view, “were utterly afraid of a nationalist idea which meant mass mobilisation and participation, and a new civic education which could detach individuals from tradition, from family, province and religion.”<sup>22</sup> The result was a middle-of-the-road case of nationalisation, which was not a complete failure, but weak and insufficient nonetheless.

Despite its considerable influence on Spanish historiography, the weak-nationalisation thesis by no means implied a uniformity of opinion amongst the historians who endorsed it.<sup>23</sup> Crucially, most of them shared a top-down, modernist interpretation of the nation, which this thesis will challenge by examining the nationalisation process below through the letters sent to the government during the dictatorship. By the time De Riquer had articulated the weak-nationalisation thesis, however, the very assumptions upon which it rested had been undermined. Parallel to the developments just described, there has been what Javier Moreno Luzón has called an “end to the melancholy” surrounding the history of the Spanish development in the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> De Riquer’s thesis was largely predicated on two paradigms which had dominated Spanish historiography: those of the failed bourgeois and industrial revolutions.<sup>25</sup> According to Archilés Cardona, although these narratives of failure and anomaly would be popularised by historians primarily in the 1960s, they

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<sup>22</sup> José Álvarez Junco, “The Nation-Building Process in Nineteenth-Century Spain,” in *Nationalism and Nation in the Iberian Peninsula*, ed. Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 98, 99. A similar argument is also made in José Álvarez Junco, “El nacionalismo español como mito movilizador. Cuatro guerras,” in *Cultura y movilización en la España contemporánea*, ed. Manuel Pérez Ledesma and Rafael Cruz Martínez (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1997), 35–68. A third, and lengthier, exposition highlighted how political stability had thwarted this process. José Álvarez Junco, “La nación en duda,” in *Más se perdió en Cuba: España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo*, ed. Juan Pan-Montojo and José Álvarez Junco (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998), 405–75.

<sup>23</sup> Archilés Cardona, “Melancólico bucle,” 250.

<sup>24</sup> Javier Moreno Luzón, “Introducción: el fin de la melancolía,” in *Construir España. Nacionalismo español y procesos de nacionalización*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007), 13–24.

<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the most dramatic statement on the economic failure of Spain is Jordi Nadal Oller, “The Failure of the Industrial Revolution in Spain, 1830-1914,” in *The Emergence of Industrial Societies. Part 2*, ed. Carlo M. Cipolla, *The Fontana Economic History of Europe, IV* (London: Fontana, 1973), 532–626. On the impact of the narrative of the failed bourgeois revolution see Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón, “La revolución burguesa en España: Los inicios de un debate científico, 1966-1979,” in *Historiografía española contemporánea: X Coloquio del Centro de Investigaciones Hispánicas de la Universidad de Pau*, ed. Manuel Tuñón de Lara (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1980), 91–138. Some early works which promoted the notion of failure are Pierre Vilar, *Historia de España*, trans. Manuel Tuñón de Lara (Paris: Librairie espagnole, 1963); Jaume Vicens Vives, *Aproximación a la historia de España* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003); Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *La España del siglo XIX* (Barcelona: Laia, 1977); Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *La España del siglo XX* (Barcelona: Laia, 1974).

can be traced back to the largely uncontested ideological legacies of the Generations of '98 and '14 thinkers.<sup>26</sup> The origin of these intertwined ideas lay in the supposed dominance of conservative ideology during Spain's revolutionary period in the nineteenth century, with the allegedly limited nationalisation a reflection of the indifference of the political class both to modernisation and to the mobilisation of the citizenry.<sup>27</sup> In this way, the historians who advanced this idea presented Spain's uneven modernisation as an exceptional case, something of a Spanish *Sonderweg*.<sup>28</sup> In the mid-1990s, a number of historians, who had been influenced by revisionist trends in the historiographies of Germany and France, began to question whether the Spanish case was so anomalous after all. Instead, they argued that the liberal revolutions of the nineteenth century had profoundly transformed Spain economically and politically, meaning that it was by no means an exceptional case in European terms, albeit without discounting its particularities.<sup>29</sup>

As we mentioned earlier, the main developments which took place in the 1990s, beginning with the De Riquer-Fusi debate, were largely theoretical and this led

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<sup>26</sup> Archilés Cardona, "Melancólico bucle", 251-54. This essay provides an invaluable overview of the historiographical trends behind this narrative of failure. See also Ferran Archilés Cardona, "¿Quién necesita la nación débil? La débil nacionalización española y los historiadores," in *Usos públicos de la historia: Comunicaciones al VI Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea*, ed. Carlos Forcadell Álvarez et al., vol. 1 (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2002), 302–22. This narrative was identified first by Santos Juliá, although his analysis makes no mention of nation or nationalism. Santos Juliá Díaz, "Anomalía, dolor y fracaso de España," *Claves de razón práctica*, no. 66 (1996): 10–21.

<sup>27</sup> Molina Aparicio, "Modernidad e identidad nacional," 154. See also Sebastian Balfour and Alejandro Quiroga, *The Reinvention of Spain: Nation and Identity since Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25–29.

<sup>28</sup> Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas, "Proyectos alternativos de nacionalización de masas en Europa occidental (1870-1939), y la relativa influencia de lo contingente," in *La transición a la política de masas*, ed. Edward Acton and Ismael Saz Campos (Valencia: Publicacions Universitat de Valencia, 2001), 96–97; Ismael Saz Campos et al., "Normalidad y anormalidad en la historia de la España contemporánea," *Spagna contemporanea*, no. 14 (1998): 139–48.

<sup>29</sup> These are summarised in Isabel Burdiel, "Myths of Failure, Myths of Success: New Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Spanish Liberalism," *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998): 892–912. For an economic perspective see David R. Ringrose, *Spain, Europe, and the "Spanish Miracle", 1700-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa and Jordi Palafox Gámir, *España, 1808-1996: el desafío de la modernidad* (Madrid: Espasa, 1997). On women's place in this see Pilar Folguera, "¿Hubo una Revolución Liberal Burguesa para las mujeres? (1808-1868)," in *Historia de las mujeres en España*, ed. Pilar Folguera et al. (Madrid: Síntesis, 1997), 421–50. The influential revisionist approach to the *Sonderweg* thesis in Germany to which I refer is David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). A study which has been influenced by French historiography can be read in Jesus Cruz, *Gentlemen, Bourgeois, and Revolutionaries: Political Change and Cultural Persistence among the Spanish Dominant Groups 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas to highlight the lack of an adequate empirical basis to support these theses.<sup>30</sup> Since then, the state's role in the process of nationalisation has been the subject of a number of important studies which have focused on how national identity was transmitted to the masses by the state and ruling elites.<sup>31</sup> The topics of these works have been diverse, ranging from examinations of the school system in Spain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to monographic treatments of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship period itself.<sup>32</sup> This has been accompanied by interest in the use of symbols and commemoration to promote the idea of the nation.<sup>33</sup> These have shown clearly that not only did the Spanish state show interest in

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<sup>30</sup> Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas, "Los oasis en el desierto. Perspectivas historiográficas sobre el nacionalismo español," *Bulletin d'Histoire Contemporaine de l'Espagne* 26 (1997): 511; Núñez Seixas, "Proyectos alternativos," 94.

<sup>31</sup> As a starting point, see the numerous essays in Javier Moreno Luzón, ed., *Construir España. Nacionalismo español y procesos de nacionalización* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007); Mariano Esteban de Vega and María Dolores de la Calle, eds., *Procesos de nacionalización en la España contemporánea* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2010); Ismael Saz Campos and Ferran Archilés Cardona, eds., *Estudios sobre nacionalismo y nación en la España contemporánea* (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2011); Ismael Saz Campos and Ferran Archilés Cardona, eds., *La nación de los españoles: discursos y práctica del nacionalismo en la época contemporánea* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2012); Pere Gabriel, Jordi Pomés, and Francisco Fernández Gómez, eds., *España Res Publica. Nacionalización española e identidades en conflicto (siglos XIX y XX)* (Granada: Comares, 2013); Félix Luengo Teixidor and Fernando Molina Aparicio, eds., *Los caminos de la nación. Factores de nacionalización en la España contemporánea* (Granada: Comares, 2016).

<sup>32</sup> Regarding education, see Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875-1975* (Princeton; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1997); Inman Fox, *La invención de España: nacionalismo liberal e identidad nacional* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1997); María del Mar Del Pozo Andrés, *Curriculum e identidad nacional. Regeneracionismos, nacionalismos y escuela pública, 1890-1939* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2000); María del Mar Del Pozo Andrés, "La construcción de la identidad nacional desde la escuela: el modelo republicano de educación para la ciudadanía," in *Construir España. Nacionalismo español y procesos de nacionalización*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007), 207–32. On the nationalisation efforts of the Republican governments through cultural and literacy programmes see Sandie Eleanor Holguin, *Creating Spaniards: Culture and National Identity in Republican Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002). For a major study of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship see Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*. On the role of the military in mass nationalisation see Geoffrey Jensen, "Military Nationalism and the State: The Case of Fin-De-Siècle Spain," *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 2 (2000): 257–74; Alejandro Quiroga, "«Los apóstoles de la patria». El ejército como instrumento de nacionalización de masas durante la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez. Nouvelle série* 34, no. 1 (2004): 243–272.

<sup>33</sup> On culture and symbols generally see Manuel Pérez Ledesma and Rafael Cruz Martínez, eds., *Cultura y movilización en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1997); Fox, *La invención de España*, 1997; Carlos Seco Serrano, *El nacimiento de Carmen. Símbolos, mitos, nación* (Madrid: Taurus, 1999); Javier Moreno Luzón and Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas, eds., *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX* (Barcelona: RBA, 2013). On commemoration see Eric Storm, "El tercer centenario del Don Quijote en 1905 y el nacionalismo español," *Hispania*, no. 58 (1998): 625–54; Eric Storm, "Conmemoración de los héroes nacionales en la España de la Restauración. El centenario de El Greco de 1914," *Historia y Política* 12, no. 2 (2004): 79–104; Carolyn P. Boyd, "The Second Battle of Covadonga: The Politics of Commemoration in Modern Spain," *History & Memory*, no. 14 (2002): 37–65. The work of

the imposition of a national identity on the population during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, it was successful in doing so. The Primo de Rivera regime would later engage in the same dynamic in its efforts to overcome Spain's post-war crisis through the creation of a new citizen.

The state was certainly not the only agent of nationalisation at work in Spain at this time. Research into this area has been complemented by various studies on the manner in which civil society and popular culture acted as autonomous and informal agents of nationalisation also. Even amid disputes over formal symbols of the nation, like the national anthem, for example, the Spanish population developed a liking for other expressions of national identity like bullfighting, *zarzuela* and football.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of these studies, like those of the weak-nationalisation thesis, have been marked by a top-down approach which pays little attention to the way in which these ideas were received by national publics. These concerns have been partially addressed in a recent historiographical shift, which has called for the subjectivities of nationalisation to be integrated into historical analysis.

In his proposal for a revised theoretical framework for the study of nationalism, Alejandro Quiroga describes what he refers to as the 'the personalisation of the patria' by individuals. According to this view, attention must be paid to the manner in which

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Javier Moreno Luzón is important enough to be highlighted separately: Javier Moreno Luzón, "Fighting for the National Memory: The Commemoration of the Spanish 'War of Independence' in 1908-1912," *History & Memory* 19, no. 1 (2007): 68–94; Javier Moreno Luzón, "Mitos de la España inmortal. Conmemoraciones y nacionalismo español en el siglo XX," in *Discursos de España en el siglo XX*, ed. Carlos Forcadell Álvarez, Ismael Saz Campos, and María Pilar Salomón Chéliz (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2009), 123–46; Javier Moreno Luzón, "Reconquistar América para regenerar España. Nacionalismo español y centenario de las independencias en 1910-1911," *Historia Mexicana*, no. 237 (2010): 561–640. On the role of historians and history as an academic discipline see Juan Sisínio Pérez Garzón et al., *La gestión de la memoria: la historia de España al servicio del poder* (Barcelona: Grupo Planeta, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> Carrie B. Douglass, *Bulls, Bullfighting, and Spanish Identities* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1999); Adrian Shubert, *Death and Money in the Afternoon: A History of the Spanish Bullfight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Serge Salaün, "La sociabilidad en el teatro (1890-1915)," *Historia Social*, no. 41 (2001): 127–46; Clinton D. Young, *Music Theater and Popular Nationalism in Spain, 1880-1930* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2016); Alejandro Quiroga, *Football and National Identities in Spain: The Strange Death of Don Quixote* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). A general overview of similar studies from an earlier period in Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas, *Historiographical Approaches to Nationalism in Spain* (Saarbrücken/Fort Lauderdale: Breitenback, 1993). On public space and the public sphere more generally, see Jorge Uría, "Lugares para el ocio. Espacio público y espacios recreativos en la Restauración española," *Historia social*, no. 41 (2001): 89–111; Ferran Archilés Cardona and Marta García Carrión, "En la sombra del Estado. Esfera pública nacional y homogeneización cultural en la España de la Restauración," *Historia contemporánea*, no. 45 (2013): 483–518.

individuals make certain elements of nationalist discourse their own, while reformulating others, therefore. “In many respects,” then, “the effectiveness of the nation as an identity creator does not depend so much on the discourse of nationalists, who tend to present the patria as a homogeneous abstraction anyway. The answer rather lies in the citizens’ subjective appropriation of the nation, a process that implies incorporating the patria into the individual’s affective universe.”<sup>35</sup> This process of ‘personalisation’ is apparent in the letters analysed in this thesis.

Archilés Cardona has taken a culturalist approach to Spanish nationalism to demonstrate how everyday activities, like membership of political movements or recreational pursuits, could create what were very often banal “lived experiences” of national identity in individuals during the Restoration period.<sup>36</sup> More recently, he has taken Quiroga’s idea that the nationalisation process occurs across three hierarchical spheres – the public, semi-public and private – and suggested that these operate in a form of continuum of fragile separations, which is never static. The national dimension implies the existence of a political sphere, as without it the imagined community of nation could not come into existence. However, it is through cultural mechanisms of representing identity that these imagined communities give meaning to personal experiences of the nation. Narratives of belonging, for example, allow a person to create these. This brings into focus what Archilés calls the qualitative, rather than quantitative, element of national identity. This thesis will explore this in considerable depth through research into the language used in petitions and denunciations during the dictatorship period.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Alejandro Quiroga, “The Three Spheres. A Theoretical Model of Mass Nationalisation: The Case of Spain,” *Nations and Nationalism* 20, no. 4 (2014): 683–700, 692 & 693. A Spanish-language version of the same article was published as Alejandro Quiroga, “La nacionalización en España. Una propuesta teórica,” *Ayer* 90, no. 2 (2013): 17–38.

<sup>36</sup> Ferran Archilés Cardona, “¿Experiencias de nación? Nacionalización e identidades en la España restauracionista (1898-c.1920),” in *Construir España. Nacionalismo español y procesos de nacionalización*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007), 127–51. This approach has clearly been influenced by the work of Michael Billig, who he cites: Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995). See also Ferran Archilés Cardona, “Vivir la comunidad imaginada. Nacionalismo español e identidades en la España de la Restauración,” *Historia de la educación: Revista interuniversitaria*, no. 27 (2008): 57–85.

<sup>37</sup> Ferran Archilés Cardona, “Lenguajes de nación. Las «experiencias de nación» y los procesos de nacionalización: propuestas para un debate,” *Ayer* 90, no. 2 (2013): 91–114, 104.



Fernando Molina has also highlighted how, since the cultural turn in the humanities, nation has been increasingly regarded as a combination of representation and narration, a ‘discursive formation.’ He points to the need to study biographical sources, understood diversely, in order to appreciate how individuals, very often out of necessity, accepted nationalist discourses in order to give meaning to their circumstances.<sup>38</sup> The public letters which this thesis examines also fall into the category Molina describes and explore this process of internalisation.

The emergence of the new historiography of ‘Spanish normality’ has led to a ‘local turn’ in the study of the public sphere in Spain.<sup>39</sup> This trend has challenged the top-down, modernist tradition in the study of nation-building, as exemplified by the work of Eugen Weber, by examining the channels of nationalisation that existed in civil society and popular culture, alongside those controlled by the state. Following this trend, Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas has shown how, in political terms, the regionalisms in Spain could, in fact, aid, rather than weaken this process.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, a theory of what Josep Fradera has called ‘dual patriotism’ divided between nation and region has been supported by a number of different case studies and has become a central element of the revisionist position.<sup>41</sup> More recently, Ferran Archilés had used a cultural-history approach to demonstrate how at the *fin-de-siècle* cultural elites became obsessed with the notion of discovering the ‘national essence’ of Spain in its regions. This process was not a retreat from modernity, however: it was “a new form of invention; a new concept of regional identity and of the place that was to be

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<sup>38</sup> Fernando Molina Aparicio, “La nación desde abajo. Nacionalización, individuo e identidad nacional,” *Ayer* 90, no. 2 (2013): 39–63. He borrows the term “discursive formation” from Craig Calhoun, who, in turn, uses it in a Foucauldian sense. Craig J. Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997). A recent study of this nature, which Molina has co-edited, is Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas and Fernando Molina Aparicio, eds., *Heterodoxos de la patria. Biografías de nacionalistas atípicos en la España del siglo XX* (Granada: Comares, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> Molina Aparicio and Cabo Villaverde, “An Inconvenient Nation,” 59–62. A number of essays of this variety can be read in the edited volume Carlos Forcadell Álvarez and María Cruz Romeo Mateo, eds., *Provincia y nación: los territorios del liberalismo* (Zaragoza: Institución “Fernando el Católico,” 2006).

<sup>40</sup> Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas, “The Region as Essence of the Fatherland: Regionalist Variants of Spanish Nationalism (1840–1936),” *European History Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2001): 483–518.

<sup>41</sup> Ferran Archilés Cardona and Manuel Martí, “Ethnicity, Region and Nation. Valencian Identity and the Spanish Nation State,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 5 (2001): 779–97; Josep M. Fradera, *Cultura nacional en una sociedad dividida. Cataluña, 1838-1868* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003); Fernando Molina Aparicio, “España no era tan diferente. Regionalismo e identidad nacional en el País Vasco (1868-1898),” *Ayer*, no. 64 (2006): 179–200; Justo Beramendi, “Algunos aspectos del nation-building español en la Galicia del siglo XIX,” in *Construir España. Nacionalismo español y procesos de nacionalización*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007), 25–57.

assigned to it in the process of nation-building.”<sup>42</sup> The effect of works like these has been to demonstrate that the Spanish nation served as an intersection for multiple, overlapping identities.<sup>43</sup> This is a theme that will reappear throughout this thesis as we examine how ordinary people sought to present local issues as matters of national importance by appropriating and re-tooling the nationalist discourse of the regime for this purpose.

These developments in Spanish historiography have coincided with renewed interest in from-below approaches to both nationalism and dictatorship across academia.<sup>44</sup> The essays in a 2012 volume edited by Marnix Beyen and Maarten Van Ginderachter have served as a point of departure for this thesis.<sup>45</sup> The term ‘history from below’ may have been expressed for the first time in English by E.P. Thompson; a similar idea already existed in the work of the French *Annales* school, even if their focus on long-term social changes tended to discount the place of human agency in these processes.<sup>46</sup> The German *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of everyday life), which emerged in Germany in the 1970s, was strongly influenced by Thompson’s work.<sup>47</sup> The *Alltag* historians, for their part, rejected the idea that power relations have an “unequivocal disciplining effect.”<sup>48</sup> Instead, they emphasised the means by which ordinary people resisted and often appropriated the discourses of power that surrounded them.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ferran Archilés Cardona, “«Hacer región es hacer patria». La región en el imaginario de la nación española de la Restauración,” *Ayer* 64, no. 4 (2006): 142. This work also contains a valuable synthesis of recent historiographical developments concerning regionalisms in Europe. See *Ibid.*, 122–28.

<sup>43</sup> Molina has identified the tension between region and nation as evidence of the dual nature of nationalism, between its civic and ethnic elements. Molina Aparicio, “Modernidad e identidad nacional,” 162. On how the civic/ethnic dimension relates to Spain see Diego Muro and Alejandro Quiroga, “Spanish Nationalism. Ethnic or Civic?,” *Ethnicities* 5, no. 1 (2005): 9–29.

<sup>44</sup> These developments are described in Van Ginderachter, “Nationhood from Below: Historiographic Notes.”

<sup>45</sup> Maarten Van Ginderachter and Marnix Beyen, eds., *Nationhood from below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> Marnix Beyen and Maarten Van Ginderachter, “Writing the Mass into a Mass Phenomenon,” in *Nationhood from below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marnix Beyen and Maarten Van Ginderachter (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 4.

<sup>47</sup> Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966).

<sup>48</sup> Beyen and Van Ginderachter, “Writing,” 5.

<sup>49</sup> A general outline of this approach may be read in Alf Lütke, ed., *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, trans. William Templer (Princeton; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1995). See also Alf Lütke, “De los héroes de la resistencia a los coautores. «Alltagsgeschichte» en Alemania,” *Ayer*, no. 19 (1995): 49–70.

Despite the considerable promise of the ‘history of everyday life’ trend, Stefan Berger has observed that its followers have tended to marginalise or avoid national history altogether.<sup>50</sup> This contrasts starkly with the history written after the cultural and linguistic turns, which wholeheartedly embraced the notion that nations and nationalism were discursively-constructed entities. In its extreme version, however, this approach left little room for the questions of resistance that were so central to the *Alltag* school’s thinking. “Insofar as scholars expressed doubts about the paradigm of elite-driven cultural constructivism,” Beyen and Van Ginderachter write, “they critically engaged its modernist aspects rather than the popular impact of nationalizing policies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”<sup>51</sup> As a means of reconciling these two approaches, this thesis accepts Beyen and Van Ginderachter’s counter-claim that ordinary people could react to the nation by transforming, appropriating or inverting it and seeks to apply this style of thinking to the Primo de Rivera period in Spain.<sup>52</sup> As we will see in the section below, such an approach sits well with recent historiographical developments relating to the regime. Moreover, combinations of the methodologies just described have already been applied to other twentieth-century dictatorships and yielded results that have demonstrated that their domination over the population was never total.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Berger, “A Return to the National Paradigm?,” 659.

<sup>51</sup> Beyen and Van Ginderachter, “Writing,” 6–7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>53</sup> For a general history-from-below approach to dictatorship see the essays in Paul Corner, ed., *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Michael Kim, Michael Shoenhals, and Yong-Woo Kim, eds., *Mass Dictatorship and Modernity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Alf Lüdtke, ed., *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship: Collusion and Evasion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). On Fascist Italy see Paul Corner, *The Fascist Party and Popular Opinion in Mussolini’s Italy* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Stephen Gundle, Christopher Duggan, and Giuliana Pieri, eds., *The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013). On Nazi Germany see Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (London: Batsford, 1987); Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews and Ordinary Germans* (London: John Murray, 2000); Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Vandana Joshi, *Gender and Power in the Third Reich - Female Denouncers and the Gestapo (1933-1945)* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). On Soviet Russia, particularly during the Stalinist period, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 2000); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear off the Masks!: Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Wendy Z. Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin’s Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On Spain during the Franco dictatorship see Pilar Folguera, “La construcción de lo cotidiano durante los primeros años del franquismo,” *Ayer*, no. 19 (1995): 165–82; Rafael Abella, *La*

***The Primo de Rivera dictatorship: parenthesis or crossroads?***

The question of whether the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera should be regarded as a parenthesis, which aimed to rejuvenate Spain's sick, though not entirely moribund, liberal system, or as a crossroads at which Spanish politics and society would be fundamentally altered, has been at the centre of the historiographical debate on the period.<sup>54</sup> During the Franco dictatorship, establishment historians rejected the parenthesis thesis and argued that the earlier dictatorship should be seen as a form of authoritarian regenerationism which, while frustrated by Primo's disinclination to break entirely with liberal parliamentarism, had prefigured a necessary project of national rehabilitation started by the rebels on 18 July, 1936.<sup>55</sup>

In 1973, Raúl Morodo published a short study of the dictatorship which proved influential in Marxist circles.<sup>56</sup> Morodo's thinking was influenced by Karl Marx and Carl Schmitt, the latter of whom we will discuss later. The Primo de Rivera dictatorship was, in Morodo's view, a regime of exception and a form of "institutionalised regenerationism with Bonapartist technique." By this he meant to highlight Primo's lingering liberalism and his efforts to give his government an inter-classist character. Describing the dictatorship in Schmittian terms as 'commissarial,' he saw a tension between the regime's need to institutionalise itself and its desire to maintain the socio-economic base of society through the state of emergency. The regime would engage in efforts to manipulate the masses, but would fail both at gaining their support and instituting a 'dictatorship of notables' capable of guaranteeing the continuity he desired.

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*vida cotidiana bajo el régimen de Franco* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 1996); Francisco Sevillano Calero, "Consensus and violence in the 'new state' franquista: history of the everyday attitudes," *Historia Social*, no. 46 (2003): 159–71; Antonio Cazorla Sánchez, *Fear and Progress: Ordinary Lives in Franco's Spain, 1939-1975* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). An unsatisfactory examination of everyday life under Primo de Rivera, which pre-dates many of these developments, can be read in José Luis Vila-San-Juan, *La vida cotidiana en España durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera* (Barcelona: Editorial Argos Vergara, 1984).

<sup>54</sup> The origin of the debate was Primo himself: the preamble to the decree which named him sole Minister in the new government on 15 September, 1923 stated that "it is our aim to open a brief parenthesis around the constitutional life of Spain." *Gaceta de Madrid*, 16/09/1923.

<sup>55</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 392–95.

<sup>56</sup> Raúl Morodo Leoncio, "El 18 Brumario español. La dictadura de Primo de Rivera," *Triunfo*, no. 572 (1973): 22–27.

In an analysis with clear Gramscian overtones, Manuel Tuñón de Lara described the dictatorship as an attempt to solve by force the “crisis of hegemony” which had assailed the Restoration’s “socially dominant bloc” of oligarchic landowners and an industrial-financial bourgeoisie. The regime, therefore, was a parenthesis aimed at holding this in check. Pierre Malerbe examined the dictatorship from the point of view of modernisation and argued that it was not the result of a crisis in the political system of the Restoration, as such, but rather of a crisis of representation brought on by the rapid transformation of society. Primo’s seizure of power, in Malerbe’s view, was primarily a counter-revolutionary reaction to García Prieto’s final Liberal government, which came to power with a reformist mandate that alarmed the military.<sup>57</sup>

The parenthesis thesis gained traction historians among of a more conservative outlook also. In one of his first major works on the crisis of the Restoration, Javier Tusell would write that “no important, or truly transcendental, transformations” occurred during the regime. Admittedly, Tusell was referring primarily to the government’s efforts to eradicate *caciquismo*, the brand of clientelistic politics that characterised the Restoration era in Spain, but it is for precisely this reason that his study of the dictatorship is limited. In contrast, he said very little about the discrediting of the monarchy and military, or the liquidation of the *turno* political parties during Primo’s rule. In a later essay, Tusell and Genoveva García Quiapo de Llano questioned the validity of Morodo’s categorisation of the dictatorship as Bonapartist, while also arguing that the Marxist historiography tended to examine the Primo de Rivera regime as a precedent to Francoism, rather than as a reflection of the crisis of Spain’s political institutions after the First World War.<sup>58</sup>

The work of Shlomo Ben-Ami in the early 1980s was at the head of attempts to bring about the historiographical ‘normalisation’ of the Primo de Rivera regime.<sup>59</sup> Ben-

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<sup>57</sup> Manuel Tuñón de Lara, “En torno a la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera,” *Cuadernos económicos de ICE*, no. 10 (1979): 9–36. This was echoed in Manuel Pastor, *Los orígenes del fascismo en España* (Madrid: Tucur, 1975), 14. Pierre Malerbe, “La Dictadura,” in *La crisis del Estado. Dictadura, República, Guerra (1923-1939)*, ed. Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *Historia de España*, IX (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1981), 11–104, 31.

<sup>58</sup> Javier Tusell, *La crisis del caciquismo andaluz (1923-1931)* (Madrid: Cupsa, 1977), 231. Genoveva García Queipo de Llano and Javier Tusell Gómez, “La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera como régimen político: un intento de interpretación,” *Cuadernos económicos de ICE*, no. 10 (1979): 37–64.

<sup>59</sup> Shlomo Ben-Ami, *La dictadura de Primo de Rivera, 1923-1930* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1984). Also published in English as Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Fascism from above: The Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in*

Ami highlighted the developmental tendencies of the state during this time and styled the dictatorship as an attempt to carry out a “revolution from above,” which incorporated elements from diverse political traditions into its administration. His comparison of Primo’s government to its authoritarian, inter-war counterparts in East Europe and the Balkans revealed significant convergences. These regimes came to power amid fear over the activation of previously dormant sectors of the population. Rapidly, however, they were forced to engage in their own mobilisation programmes, even if this was only to mould public opinion. Unlike the more extreme regimes in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, though, Primo and his analogues in Metaxas, Pilsudski and others did not aspire to a totalitarian organisation of society. “[These] were not totalitarian dictatorships.” he wrote. “Basing themselves on traditional precepts, they responded more to the need to regulate change than to build an entirely new society.”<sup>60</sup>

In a short essay, Carlos Hernández expanded on this view by arguing that the dictatorship was characterised not by any profound regeneration of society or change to its socio-economic base, but rather by an attempt to expand and concentrate state power. “In short,” he concludes, “there was no empty parenthesis or continuity *sensu stricto*, but rather a qualitative leap in the behaviour of the elites of the hegemonic block, who, in the interest of the authoritarian reconstruction of the State, surrender control of the national political superstructure into the hands of a new bureaucratic elite.”<sup>61</sup> It is my own belief that the dictatorship should be understood primarily in this light through its project to nationalise the population and create a new citizenry, as I will elaborate below.

María Teresa González Calbet and José Luis Gómez Navarro presented two largely complementary studies of the dictatorship in the late 1980s and early 1990s, although they disagreed on the scale of renewal during Primo’s rule. González Calbet’s contribution focused exclusively on the *Directorio Militar* period (1923-1925) and argued against the influential thesis of Raymond Carr that the dictatorship had

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*Spain 1923-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983). See also Shlomo Ben-Ami, “The Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera: A Political Reassessment,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 12, no. 1 (1977): 65–84.

<sup>60</sup> Ben-Ami, *Dictadura*, 255–61, quotation from 255.

<sup>61</sup> Carlos Ernesto Hernández Hernández, “¿Regeneración o reconstrucción? Reflexiones sobre el estado bajo la dictadura primorriverista (1923-1930),” *Historia Contemporánea*, no. 17 (1998): 335–57, 345.

strangled the new-born child of Spanish democracy.<sup>62</sup> Instead, she saw the regime as just “one of the options – the authoritarian route – available to the system in order to escape from the crisis that had engulfed it, especially since 1917.”<sup>63</sup> While she recognised that dictatorship represented a fundamental break with the liberal regime that preceded it, particularly in relation to the Restoration political parties, González Calbet rejected the idea that Primo’s reforms to the state administration had been successful in eliminating the clientelism (*caciquismo*) that had undermined Spanish democracy; on the contrary, she pointed to the numerous accommodations which the government and its representatives reached with local notables as these measures were carried out. This meant that there was no renovation of the political class.<sup>64</sup>

The work of Gómez Navarro, in contrast, primarily examines the later *Directorio Civil* phase (1925-1930).<sup>65</sup> Gómez Navarro concludes that the regime brought about a major changing of the political guard in Spain, while conceding that this was less pronounced outside the large cities. Politicians of the previously marginal *Maurista* and *Mellista* traditions, in his view, came to exert a disproportionate influence on government due to its ideological poverty. Less convincing, however, is Gómez Navarro’s suggestion that the dictatorship meant a definitive end to *caciquismo*, as his analysis of this phenomenon considers it only in its political, rather than social manifestations.<sup>66</sup> As the letters analysed in this thesis make clear, the influence of *caciques* remained significant both in local settings and, crucially, in the *perception* of the population, which continued to denounce their excesses until the end of the dictatorship in 1930. Indeed, as more recent studies have shown, aspects of *caciquismo* survived until well into the Franco regime.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> M. Teresa González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera. El Directorio Militar* (Madrid: Ediciones el Arquero, 1987), 275. Carr’s thesis in Raymond Carr, *Spain: 1808-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

<sup>63</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 11.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 248–56, 237-247.

<sup>65</sup> José Luis Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera: reyes, dictaduras y dictadores* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1991), 13–100.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 487–507.

<sup>67</sup> See the essays in Antonio Robles Egea and José Álvarez Junco, eds., *Política en penumbra: patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1996). Another worthwhile examination of this is Antonio Cazorla Sánchez, “Dictatorship from Below: Local Politics in the Making of the Francoist State, 1937-1948,” *Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 4 (1999): 882–901.

The work of Ben-Ami, González Calbet and Gómez Navarro revolutionised the historiography of the dictatorship period. It moved beyond the simplistic explanation of the regime as an expression of socio-economic interests and showed how it had garnered support from other sections of society. Moreover, they demonstrated clearly that Primo had attempted to bring about a radical break with the Restoration system and create a new and highly authoritarian state. Finally, their comparative approach situated the regime in the interwar crisis and, by historicising it as such, helped to overcome teleological explanations which started with the Franco regime and worked backwards.<sup>68</sup>

More recently, Eduardo González Calleja has highlighted the dictatorship's role in facilitating the entry of the masses into Spanish politics, an idea hinted at in González Calbet's and Ben-Ami's work in the 1980s. The 1920s, González Calleja argues, were marked by new forms of public behaviour, particularly by young people, who were increasingly nonconformist towards the traditional views of the establishment. This meant that a new normative and institutional framework for society became inevitable. González Calleja builds on his earlier work on public order during the Restoration and concludes that the dictatorship ultimately served to erode the liberal system's commitment to 'fair play' and 'self-limitation,' thus legitimising the use of political violence in the 1930s. While spontaneous violence was largely contained during the regime by state repression, these new methods would come to the fore in the 1930s, beginning with the uprising against the failing monarchy in December 1930.<sup>69</sup> Although nuanced by his earlier observations about the changing values of Spanish society, González's conclusion that the collapse of the regime was

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<sup>68</sup> Radcliff, *Modern Spain*, 145–46.

<sup>69</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 259–316, 386–88. See also Eduardo González Calleja, "La defensa armada del «orden social» durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1923-1930)," in *España entre dos siglos (1875-1931): continuidad y cambio. Coloquio de la Universidad Complutense sobre la España contemporánea*, ed. José Luis García Delgado, Manuel Tuñón de Lara, and Michael Alpert (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, 1991), 345–59; Eduardo González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio: orden público, subversión y violencia política en la crisis de la Restauración (1917-1931)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1999); Eduardo González Calleja, "La política de orden público en la Restauración," *Espacio Tiempo y Forma. Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*, no. 20 (2008): 93–127.



brought about when the Army and King withdrew their support for it seems to forget public opinion and the role played by civil society in shaping this.<sup>70</sup>

Alejandro Quiroga's 2007 study of the regime represents a major contribution to our understanding both of the dictatorship and of the nationalisation process more generally in Spain. Quiroga contends that the Primo de Rivera government engaged in a programme of mass indoctrination, which aimed to inculcate the population in the 'National-Catholic' values around which it had rallied its supporters. This was carried out through a process of 'negative integration' which emphasised domestic and foreign foes. The regime's overbearing and often inconsistent policies proved counter-productive, however, and served to alienate large segments of the population, a process Quiroga calls 'negative nationalisation.' This theory is germane to this thesis as, by giving some consideration to those outside the political elite, it partially accounts for the change in public opinion which brought about the transformations of 1930 and 1931. But Quiroga's explanation considers these people only in a passive sense, as if they were mere receptacles for a nationalist message that was directed towards them entirely from above. Thus, as he fully admits, no attention is given to factors autonomous of the state, which might have promoted 'alternative nationalisations.'<sup>71</sup> In a provocative analysis of the historiography on the dictatorship, Pablo Montes observes that this tendency to approach the topic from a rigidly top-down point of view of political history has been repeated almost uniformly in secondary literature.<sup>72</sup> The year 1930, he observes, has consistently been identified as *the* decisive moment which decided the fate of the monarchy, something which surely discounts the many important changes that occurred between September 1923 and January 1930.

### **Research questions and methodology**

Following from these initial observations, the central research questions that this thesis seeks to answer are:

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<sup>70</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 378.

<sup>71</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 183–88, 4–5.

<sup>72</sup> Pablo Montes, "La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera y la historiografía. Una confrontación metodológica," *Historia Social*, no. 74 (2012): 167–84.

- How did ordinary people respond to the regime's project of mass nationalisation? Did they accept the authoritarian national identity promoted by the regime passively or did they seek to alter it and challenge the monopoly that the administration aspired to on legitimate political discourse?
- If the latter is true, how did these people make representations to the government, thereby engaging in the practice of citizenship as defined Chapter One? What language and rhetoric did they use to this end? To what extent did the regime react favourably to these petitions and did this coincide with the civic vision it promoted?
- How can the nature of the infamous mass denunciation that took place at the start of the dictatorship be understood in a comparative context and did it prefigure the denunciations which accompanied the violence of the Spanish Civil War and the post-war Francoist repression?

This thesis responds to the questions arising from the trends described in the previous section by examining how the Spanish population interacted with the dictatorial state in their daily lives through the medium of petition. The from-below perspective which this thesis adopts lends itself to the study of the ordinary members of this population. However, it must be conceded that the use of the categorisation of 'ordinary people' is problematic and often leads to definitions that are as arbitrary as they are elaborate. As a means of avoiding the potential pitfalls associated with this, this thesis opts for a functional definition of 'ordinary people,' which coincides with its principal analytical foci: nationalism and citizenship. By describing the nationalism as one of the principal channels through which the ideals and values of citizenship are communicated in both directions between the state and its citizens, the thesis fruitfully employs Van Ginderachter's and Beyen's definition of ordinary people as "those people who are not actively or consciously engaged in concerted, organized nation-building strategies" and uses it to explore how ordinary people attempted to harness the discursive tools used by the dictatorial government to assert the very rights which it attacked through the inauguration of a 'permanent state of exception.'<sup>73</sup> While students of social history may lament that this approach forgoes

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<sup>73</sup> Beyen and Van Ginderachter, "Writing," 10.

deeper analysis of each letter-writer's social background, class, cachet, etc., it has been chosen to point this study towards a cultural history of nationalism and of citizenship in Spain during this time, in line with Beyen's and Van Ginderachter's observations.<sup>74</sup>

In order to achieve the aims described above, this thesis analyses a considerable corpus of previously undiscovered letters which were sent to the authorities by the population in Spain, while paying particularly close attention to the language which the letter-writers employed as they made important claims to the dictatorial state on matters relating to citizenship.<sup>75</sup> In total, this thesis refers to 118 separate correspondences between Spanish citizens and the state, in addition to a wide range of contemporary sources in other formats, such as government papers, legislation, press and memoirs.

By placing the manner in which these people appropriated and re-deployed elements of the discourse promoted by the Primo de Rivera regime at the centre of its analysis, it shows clearly that the Spanish population successfully sought to negotiate and alter the national identity which the government sought to impose on it via a programme of 'mass nationalisation.' Moreover, by focusing on the *practice* of citizenship, which naturally emphasises the point of view of these ordinary people, this thesis represents a crucial contribution to our understanding of how and why the culture of protest, which was largely repressed for the duration of the dictatorship, could re-emerge so rapidly upon the administration's collapse in January 1930.<sup>76</sup> In this way, this thesis is a significant development on earlier studies of the dictatorship, which have tended to deny ordinary people knowledge of their social and political circumstance by focusing on the state alone. It does so by reconstructing the fragile and fleeting subjectivities of Spanish national identity at this decisive point in Spain's history, a topic that, until now, has received far too little historiographical attention.

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<sup>74</sup> Readers will note that in Chapters Three and Four many of the complainants were disgruntled former notables who wrote to the authorities to express outrage at their ouster. However, for the purposes of this thesis, they are considered 'ordinary people' due to their distance from nation-building strategies, as described by Beyen and Van Ginderachter. This comes with the caveat, also expressed by Beyen and Van Ginderachter, that the question of defining 'ordinary people' and 'from below' will always be somewhat arbitrary. *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>75</sup> The nature of this material will be discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>76</sup> Montes, "La Dictadura y la historiografía," 179–80.

## Thesis structure

The structure of this thesis is thematic, although the Chapters Three to Six are also arranged on a loosely chronological basis. Their topics are as follows:

Chapter One begins with a theoretical exploration of the concept citizenship, the key analytical device employed in this thesis, through the prism of Hannah Arendt's famous call for all individuals to have 'the right to have rights.' It then applies these ideas to the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and explores the administration's vision of civic life in Spain. Following this, it inquires into the nature of the 'states of exception' created by modern dictatorships with reference to the work of Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben, and shows how the ambiguity of these situations undermines the rights which citizenship should offer. The chapter ends by describing the Primo de Rivera regime as such a 'state of exception.'

Chapter Two explores the history and culture of petitioning and situates the practice in the context of the spread of 'popular literacy' in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It then considers the way in which ordinary Spaniards represented authority in their letters and finishes with a discussion of the archival material consulted in this thesis and of how this relates to the trends identified earlier in the chapter.

The third chapter examines the manner in which the regime elicited the help of the population in its efforts to eradicate *caciquismo* through mass denunciation from the outset of the dictatorship in September 1923 until implementation of the *Estatuto Municipal* (Municipal Statute) in April 1924. The chapter begins with an exploration of the practice of denunciation in comparative context, before describing the wave of purges initiated by the government upon Primo's seizure of power. In the main body of the analysis it probes a number of key themes that appeared in these denunciations, while showing that the regime's language of national regeneration could also be appropriated by ordinary people in order to express dissatisfaction with its policies.

Chapter Four looks into the work of the *Delegados Gubernativos* (Government Delegates), the army officers sent by Primo to the towns and villages of Spain to carry

out reform to municipal government and instil the values of citizenship in the masses. The chapter covers the period from late 1923 until the end of the Military Directorate in December 1925 and examines a mixture of letters written both by ordinary people and by the *Delegados* themselves about their work. This analysis reveals that not only were these officers grossly unprepared for their task, they were also deeply resented by the population who rejected the civic vision which they promoted.

Chapter Five discusses petitions relating to government repression during the Civil Directorate period of late 1925 to 1930. It explores how the concept of justice was invoked by members of the population, both when denouncing the enemies of the regime as '*malos españoles*' (bad Spaniards) and, equally, as a means of asserting rights in the face of this often arbitrary repression. These documents are discussed in the context of the increasingly severe public-order measures imposed by the government as it faced the emergence of opposition movements in the Army and other sections of society from 1926 onward. It shows that the idea of what constituted a 'good citizen' was deeply contested by the population, even as the regime cracked down on dissent.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, delves into the petitions sent to the authorities by the female population of Spain from 1923 to 1930. It places these within the wider context of women's place in the discourse of national regeneration, both before and during the dictatorship, and shows that these letter-writers were willing to reinterpret and redeploy notions of femininity and female domesticity in order to make a variety of demands to the government. At a time when the regime envisaged granting limited voting rights to women such interventions were powerful demonstrations of the culture of citizenship that was emerging among Spanish women.

## Chapter One | Citizenship in a state of exception

In this chapter, I examine the history and theory of citizenship, both generally and in the Spanish case during the dictatorship. I do this by probing a number of key themes which are inherently linked to the concept of citizenship, namely the public and private divide, nationalism, and citizenship's nature as discourse. I then explore how the condition of "rightlessness," which Hannah Arendt identifies in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), can be created deliberately by governments through the mechanism of what Carl Schmitt called a 'state of exception.' Following this, I relate this idea to the Primo de Rivera regime. The purpose of this is to problematise how one could act like citizen, as was the central aim of the dictatorship's programme of mass nationalisation, if one was potentially denied the very rights which are codified in citizenship. These seemingly contradictory forces acted as push and pull factors in the everyday lives of ordinary people and, therefore, had a significant impact on the way in which they made representations and claims to the Spanish state via their denunciations and petitions.

### Citizenship and rightlessness

The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben writes that the changes by democracies into authoritarian and totalitarian states in the twentieth century were not sudden transformations. He suggests that it is

almost as if, starting from a certain point, every decisive political event were double-sided: the spaces, the liberties, and the rights won by individuals in their conflicts with central power always simultaneously prepared a tacit but increasing inscription of individuals' lives within the state order, thus offering a new and more dreadful foundation for the very sovereign power from which they wanted to liberate themselves.<sup>1</sup>

He identifies the eighteenth-century declarations of rights, "the place in which the passage from divinely authorised royal sovereignty to national sovereignty is accomplished," as the beginning of this drift.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, birth seems to become the critical moment for citizenship, for this grants membership of the national political

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<sup>1</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 121.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

community.<sup>3</sup> As this occurs, sovereignty is transferred from ‘man’ in general to the figure of the ‘citizen,’ who becomes the bearer of rights in the national context. Through this link between birth and nation, Agamben argues, the third article of the iconic French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789 could state, “[t]he principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the nation,” for the nation is the conglomeration of these citizens. The implications of this statement are quite radical, in the Italian philosopher’s view. If birth and nation appear to be one and the same thing, this means that “rights are attributed to man (or originate in him) solely to the extent that man is the immediately vanishing ground (who must never come to light as such) of the citizen.”<sup>4</sup> This situation reveals what he calls the “originary fiction of modern sovereignty,” which exists to cover over the ultimate “inoperativity of the law,” a topic that we will discuss in the next section on the ‘state of exception.’<sup>5</sup>

Agamben’s analysis owes a significant debt to Hannah Arendt, who, in the ninth chapter of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, exposes a paradox at the heart of liberalism – that the rights of man have been guaranteed purely on the basis of birth, rather than association, an element that she regards as crucial to citizenship. As a result of this, rights have become inexorably tied to the structure of the nation-state, thereby making them vulnerable to attack, even by the nation-state itself. Arendt identifies the First World War and the instability that followed it as the moment when the façade of the European political system – namely its claim to be committed to the rights of man – was shattered. This breakdown, in her view, is embodied in the figures of the minority-member and the stateless person, both of whom, when forced from the “protective boundaries” to which they once belonged, “look like an unfortunate *exception* [my emphasis] to an otherwise sane and normal rule,” which governs society: the concept of national sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> “Once they had left their homeland,” she writes, “they remained homeless, once they had left their state they became stateless; once they

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 127. This leads to the emergence of what Michel Foucault described as ‘biopolitics. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol.1: The Will to Knowledge*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 128.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 3rd ed. (1951; repr., San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1979), 267–68.

had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth.”

Their status as ‘rightless’ made clear

what until then had been only implied in the working system of nation-states, namely, that only nationals could be citizens, only people of the same national origin could enjoy the full protection of legal institutions, that persons of different nationality needed some law of exception until or unless they were completely assimilated and divorced from their origin.<sup>7</sup>

The failure by most states to acknowledge the plight of stateless people caused great damage. This was the first step in the disintegration of the illusion that constitutional government was a bastion against arbitrary rule and despotism.<sup>8</sup>

Totalitarianism, the concept which Arendt describes, is at the extreme end of this dynamic and it is not my intention to directly equate the Primo de Rivera dictatorship to this. However, following the thinking of Carl Schmitt and Agamben, I argue that this logic of ‘exceptionality,’ which supposedly allows states to withhold fundamental rights while declaring this to be legitimate, became a paradigm of government during the twentieth century. This is embodied in the willed ‘states of exception’ which they created in what they alleged were times of extreme emergency and can be detected in Spain during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. This allowed the government to claim legitimacy while severely repressing its citizenry, as we will see later in this chapter.

There is an tremendous richness to Arendt’s thinking on human rights, which makes it attractive to those who wish to study the oppressed or subaltern in situations like dictatorship. In a passage that influenced Agamben, Arendt suggests:

Since the Rights of Man were proclaimed to be “inalienable”... no authority was invoked for their establishment; Man himself was their source as well as their ultimate goal. ... Man appeared as the only sovereign in matters of law as the people was proclaimed the only sovereign in matters of government.<sup>9</sup>

The rights of man, then, were merely the rights of the citizen. The status of rightlessness, Arendt asserts, leads to the loss of home, “social texture” and government protection.<sup>10</sup> Most importantly, it leads to the loss of community, the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 293–95.



place in which a person's opinions matter. The rightless are thus deprived not of the right to freedom, but to action and opinion, a status that is far more debilitating, in her view. In the critical argument of the chapter, Arendt wonders if the rights of man should not be reformulated as "a right to have rights... and a right to belong to some kind of organised community."<sup>11</sup> Her worry here is that a loss of polity amounts to an expulsion from humanity, something which the foundational declarations of rights of the eighteenth century were not designed to contemplate.<sup>12</sup> A thinker of the Toquevillian tradition, Arendt finds the attack on a person's ability to express opinion particularly threatening.<sup>13</sup> According to the republican view, individuals are the product of their social context, rather than prior to it. Through participation in democracy, republicans believe that individuals become connected to one another and develop ethically, thus promoting the civic virtue essential to a healthy society; citizenship as republicanism is a form of social agency. In liberal thought, in contrast, rights are seen as inherent to individuals because individuals are *both* logically and morally prior to society and the state, a notion which Arendt rejects as dangerous due to the post-war developments which she describes.

Another key divergence between these visions is the place of the private and the public in each. According to liberals, individuals are free to decide what type of citizen they would like to be. They may legitimately choose to remain entirely in the private realm, never venturing into the public so important to republican citizenship. For republicans, however, the concept of 'publicity' – "the condition of being open and public rather than private or personal" – is essential.<sup>14</sup> Adrian Oldfield has summarised these differences as classifications of citizenship as 'status' and as 'practice' in the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 296–97.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>13</sup> On neo-Toquevillian thinking in the political and social sciences, and Arendt's place in this tradition see Dylan Riley, *The Civic Foundations of Fascism in Europe: Italy, Spain, and Romania, 1870-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 7–9.

<sup>14</sup> Peter H. Schuck, "Liberal Citizenship," in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 137. Richard Dagger, "Republican Citizenship," in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 146–47.

liberal-individualist and civic-republican traditions respectively, a topic to which we will return later.<sup>15</sup>

As Seyla Benhabib notes, in *Origins* Arendt emphasises the special importance of an autonomous public sphere; authoritarian rule is its special enemy.<sup>16</sup> On this basis, Arendt asserts that the rightless person is denied access to the public realm:

The human being who has lost his place in a community, his political status in the struggle of his time, and the legal personality which makes his actions and part of his destiny a consistent whole, is left with those qualities which usually can become articulate only in the sphere of private life and must remain unqualified, mere existence in all matters of public concern.<sup>17</sup>

This is an idea which Arendt expands significantly in her later work *The Human Condition* (1958). In this she develops a distinction between labour, work and action:

Labor assures not only individual survival, but the life of the species. Work and its product, the human artefact, bestow a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life and the fleeting character of human time. Action, in so far as it engages in founding and preserving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance, that is, for history.<sup>18</sup>

Political life in the classical Greek sense corresponds to the last of these three. A desire for permanence has inclined man to participate in political life, the realm of action, what Seyla Benhabib has described as an “agonistic” public space, where moral and political greatness and pre-eminence are revealed and shared with others.<sup>19</sup> Entry into the public *polis* required a person to be free, something which demanded property ownership and status as a head of household. This, in turn, entailed equality amongst the public sphere’s members. The private life of the home, or *oikos*, existed to meet the mere necessities of life; politics, in comparison, “is never for the sake of life. As far

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<sup>15</sup> Adrian Oldfield, “Citizenship: An Unnatural Practice?,” in *Citizenship: Critical Concepts*, ed. Bryan S. Turner and Peter Hamilton, vol. 1 (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 188–98.

<sup>16</sup> Seyla Benhabib, “Hannah Arendt and ‘The Right to Have Rights,’” *Forum* 2, no. 1 (1999): 5.

<sup>17</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 301.

<sup>18</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 8–9.

<sup>19</sup> Seyla Benhabib, “Feminist Theory and Hannah Arendt’s Concept of Public Space,” *History of the Human Sciences* 6, no. 2 (1993): 102. On this Arendt writes: “For the polis was for the Greeks, as the res publica was for the Romans, first of all their guarantee against the futility of individual life, the space protected against this futility and reserved for the relative permanence, if not immortality, of mortals.” Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 56.

as the members of the *polis* are concerned, household life exists for the sake of the 'good life' in the *polis*."<sup>20</sup>

Arendt sees this agonistic public space collapse with what she calls 'the rise of the social.' The social realm to which she refers is essentially economic and emerges in modernity as a middle layer between the family and the political, constricting the latter as it grows.<sup>21</sup> Individuals, as a result, cease to *act* in the agonal sense of the Greeks and come to merely *behave* as economic producers and consumers for whom there is no possibility of spontaneous behaviour, individuality or outstanding achievement.<sup>22</sup> The liberal emphasis on equality as a social category that precedes action in the *polis* in modern times, Arendt believes, represents the conquest of the public realm by society and causes distinction and difference, which were regarded by the Greeks as the legitimate public manifestations of the self, to become confined to an intimate sphere dominated by private individuality.<sup>23</sup>

The strength of Arendt's analysis, as Raia Prokhovnik notes, lies in her call for an insulated public space which cannot be invaded and usurped by the particularist interests of society.<sup>24</sup> However, while many aspects of Arendt's analysis are compelling, her relegation of the rightless person to the private realm of the *oikos*, in the Greek terminology, has been much criticised, particularly by feminist theorists, who have questioned her dualistic separation of private and public and emphasised its tendency to exclude women (as well as colonised peoples and ethnic minorities) from participation in the public sphere.<sup>25</sup> Freedom, in her view, corresponds to the public realm and, therefore, depends on domination carried out in private.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, her dichotomous separation of the two renders it difficult to attach emancipatory aims to the private realm at all. This has particularly important implications for dictatorships, like Primo de Rivera's, as the repression which they carry out drastically limited the

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<sup>20</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 37.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 38–49. On the economic aspects of this, particularly in relation to property, see *Ibid.*, 58–73.

<sup>22</sup> Benhabib, "Feminist Theory," 101.

<sup>23</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 41.

<sup>24</sup> Raia Prokhovnik, "Public and Private Citizenship: From Gender Invisibility to Feminist Inclusiveness," *Feminist Review*, no. 60 (1998): 91.

<sup>25</sup> For a concise overview of these viewpoints, particularly in regard to *The Human Condition*, see Benhabib, "Feminist Theory."

<sup>26</sup> Prokhovnik, "Public and Private Citizenship," 91.

possibility of public expression, even as they elaborated discourses on citizenship. Alongside their desire to create new citizens of their own design, dictatorships simultaneously attack the legal foundations upon which citizenship is based.

Arendt's belief that the working of the public sphere depends on the exclusion of others, who remain in the private realm, has led to her being labelled an elitist, even anti-modern thinker.<sup>27</sup> As Benhabib writes, "the agonal space of the *polis* was made possible by a morally homogeneous and politically egalitarian, but exclusive community, in which action could also be a revelation of the self to others."<sup>28</sup> For the modern public, unlike the Ancient Greeks, this no longer makes sense as public space is considered more porous and negotiable. Indeed, since the French and American Revolutions, the scope of the 'public' has expanded with the entry of every new group into politics. In Benhabib's view, therefore,

Not only is it the 'lost treasure' of revolutions that eventually all can partake in them, but equally, when freedom emerges from action in concert, there can be no agenda to predefine the topic of public conversation. The struggle over what gets included in the public agenda is itself a struggle for justice and freedom.<sup>29</sup>

Freedom, according to Benhabib's associational vision, becomes practice rather than space. We see this dynamic occurring in the petitioning process, as individuals attempt to transform matters that begin as private concerns into issues of public import, to which the state must respond, via their claims. To understand these ideas in their full richness we must first examine a number of theoretical approaches to public and private space and define citizenship in relation to this.

### ***Reconciling public and private***

The theory of citizenship can help us to conceptualise this struggle to set the public agenda before we set forth on our study of the letters sent to Primo de Rivera in Spain.<sup>30</sup> The point of departure for most studies on citizenship is typically T.H. Marshall's seminal essay *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950), a study which, in contrast

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<sup>27</sup> Benhabib, "Feminist Theory," 97–98.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* This contrasts to the Greek view that freedom was exclusively located in the political realm. The only struggle, as such, was to overcome necessity and, by doing so, become able to enter the public realm. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 31.

<sup>30</sup> Florencia Peyrou, "Ciudadanía e historia. En torno a la ciudadanía," *Historia Social*, no. 42 (2002): 146. To this we might also add the neo-liberal assault on the welfare state.

to that of Arendt, describes citizenship from a rights-, rather than practice-based perspective.<sup>31</sup> Marshall elaborates a tripartite division of citizenship rights, which develop sequentially alongside capitalism, over the course of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United Kingdom. These rights are civil, political and social, respectively. By stratifying citizenship rights like this, Marshall aims to show how citizenship could develop while the inequalities of social class remained – his contention is that it has a levelling effect and that social citizenship is the culmination of this process. In this way, it is an attempt to address the deficiencies of the liberal model of citizenship, which, while guaranteeing formal political equality through the franchise, allows the social and economic fortunes of each citizen to be determined on the basis of their merit in the marketplace (what was understood as the critical element of civil society by early, market-focused thinkers like Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith).<sup>32</sup> But Marshall's analysis has been accused of being evolutionist, and, in another clear deficiency, it assigns a privileged role to the state as a body which grants these rights to individuals, while failing to take into account the autonomous action of the citizen and the claims that he or she makes from below, often through social struggle.<sup>33</sup>

The historical sociologist Michael Mann has suggested that Marshall's model is inappropriate for societies other than England.<sup>34</sup> Mann develops a comparative framework of five citizenship strategies, which emerged as states transitioned from their absolutist and constitutional iterations from roughly the eighteenth century onward. He calls these 'liberal,' 'reformist,' 'authoritarian monarchist,' 'fascist' and 'authoritarian socialist.' Each is reasonably successful at defusing class struggle. However, Mann sees the institutionalisation of class conflict entailed by the emergence of citizenship rights (as Marshall describes it) as a process led by the ruling classes in each state, rather than from below, and emphasises the role played by war

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<sup>31</sup> Thomas Humphrey Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays* (Cambridge: University Press, 1950). On the influence of Marshall's work see Francisco Javier Noya Mirando, "Ciudadanía y capital social. Estudio preliminar en torno a Ciudadanía y clase social de T.H. Marshall," *Reis: Revista española de investigaciones sociológicas*, no. 79 (1997): 267–95.

<sup>32</sup> Craig Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 5, no. 2 (1993): 271.

<sup>33</sup> These criticisms are summarised in Bryan S. Turner, "Outline of a Theory of Citizenship," *Sociology* 24, no. 2 (1990): 190–95.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Mann, "Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship," *Sociology* 21, no. 3 (1987): 339–54.

and geo-politics in shaping these citizenship regimes. The citizen as subject is nowhere to be seen.

Bryan Turner has criticised Mann's approach for failing to account for social stratifications other than class. Most significantly, Turner argues that Mann does not adequately appreciate "the revolutionary implications of the oppositional character of rights."<sup>35</sup> Mann's from-above model, therefore, conceives the granting of rights only in a passive sense. In response to this, Turner develops a typology of four political contexts for the creation of citizenship rights, which are divided along private/public and above/below axes. The second of these axes, in Turner's analysis, may also be conceived of as "active and passive forms of citizenship in terms of whether the citizen is conceptualised as merely a subject of an absolute authority or as an active political agent."<sup>36</sup> While this emphasis on the active and passive dimensions of citizenship should be retained, Turner's theory has also been criticised for failing to take into account the gendered structure of private and public.<sup>37</sup>

Social and political theorists have generally located citizenship in the public domain of state, civil society and the public sphere, the last of these understood in the sense described by Jürgen Habermas.<sup>38</sup> Feminist critics have rejected this dichotomy by "emphasising that women's subordination in the realm of the family, or the elevation of women as 'reproducers of the nation,' has served to undermine the formal rights which they may have gained in the public domain."<sup>39</sup> There has been some inconsistency in feminist literature over what exactly constitutes the public and the private, however.<sup>40</sup> As Jeff Weintraub has written, "broadly speaking, the

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<sup>35</sup> Turner, "Outline of a Theory of Citizenship," 199.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>37</sup> Pamela Beth Radcliff, "Imagining Female Citizenship in the 'New Spain': Gendering the Democratic Transition, 1975–1978," *Gender & History* 13, no. 3 (2001): 506; Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women, Citizenship and Difference," *Feminist Review*, no. 57 (1997): 5; Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship," *Ethics* 99, no. 2 (1989): 250–74; Mary G. Dietz, "Context Is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship," *Daedalus* 116, no. 4 (1987): 1–24.

<sup>38</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962; repr., Cambridge: Polity, 1991). Arendt theorises the public sphere somewhat differently. See Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig J. Calhoun (Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 1992), 73–98.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Canning and Sonya O. Rose, "Gender, Citizenship and Subjectivity: Some Historical and Theoretical Considerations," *Gender & History* 13, no. 3 (2001): 435.

<sup>40</sup> These are summarised in Yuval-Davis, "Women, Citizenship and Difference," 12–15.

characteristic tendency in most branches of feminist scholarship is to treat the family as the paradigmatic 'private' realm, so that the formulation 'domestic/public' is often used almost interchangeably with 'private/public.'<sup>41</sup> In this way, he observes, it is actually distinct from the liberal-individualist and the civic-republican traditions. In the first of these, the distinction between public and private is between 'governmental' and 'non-governmental.'<sup>42</sup> For the liberal mainstream, the dichotomous separation of public and private, therefore, is the source of liberal benefits.<sup>43</sup> The civic-republican tradition, in contrast, sees the public realm as that of political community based on participation in decision-making. Here politics means a world of discussion, deliberation and action. This is captured in Arendt's conception of the 'public realm', which is distinct from the private or 'social realm.'<sup>44</sup>

The first systematic examination of the public and private divide from a feminist perspective came in the work of Carol Pateman in the 1980s.<sup>45</sup> In these essays, she noted the close but complex relationship between liberalism and feminism. The 'fraternity' claimed by the French Revolution, Pateman argued, signalled only a transformation of the hegemonic power relations in society from patriarchy to a new contract-based social order, which guaranteed equality amongst *men*, while excluding women from the public sphere.<sup>46</sup> This exclusion was not incidental, but rather a "bargain between the new regime and its member citizens."<sup>47</sup> Pateman sees the theoretical basis for the liberal separation of public and private in Locke's *Second Treatise*. She writes:

Locke's theory [shows] how the private and public spheres are grounded in opposing principles of association which are exemplified in the conflicting status of women and men; natural subordination stands opposed to free individualism. ... An important consequence of this conception of private and public is that the public world, or civil

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<sup>41</sup> Jeff Alan Weintraub, "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, ed. Jeff Alan Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 27.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>43</sup> Prokhovnik, "Public and Private Citizenship," 87.

<sup>44</sup> Weintraub, "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," 10–11.

<sup>45</sup> Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988); Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989). On Pateman's influence see Canning and Rose, "Gender, Citizenship and Subjectivity," 429. On the chronology of feminist critiques see Weintraub, "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," 27–34.

<sup>46</sup> Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*.

<sup>47</sup> Yuval-Davis, "Women, Citizenship and Difference," 12.

society, is conceptualized and discussed in liberal theory (indeed, in almost all political theory) in abstract form, or as separate from, the private domestic sphere.<sup>48</sup>

Because civil society is conceptualised in abstraction from domestic life, this means that the latter remains forgotten. As such, she writes,

The separation between private and public is [re-established] as a division *within* civil society itself, within the world of men. The separation is then expressed in a number of different ways, not only private and public but also, for example, 'society' and 'state', or 'economy' and 'politics', or 'freedom' and 'coercion' or 'social' and 'political'.<sup>49</sup>

Given that civil society is typically identified with the private side of the public and private division in liberal thought, then what Pateman is describing is a double separation of the private and public, rather than a single dichotomy. Thus, we can describe the supposed divide as "a shifting cluster of binary oppositions."<sup>50</sup>

According to Weintraub, this reveals the underlying difficulties in attempting to fit civil society into a private and public framework. In order to clarify this somewhat, he reminds us that the Aristotelian vision of the *oikos* encompassed *both* family and 'economic' life (what liberals originally described as civil society), as the household could be regarded as the main institution that regulated production and distribution. In the modern era, the combination of the family and the economic in the sphere of private life no longer seems plausible. Hannah Arendt, he notes, develops her tripartite model of modern society in response to this. This imagines a 'social' realm, which equates to civil society, between the 'private' and the 'public.' By distinguishing civil society from the private sphere, while also separating civil society from politics, Pateman's feminist theory of public and private thus bears some resemblance to Arendt's, even though Pateman ultimately seeks to overcome that rigid division between the 'private' sphere of the household and the 'public' realm of political community.<sup>51</sup>

Nira Yuval-Davis supports this tripartite division of society also. While she suggests that feminism's most important contribution to social theory has been a "recognition that power relations operate within primary social relations as well as

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<sup>48</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, 121.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>50</sup> Weintraub, "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," 32.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 35–36.



within the more impersonal secondary social relations of the civil and political domains,” she warns against the view that there is no need to theorise the state as a separate unitary sphere. While the state is not unitary in its practices, it is, she writes, “a body of institutions which are centrally organized around the intentionality of control with a given apparatus of enforcement at its command or basis.” The exercise of rights, both individual and collective, continues to be tied to the state, making control over it the principal target of politics.<sup>52</sup> These observations are crucial to our understanding of how petition-making relates to citizenship as this process documents claims between individuals *and* the state. Both elements must be accounted for, therefore.

Having made these observations we may now define of citizenship. The historical sociologist Margaret Somers has challenged Marshall’s state-centric view by arguing that citizenship is “‘an instituted process’, i.e., citizenship is a set of institutionally embedded social practices,” rather than a status granted to individuals.<sup>53</sup> Taking up the broad periodisation used by Marshall, she examines the development of citizenship practices amongst workers on arable and pastoral lands in eighteenth-century England and shows how geography and region caused these to vary in the two different types of community. Somers’ analysis assigns particular importance to the legal sphere, where, mediated through local institutions and traditions, claims to citizenship could be articulated by reference to regulation and the manner in which it was enforced. In doing so, she is able to show that citizenship’s abilities to level social difference were very much contingent on these regional institutional variations. Moreover, Somers observes from the claims-making of the workers she analyses that they

were not the ‘deferent’ – although sometimes unruly – ‘prepolitical’ population that appealed to a paternalistic moral economy. At issue were not expectations of charity or paternal beneficence, but demands for legitimate rights. Social claims were inseparable from the insistence that participation and norms of universal justice in the making and implementation of these laws was central to their freedom under the law. These claims to rights thus depended on the core components of citizenship – membership,

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<sup>52</sup> All quotations from Yuval-Davis, “Women, Citizenship and Difference,” 13.

<sup>53</sup> Somers, “Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere,” 589.

participation, association, inclusion/exclusion, national identity, and above all, the constitutionally guaranteed rule of law.<sup>54</sup>

As we will see, during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, much of the population interacted with the state in a similar manner by rooting their claims in these core components of citizenship, even though the claims-making process itself was made highly uncertain by the state of exception which the government created. However, while in theory this allowed it to act arbitrarily towards its citizenry, the regime's need to present itself as legitimate meant that it had to take these claims into account, thereby entering into negotiation with the population over the nature of this citizenship.

Somers' analysis allows her to conclude with the suggestion that research

should not be centred only on states and economies, but should include family, community, and associational life (civil society) and political public spheres. ... [These additions move] theory toward a comparative historical exploration of the *varying and limited conditions under which public spheres can be appropriated for increasing democratization through the participatory activities of a popularly constituted civil society*.<sup>55</sup>

In this way it neatly synthesises both the rights- and the practice/civic-virtue-based approaches to citizenship, represented broadly by Marshall and Arendt in this analysis, while also addressing the difficulties posed by a dichotomous separation of public and private. Having defined citizenship in this way, we come to understand that the process of claims-making is an essential part of the 'instituted process' which Somers describes. Petitions, a channel through which such representations can be made to the state, become a peerless source through which to examine this as the very claims which they make represent the practice of citizenship. We will explore this in more detail in Chapter Two.

### ***Nationalism and citizenship***

There is a clear nexus between nationalism and citizenship, as the case of the Primo de Rivera regime confirms. Citizenship, Turner suggests, is crucial to nation-building as it "weakens class identity and binds individuals to nation-state projects through the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 609.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 612.

creation of a minimum set of social rights.”<sup>56</sup> In fact, the development of a national citizen is the *primary project* of the nation-state. The purpose of this process is captured in what Michel Foucault calls ‘governmentality,’ a concept that the French philosopher argues arises from the problematics “of how to be ruled, how strictly, by whom, to what end, by what methods, etc.” Whereas ‘sovereignty’ has as its aim “the common welfare and the salvation of all,” ‘government’ “is defined as a right manner of disposing things so as to lead not to the form of the common good... but to an end which is ‘convenient’ for each of the things that are to be governed.”<sup>57</sup> This is the logic behind the so-called ‘nationalisation of the masses;’ what Quiroga refers to as the “historical process of homogenizing the population under a common national identity,” in order to overcome the divisions caused by factors like social class, geography and language.<sup>58</sup> Nationalism, as we will see below, becomes a powerful means of reconciling the citizen to the state. As the ‘nationalisation’ process has dominated historical debate on the Restoration and dictatorship periods in Spain, it is essential to place citizenship at the heart of our analysis.

The homogenisation to which the ‘nationalisation of the masses’ aspires is problematic, however. In her call to establish a new category of ‘differentiated citizenship’ which can better take into account the diversity of citizenries, Iris Marion Young has written:

An ideal of universal citizenship has driven the emancipatory momentum of modern political life. ... With equality conceived as sameness, the ideal of universal citizenship carries at least two meanings in addition to the extension of citizenship to everyone: (a) universality defined as general in opposition to particular; what citizens have in common as opposed to how they differ, and (b) universality in the sense of laws and rules that say the same for all and apply to all in the same way; laws and rules that are blind to individual and group differences.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Bryan S. Turner, “Citizenship, Nationalism and Nation-Building,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, ed. Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar (London: SAGE, 2006), 227.

<sup>57</sup> Michel Foucault, “Governmentality,” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, trans. Rosi Braidotti and Colin Gordon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 88, 94, 95. The ‘common good’ is considered to be obeying the law. Turner, “Citizenship, Nationalism and Nation-Building,” 226.

<sup>58</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Young, “Polity and Group Difference,” 250.

In this light, the majority of the literature has tended to focus on citizenship's inclusionary face.<sup>60</sup> Yet citizenship also has powerful exclusionary tendencies.<sup>61</sup> These exclusions can be internal, as our discussion of the feminist literature has made clear, or external, as the next number of paragraphs will examine. Following on from point (a) above, Young suggests that, "the ideal of the public realm of citizenship as expressing a general will, a point of view and interest that citizens have in common which transcends their differences, has operated in fact as a demand for homogeneity among citizens."<sup>62</sup> As elaborated above, the most common mode of producing such homogeneity is through a discourse of nationalism.

The work of William Rogers Brubaker has highlighted the importance of the stances taken by states towards access to what he calls 'formal citizenship' (i.e. citizenship as a status) as a signifiers of either inclusive or exclusive understandings of national belonging and membership.<sup>63</sup> Drawing upon Max Weber's distinction between open and closed social relationships, Brubaker defines citizenship as "a powerful instrument of social closure," for which the nation-state serves as both "architect and guarantor."<sup>64</sup> The primary form of closure is territorial, though citizenship also provides closure to the sovereignty of the nation-state itself. As such, access to citizenship is deliberately restricted. This, in turn, renders citizenship a form of social control.<sup>65</sup> Normative definitions of citizenship often make use of the concepts of *jus solis* or *jus sanguinis*, exemplified by France and Germany respectively in Brubaker's analysis.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, Brubaker's notion of closure, with the clear delimitations it implies, is questionable. For example, if a nation is, as Benedict

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<sup>60</sup> Ruth Lister, "Citizenship: Towards a Feminist Synthesis," *Feminist Review* 57, no. 1 (1997): 36.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 36–42.

<sup>62</sup> Young, "Polity and Group Difference," 252.

<sup>63</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1992). Lister, "Citizenship," 36.

<sup>64</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 23. Weber's description of this in Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoof (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 43–46.

<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth F. Cohen, *Semi-Citizenship in Democratic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 34.

<sup>66</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*. Arendt's republicanism would lead her to defend the ideal of a civic nation based upon a *jus soli* model of citizenship acquisition. Benhabib, "Hannah Arendt and 'The Right to Have Rights,'" 9.

Anderson tells us, “an imagined political community,” this suggests flexible boundaries, which shift at different points according to how they are imagined and by whom.<sup>67</sup>

Following from Brubaker, political communities are given some of their most obvious boundaries by common subjection to a state. Moreover, they do this both domestically and in relation to other states. Yet this relational definition is also paradoxical. As Craig Calhoun notes, states are not merely countries, but also specialised apparatus of rule; they are distinct from the people subject to their authority.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, states may not even claim to derive their legitimacy from the broad category of “the people,” as in colonial contexts, for example. As such, “the extent and kind of distinction between the political community and the state is... a crucial variable.”<sup>69</sup> At the same time, the modern state also claims and builds a closer relationship to the population which it rules and penetrates the lives of ordinary people more and more evenly as it develops.

The emergence of a civil society independent of the state transformed understandings of both political community and the nature of legitimacy. Though civil society was initially conceived in relation to the market, it soon came to be associated with the rejection of absolute monarchy and assertions of the rights to popular sovereignty. Because of this, a new discourse on the social integration of society emerged, a development that challenged the state’s power to define political community exclusively. The discourse of nationalism, therefore, came to serve as a powerful means of reconciling the political community and the state apparatus.<sup>70</sup> Calhoun, however, suggests that nationalism

has appeared recurrently as one of the greatest challenges to the ideal of rational collective decision making through peaceful discourse that has joined the term ‘public’ to the projects of republicanism and democracy. Yet in many ways nationalist ideas are presumed by the more ‘successful’ democracies, and nation-building has been closely

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<sup>67</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; repr., London: Verso, 2006), 6.

<sup>68</sup> Craig Calhoun, “Nationalism and the Public Sphere,” in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, ed. Jeff Alan Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 76.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>70</sup> I, like Calhoun, owe this observation to Ernest Gellner, who suggests that “nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.” Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 1.

related historically to the very rise of public life that has helped make modern democracy possible.<sup>71</sup>

Calhoun's analysis here is a clear reference to the type of public sphere described by Habermas in his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.<sup>72</sup> Habermas defined the public sphere quite differently to Arendt.<sup>73</sup> Written as a response to the pessimism of Max Horkheimer's and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), *Structural Transformation* offered a positive assessment of the European Enlightenment by demonstrating how social *self-organisation* could be achieved through the more or less egalitarian participation in rational-critical discourse.<sup>74</sup> Yet as feminist theorists (amongst others) have shown, the public sphere described by Habermas could also work in anti-democratic ways, particularly by failing to recognise and incorporate diversity. While discourse across lines of difference is essential to the democracy which Habermas seeks to analyse, nationalist thought tends to "[reject] such notions of multiple and multifarious publics as divisive. The presumption that the nation is a unitary being is a staple of nationalist thought."<sup>75</sup> In Habermas' account, discursive equality is created by disqualifying discourse about the differences among actors. Indeed, the public sphere "preserved a kind of social intercourse that, far from pre-supposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether."<sup>76</sup> It is private life that prepares the individual to act as an independent and rational-critical subject in the public sphere. Habermas' vision of the public sphere, therefore, tends to focus on this rational-critical discourse, rather than identity formation, which it sees as occurring prior to entry into the public sphere. Calhoun challenges this convincingly by suggesting that we must regard the public sphere as a series of multiple, overlapping, and largely heterogeneous publics: a "sphere of publics." "It is," he writes,

one of the illusions of liberal discourse to believe that in a democratic society there is or can be a single, uniquely authoritative discourse about public affairs. ... It reflects a nationalist presumption that membership in a common society is prior to democratic

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<sup>71</sup> Calhoun, "Nationalism and the Public Sphere," 80.

<sup>72</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation*.

<sup>73</sup> See Benhabib, "Models of Public Space."

<sup>74</sup> Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (1947; repr., London: Verso, 2010); Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "The Public Sphere: Models and Boundaries," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 1992), 98; Calhoun, "Nationalism and the Public Sphere," 81.

<sup>75</sup> Calhoun, "Nationalism and the Public Sphere," 81.

<sup>76</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 36.

deliberations as well as an implicit belief that politics revolves around a single and unitary state.<sup>77</sup>

On this basis, the act of defining which of these many publics is to be considered legitimately 'public', and, inversely, which are to remain 'private,' becomes a political exercise of power, a view that echoes Benhabib's. The degree to which the discourse of these multiple groupings, which can also address multiple centres of power, rather than just the state, is organised along rational-critical lines also varies.

Calhoun criticises Habermas' work for failing to adequately consider the role of these public spheres in shaping identity. "Experience," he writes, "is not something exclusively prior to and only addressed by the rational-critical discourse of the public sphere; it is in part constituted through public discourse, and at the same time continually orients people differently in public life."<sup>78</sup> Once we accept that political community is not solely defined by nationality, or any other historical factor, it becomes a matter of civil society or a combination of state *and* civil society. Participation, therefore, is more than merely a question of settling arguments, but also one of altering identities.<sup>79</sup>

In the modern age, nation came to be associated with popular will. This, however, assumed the existence of some bounded and integrated population, a political community. Political communities, as we have seen, are porous, though, and their makeup is heavily contested. On this basis, Calhoun concludes, that

nationalism, then, is not the solution to the puzzle but the discourse within which struggles to settle the question [over political community] are most commonly waged... As such a discourse, it marks nearly every political public sphere in the contemporary world as an inescapable, if often unconscious, rhetoric of identity-formation, delimitation, and self-constitution. Nations are discursively constituted subjects, even if the rhetoric of their constitution is one that claims primordality or creation in the distant, seemingly prediscursive, past.<sup>80</sup>

Nations and nationalism are inherently linked to the creation of political publics because of this. The degree to which nationalist rhetorics have recognised the existence of difference has varied, leading in some cases to the processes of mass

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<sup>77</sup> Calhoun, "Nationalism and the Public Sphere," 94.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 87–88.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

nationalisation described in the Introduction. Calhoun's observations here are essential to the analysis in this thesis as they show that national identity, though a powerful unifier, can be challenged from below through the same means it uses to propagate itself, that is, discursively. Throughout the course of this study we will see that ordinary people were fully engaged in this struggle to define political publics, a key element of citizenship, during the dictatorship, as their petitions and denunciations attest.

### ***Discourses of citizenship***

We have just seen how nations are constructed discursively from above and from below. The same is true of citizenship. As Kathleen Canning and Sonya Rose write, "as a multi-dimension discursive framework, citizenship provides the languages, rhetorics, and even the form categories for claims-making, sometimes in the name of national belonging or on behalf of specific rights, duties, or protections, or visions of political participation."<sup>81</sup> The discourse of citizenship can be invoked by a variety of different actors both as a means of strengthening integrative practices and as a means of articulating alternative visions of citizenship or of making claims against exclusions from it. Echoing Somers' definition of citizenship as an 'instituted process,' Canning and Rose also suggest that "the juridical and legal inscriptions, as well as the unwritten traditions, of citizenship, create subject positions that have meanings for those governing and those inhabiting citizenships, as well as those excluded" from them.<sup>82</sup> These subject positions can be appropriated by actors for their own purposes, including subversive ones. This vision clearly identifies claims-making as an essential point of analysis in the study of citizenship. As such, petitions are a source *par excellence* for studying discourses of citizenship.

The term 'discourse' has become common currency across the humanities and social sciences. As a result, it has been used in dizzying variety of ways, something which means that we must clarify our usage.<sup>83</sup> Although I acknowledge Michel Foucault's influence on the study of discourse, my own thinking on the subject has

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<sup>81</sup> Canning and Rose, "Gender, Citizenship and Subjectivity," 431.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> A useful introduction to this can be read in Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1–25.



been influenced primarily by the work of the Russian philosopher and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin, who, in an essay entitled *Discourse in the Novel* (1934-1935), develops a theory of the “dialogic orientation of discourse.”<sup>84</sup> As part of this, Bakhtin understands language “not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather... as ideologically saturated, language as a world view.”<sup>85</sup> He observes a tendency in the various schools of thought in the philosophy of language to posit the existence of a “unitary language,” which is articulated by the dominant social groups in a given era and shaped by their historical circumstances. This ‘unitary language’ serves to “unify and centralize [these groups’] verbal-ideological world,” though it does not exist in a real sense.<sup>86</sup> Instead, it lives in opposition to “the realities” of what Bakhtin terms “heteroglossia,” the multiplicity of coexisting and competing varieties in a single language. These exert a centrifugal force, which counteracts the centripetal tendency of the ‘unitary language’ that aspires to verbal-ideological dominance.

In Bakhtin’s view, every utterance of language serves as a point where these conflicting forces come to bear: “The utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity.”<sup>87</sup> “Language,” therefore, “is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.”<sup>88</sup> To this end, when engaging in dialogue, a speaker must attempt to orientate him- or herself toward the listener, a process which shapes his or her discourse, in an attempt to “[break] through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, [construct] his own

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<sup>84</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, by Mikhail Bakhtin, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 279. For the Foucauldian perspective see his major studies: Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

<sup>85</sup> Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 271.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background."<sup>89</sup> The act of understanding the word involves the assimilation of that word into the listener's conceptual system and becomes merged to his or her response to it, in agreement or disagreement. "Here it is not the object that serves as the arena for the encounter, but rather the subjective belief system of the listener."<sup>90</sup> Thus, the semantic meaning of what is uttered is not its most important element of the dialogue, but rather the political and socio-cultural meaning which is given to it in the on-going exchange between speaker and listener. This process is fraught with difficulty and not all words will submit to an actor's efforts to appropriate them, Bakhtin notes.<sup>91</sup> However, it shows that discourse is by no means fixed and can, in fact, be shaped by different actors, dominant and subaltern alike, in the course of dialogue.

It is this struggle by individuals to harness this seemingly dominant language for the purposes of making citizenship claims that this thesis seeks to analyse and understand. In a dictatorship that is built upon a state of exception, like Primo de Rivera's, it is clear that the government sought to establish a monopoly on the acceptable forms of political discourse, including citizenship.<sup>92</sup> In their interactions with the state authorities, ordinary people were required to adopt elements of this dominant and allegedly legitimate discourse in order to present their claims, even critical ones, in an acceptable manner. In simple linguistic terms, this language was *invariably* Castilian.<sup>93</sup> Yet Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia implies that there is a dialectic at work in *all* language use as it is articulated, appropriated and re-orientated by actors. This, in turn, suggests that when those who made claims and demands to the state authorities in Spain employed the dominant discourse of the time, they could use it both to embrace and to challenge aspects of this rhetoric and, indeed, of their circumstance.<sup>94</sup> As this thesis will demonstrate, ordinary people often articulated their

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>92</sup> Hasset identifies the same phenomenon in the colonial context. Dónal Hasset, "Mobilising Memory: The Great War and the Language of Politics in Colonial Algeria, 1918-1939" (European University Institute, 2016), 23.

<sup>93</sup> This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

<sup>94</sup> Hasset, "Mobilising Memory," 23. For a methodological implementation of Bakhtin's theory of language use, which Hasset also employs, see John Grenville Agard Pocock, "The Reconstruction of Discourse: Towards the Historiography of Political Thought," *MLN* 96, no. 5 (1981): 959–80.

claims in an idiom of mutual obligation which offered support to the regime in return for the rights of citizenship. This process of negotiation, which incorporated the dynamic just described, played an important role in determining the form of this citizenship, despite the regime's efforts to define this exclusively from above. It is to the *primorriverista* discourse of citizenship that we now turn.

### ***Primorriverista citizenship***

The Restoration Constitution of 1876 which prevailed before Primo de Rivera's seizure of power reflected the doctrinaire liberalism of its chief author, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, and his wish to return to the Moderate tradition of earlier in the century. Legislative power was reduced in favour of a powerful executive embodied in the King, while national sovereignty was shared between the Crown and the *Cortes*, a principle known as *cosoberanía*. In keeping with this conservative vision, the Constitution referred to members of the political community not as *ciudadanos* (citizens) but rather *españoles* (Spaniards). While its *Título Primero* identified the rights of these *españoles*, it did not conceive of these as prior or superior to legal norms; instead it subordinated them to the law. This meant that the key freedoms of gathering, expression and association identified in the Constitution had to be defined in ordinary legislation over the next decade. Electoral laws for the Senate and Congress, introduced in 1877 and 1878 respectively, also conformed to this logic and attached the status of *elector* (elector) to being a *contribuyente* (ratepayer). This created an electorate made up of only 5% of the population. When universal manhood suffrage was introduced in 1890, voting was deliberately defined as a simple function of *electores*, which did not place the concept of *cosoberanía* in jeopardy. For this reason, it is unsurprising that citizenship was largely absent from political language for much of the remainder of the nineteenth century.<sup>95</sup>

The *fin-de-siècle* and colonial disaster in 1898 marked a resurgence in the use of the term. The new regenerationist discourse inspired by these developments

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<sup>95</sup> Manuel Pérez Ledesma, "El lenguaje de la ciudadanía en la España contemporánea," *Historia Contemporánea*, no. 28 (2004): 260–61. A concise overview of the Constitution and political system of the Restoration can be read in Juan Pro Ruíz, "La política en tiempos del Desastre," in *Más se perdió en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo*, ed. Juan Pan-Montojo and José Álvarez Junco (Madrid: Alianza, 1998), 163–73.

tended to emphasise the duties side of citizenship (and particularly society's failure to fulfil these), rather than the rights dimension. This focused on the "absence of citizenship" from Spain, the lack of civic-mindedness in its population and the Spanish people's scant interest in public affairs.<sup>96</sup> Pérez Ledesma, a theorist and historian of citizenship in Spain, has argued that once the *fin-de-siècle* crisis had passed, the language of citizenship largely receded from political discourse. When this eventually reappeared in the 1920s, it was, in Pérez Ledesma's view, primarily in the "most classical liberal sense," that is, in defence of the rights of citizens before the excesses of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.<sup>97</sup> However, this overlooks the regime's own discursive production, which was steeped in the language of citizenship, as a host of speeches, articles and official publications attest. Moreover, it also ignores a number of important ideological precursors to the Primo de Rivera regime, which will be highlighted below.

The most fundamental observation about the discourse of citizenship under Primo de Rivera is that it could mix ideology with state power, despite the occasional eclecticism of the strands behind the former. The *primorriverista* state was born of its liberal predecessor and was bound to the imperatives of 'governmentality,' which we described earlier as the need to dispose things to being ruled, just as any other administration would be. In this sense, it coalesced with the liberal-democratic system in its aims of reconciling citizens to the state through nationalism. We might even better consider the regime's programme to be one of "hypernationalism" which was conceived of as an "immediate and drastic measure to foster feelings of national incorporation" in response to both a sense that this process was incomplete and the crisis of parliamentary liberalism in which Spain had been embroiled since at least 1917.<sup>98</sup> The *primorriverista* salvation of the *Patria*, as Quiroga notes, was based on two complementary aims: the destruction of the ruling political class, which was associated with oligarchy and corruption, and the creation of a new type of 'patriotic citizenry' to replace the clientelist relations that had characterised Spanish politics.

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<sup>96</sup> Pérez Ledesma, "El lenguaje de la ciudadanía en la España contemporánea," 261.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self*, 27.

Primo de Rivera seized upon the idea that *caciquismo*, the particular brand of political clientelism that existed in Spain, had inhibited public participation in politics and set about dismantling it. *Caciquismo*, understood simply as “the impact of local bosses on Spanish politics,” has its origin in the transition from the *ancien regime* to a liberal system, though it was only during the Restoration period that the practices associated with it came to be regarded by political analysts as damaging to the public life of the country.<sup>99</sup> Criticism of *caciquismo* became most acute in the aftermath of Spain’s defeat to the United States of America in the Spanish-American War of 1898, such that it came to be regarded as “the key to explaining the backwardness of Spain and the overriding obstacle to the urgent modernisation of the country.”<sup>100</sup> *Caciquismo* was closely associated with the *turno pacífico* of the Restoration era, the contrived alternation in power of the two ‘dynastic’ political parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, under the adjudication of the Crown. Changes in government were made in the understanding that whichever party came into power would be guaranteed a parliamentary majority by fraudulent elections, which were planned by the authorities in the Ministry of the Interior and brought into fruition by the *caciques* by influencing their clientelist networks. The outgoing party, for its part, would be conceded enough seats so as to provide a respectably robust opposition in anticipation of its inevitable return to government.

In the initial growth in academic studies of the contemporary period in Spain in the 1960s and 1970s, historians of the left, such as Manuel Tuñón de Lara, suggested that *caciquismo* had a socio-economic origin and was a tool that allowed the ruling Spanish social oligarchy of industrialists, landowners and financiers to retain power.<sup>101</sup> As Moreno Luzón notes, this interpretation was closely linked to the ‘paradigm of failure,’ discussed earlier in this chapter, in that it assumed that Spain was an archaic and backward country that was rooted in agriculture and dominated by an anti-

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<sup>99</sup> Javier Moreno Luzón, “Political Clientelism, Elites, and Caciquismo in Restoration Spain (1875–1923),” *European History Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2007): 418.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

<sup>101</sup> Manuel Tuñón de Lara, “La burguesía y la formación del bloque de poder oligárquico (1875-1914),” in *Estudios sobre el siglo XII español*, ed. Manuel Tuñón de Lara (1972; repr., Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1984), 155–238.

modern oligarchy.<sup>102</sup> This is a position that no longer holds up to scrutiny, as outlined in the Introduction.

A second major historiographical trend, associated with the writers José Varela Ortega, Joaquín Romero Maura and Javier Tusell, focused on *caciquismo* as a product of the political system in Spain and described the mechanisms by which the dynastic parties were able to alternate in power.<sup>103</sup> According to this trend, the powerful did not derive their pre-eminence from their economic position but from management of the administrative resources of the state. While the liberal state entered a period of stability during the Restoration era, its ability to penetrate the lives of its citizens and organise social relations by convincing, rather than coercing, remained relatively limited until the turn of the century.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, the state proved its ubiquity in one key area, from which few of its inhabitants could escape. National budgets of monetary resources may have been relatively meagre at this time – and, from the point of view of the *cacique*, not easily divisible – but, as Romero-Maura notes, the state succeeded in creating one form of “good of which there was a cheap and inexhaustible supply, and which were often vital to the citizen: decision by the administration, constitutive, sanctioning, or whatever. These had to be distributed, and their distribution could be controlled.”<sup>105</sup> On this basis, official documentation, certificates, exemptions and declarations became resources that could be granted to clients and non-clients alike in exchange for influence, often of a political nature. The state and administration may have been bound by the rule of law but often the appearance of this could suffice. *Caciquismo*, therefore, came to thrive on the illicit decision.

The administrators and civil servants who granted these decisions at the request of the *cacique* clearly disobeyed the rules which they were supposed to follow.

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<sup>102</sup> Moreno Luzón, “Political Clientelism,” 422–23.

<sup>103</sup> Joaquín Romero-Maura, “El caciquismo: tentativa de conceptualización,” *Revista de Occidente* 127 (1973): 15–44; José Varela Ortega, “Los amigos políticos: Funcionamiento del sistema caciquista,” *Revista de Occidente* 127 (1973): 45–74; Javier Tusell, *Oligarquía y caciquismo en Andalucía (1890-1923)* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1976).

<sup>104</sup> Georgina Blakeley, “Clientelism in the Building of the State and Civil Society in Spain,” in *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. Simona Piattoni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 84.

<sup>105</sup> Joaquín Romero-Maura, “Caciquismo as a Political System,” in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 56.

They did so because the *cacique* could provide them with the resources they required – a state job, perhaps – and, crucially, protect them from any repercussions for their actions. For those who governed, the inefficiencies and disruption this caused could be justified due to the reliability of *caciques* in achieving the required results in elections, made necessary by the lack of any sophisticated party machineries until the emergence of the *Maurista* movement, which is described later in this section.<sup>106</sup> This was caused by – and, reciprocally, contributed to – political demobilisation across the country. The Restoration system, therefore, was similar to those of other European countries, including pre-Reform Act Britain, Napoleon III’s France and Giolitti’s Italy; that is, a liberal regime based on client networks that were established by political parties in largely rural and passive societies.<sup>107</sup>

Newer outlooks in the study of *caciquismo* sit in the middle ground between the Marxian analysis and political-history trend, and show how separate economic and political causes coexisted and interacted with one another. As these works have shown, *caciques* themselves were by no means all wealthy, nor, indeed, were they all landowners. Rather, the profile of these elites varied from region to region and in many areas agricultural landowners were just one component – and not the dominant one – of these elites. The large *latifundistas*, who owned large estates, were not even typically the most influential farmers: these tended to be the well-organised growers of commercial crops. Professionals, and, more specifically, lawyers, represented a second social group with a widespread presence amongst these elites, and many of these were self-made men who used the knowledge of laws and the administrative system which they derived from their studies to reach positions of influence. In more industrialised areas like the Basque Country and Catalonia, businessmen represented a third group. As landowners ceded territory to professionals and businessmen, the old aristocracy became more and more marginalised in elite groups. As such, it is most appropriate to regard *caciques* as a diffuse, fragmented and diverse grouping.<sup>108</sup> Ultimately, recent historiography has rejected the idea that *caciquismo* was a mere

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 57. Blakeley, “Clientelism in Spain,” 78.

<sup>107</sup> Moreno Luzón, “Political Clientelism,” 424. Comparison of the *turno pacífico* in Spain and the Italian system of *trasformismo* has been particularly fruitful. Ibid., 426–27.

<sup>108</sup> Moreno Luzón, “Political Clientelism,” 427–28.

effect of the persistence of the ancien régime in Spain or of the country's perennial backwardness. Rather, it is now viewed as a complex series of mechanisms that allow Spanish society to adapt to political change. This echoes Piattoni's views on clientelism and patronage more generally that, "as political strategies, [they] have the capacity to adapt to the existing circumstance as well as to alter them."<sup>109</sup>

This thesis will show that there were many stories of excesses and cruelties inflicted on the population by *caciques*. However, it is important to note that there was a reasonably well-respected pluralism in Restoration Spain, even amongst *caciques*. As Romero-Maura has written, "the general constitutional framework of freedom of the press, of organisation, etc., was not just in the letter of the law. In varying degrees, but by no means always less than, say, in neighbouring France, such freedoms were very real. This limited the freedom of any *cacique* to abuse the law against too many people in too many ways."<sup>110</sup> The system was rarely immobile and fierce conflicts emerged between rival clientelist factions. The existence of legal mechanisms of representation, like universal male suffrage, introduced in 1890, meant that some those outside the political elite could eventually end up in positions of power, something which occurred more frequently as the politicisation of Spain advanced after the turn of the century.<sup>111</sup> However, access to these mechanisms could be patchy, as many complained in their letters to Primo de Rivera. Because of this, it is important not to forget the other half of the *caciquil* system, the clients themselves, many of whom participated willingly in the system, despite the imbalance of power between them and local power-holders. In his work on political patronage, Shefter introduces the terms "supply side" to "demand side" to such relationship.<sup>112</sup> The first refers to the institutional circumstances that induce party leaders to adopt clientelism or patronage strategies, like *caciquismo*, to attract support, while the latter refers to the circumstances that induce citizens to accept such an arrangement in exchange for benefits. Blakeley builds on this and argues that *caciquismo* emerged due to the strength of both the "supply" and the

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<sup>109</sup> Simona Piattoni, "Clientelism in Historical and Comparative Perspective," in *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. Simona Piattoni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>110</sup> Romero-Maura, "Caciquismo as a Political System," 60.

<sup>111</sup> Moreno Luzón, "Political Clientelism," 432.

<sup>112</sup> Martin Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 22–29.



“demand” sides of patronage in Spain.<sup>113</sup> Formally empowered citizens, with well-established civil rights, he adds, may still need to resort to clientelism in order to obtain a livelihood from those who control public decision-making, or because this was the most convenient or effective way of navigating a complex bureaucracy. This highlights a limit to the liberal notion of civil society, which will be discussed in the next chapter, as it shows that the virtues of the citizen postulated by liberalism tend not to be fully born out in reality, leading to inequalities between these citizens which must be addressed by the state.<sup>114</sup>

The modernising, nationalist elites of the Restoration era were not quite as flexible as more recent scholars in their interpretation of *caciquismo*, however, and regarded it as an aberration and a symbol of oligarchy and corruption. As Álvarez Junco argues, this rejection must be analysed from the point of view of a society that is in transition from a localist orientation to a national one. For the state, this was motivated by a need “to create a new collective subject, the nation, as the carrier of political legitimacy” in place of the traditional loyalties associated with the Ancien Régime, an obsession of the Primo de Rivera regime.<sup>115</sup> The need to eliminate *caciquismo* became a question of implanting a combination of new social relations and modern civic values based on impersonal interactions, affective neutrality, competition for access to status and roles, and functional and anonymous bureaucratic rationality in Spanish society. “The ‘modern,’ in this case,” Álvarez Junco writes, “can be translated as urban, but it can also be translated as state-oriented.”<sup>116</sup>

What was at stake, from this perspective, was a strong Spain. There were certainly compelling economic reasons to remove the inefficiencies caused by *caciquismo* from the public administration and to stamp out the arbitrary distribution of state resources, but this also had significant political implications because any impoverishment of the Spanish state made it weaker. This, in turn, prevented it from

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<sup>113</sup> Blakeley, “Clientelism in Spain,” 83.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 77–78.

<sup>115</sup> José Álvarez Junco, “Redes locales, lealtades tradicionales y nuevas identidades colectivas en la España del siglo XIX,” in *Política en penumbra. Patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea*, ed. Antonio Robles Egea and José Álvarez Junco (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1996), 75–76. On persistence in the societies of Europe more generally see Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

<sup>116</sup> Álvarez Junco, “Redes locales,” 71–80; quotations 71, 78–79.

adequately representing the national collective, particularly on the international stage, where Spain's decline was embodied by the loss of its colonies amid a period of European expansion in that arena. Álvarez Junco identifies the critique of *caciquismo* as a consequence of weak Spanish state-nationalisation in the nineteenth century, a thesis that, as we saw in the Introduction, has been revised somewhat in recent years. Regardless of the extent to which this weakness was the case or not, there was certainly an explosion in nationalist sentiment in Spain after the loss of colonies in 1898. Following the populist liberal tradition, this tended to absolve the people of blame for the catastrophe and paint them as victims rather. Despite the pain and shock caused by capitulation, the Restoration regime survived, due, in part, to what its regenerationist critics regarded as the sleep of the masses. This, they argued, was caused by backwardness and obscurantism brought on by the influence of the Church and by *caciquismo*. Comparison with the rest of Europe, a regenerationist infatuation, led to the mythification of these *males de la Patria* (ills of the *Patria*), even if these were not truly unique to Spain.<sup>117</sup> After 1898, the political right, which had been progressively penetrated by nationalist ideas over the previous half-century, incorporated anti-*caciquismo* into a new discourse, which mixed elements of neo-colonialist thinking, populism and an obsession with national unity.<sup>118</sup> This entered the political mainstream in the figures of Francisco Silvela and Antonio Maura, even if they were considered heterodox by the political mainstream.

The *maurista* (Maurist) movement, which formed within the Conservative Party around the figure of Maura in the first quarter of the twentieth century, served as a particularly important ideological precursor to the Primo de Rivera regime. Indeed, it was from this group that the dictator would recruit the author of the administration's landmark reform to local government, the Municipal Statute (*Estatuto Municipal*), José Calvo Sotelo, whom Primo would later elevate to the position of Minister for Finance.

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<sup>117</sup> The main contributions to this field were Lucas Mallada, *Los males de la patria y la futura revolución española*. (Madrid: La Real Casa, 1890); Angel Ganivet, *Idearium español* (Granada: Vda. e Hijos de Sabatel, 1897); Ricardo Macías Picavea, *El problema nacional: hechos, causas, remedios* (Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, 1899); Luis Morote, *La moral de la derrota* (Madrid: Estab. Tip. de G. Juste, 1900); Joaquín Costa y Martínez, *Oligarquía y caciquismo: como la forma actual de gobierno en España, urgencia y modo de cambiarla* (Madrid: Imprenta de los Hijos M. G. y Fernández, 1902); Miguel de Unamuno, *En torno al casticismo* (Barcelona: A. Calderón & S. Valentí Camp, 1902). A useful overview of their contents can be read in Pro Ruíz, "La política en tiempos del Desastre," 191–215.

<sup>118</sup> Álvarez Junco, "Redes locales," 80–94.

The two decades preceding the establishment of the dictatorship saw the emergence and consolidation of a new radical right in Spain, in which the *mauristas* became prominent. While Maura echoed Costa's caustic critique of *caciquismo* and his appeal to the 'neutral masses' (*masas neutras*) of Spain, the former's regenerationism was optimistic and active, unlike Costa's. As such, Maura and his followers believed that Spain's political and administrative problems – corruption, political disengagement and *caciquismo* - could be overcome by a combination of measures in the political and administrative fields, mass mobilisation and calls to vote: a 'revolution from above' (*revolución desde arriba*).<sup>119</sup> While Maura's and his followers' intentions were strongly counter-revolutionary, their emphasis on action and on political mobilisation set them apart from the rest of their party, as it did from the party-political landscape of the Restoration era in general. As González Hernández writes, the *mauristas'* desire to create public opinion and form a permanent, mass base of support, elements that neither of the principal dynastic parties, Conservative and Liberal, had previously shown an interest in, allows them to be characterised as one of Spain's first modern political parties.<sup>120</sup>

To achieve its goals, the *maurista* movement organised mass rallies, developed modern propaganda machinery, which focused on the figure of Maura, formed an influential (and radical) youth wing and created social centres around Spain to compete with their left-wing and republican rivals in attracting working-class support. The last of these was highly significant as this was the first time a *conservative* political party in Spain had attempted to include workers in its ranks and, moreover, endeavour to improve their social circumstance in an attempt to forestall violent revolution from below. As part of this approach, the newly mobilised middle classes were to act in a tutelary role for workers, guiding them in the values of citizenship. Propaganda and social action were ultimately two sides of the same coin: "an attempt at mobilisation or the creation of a citizenry, in short, the politicisation [...] of a society that was evidently comfortable with, or, at least, resigned to the usual political system, without

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<sup>119</sup> María Jesús González Hernández, *Ciudadanía y acción. El conservadurismo maurista, 1907-1923* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, 1990), 129.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

whose support even the most honest attempts to authenticate politics would fail.”<sup>121</sup> Although the *maurista* movement would fade by the mid-1920s, these techniques in political mobilisation would pave the way for the ‘national mobilisation’ which Primo de Rivera would later attempt.<sup>122</sup>

While Maurism emerged in the large cities of Spain, another conservative movement based around the Social Catholic doctrines of Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (1891) became influential in Spain’s heartland of Old Castile, as well as the regions of Navarre and Aragon. As Catholic interest in the social condition of the lower classes increased at the turn of the century, the Church hierarchy responded by opening Catholic social centres and creating Catholic trade unions and savings banks. Within civil society more broadly, Social Catholic doctrine was diffused by an active press, the organisation of thematic congresses and the popularisation of collective pilgrimage. This ‘re-clericalisation’ of Spanish society was at its most intense in the years of 1898 to 1909. It was at the end of this period, in 1909, that the Jesuit Ángel Ayala formed a new Catholic movement named the *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas* (National Catholic Association of Propagandists), which promoted a vision of Spain that was heavily indebted to the romantic, neo-Thomist canon of nineteenth-century Spanish conservatism. As an alternative to liberal democracy, which Ayala thought ill-suited to Spain, because, ultimately, sovereignty rested in God, not the nation, the Propagandists promoted a form of ‘organic democracy’ based on the family, the municipality and the corporation. These ideas, as we will see throughout this thesis, were replicated faithfully by the regime and its ideologues, including José María Pemán, who was a member. The Propagandists were true to their name and made use of large-scale propaganda campaigns through their mouthpiece, *El Debate*, to promote the cohesion of Spanish Catholics in social and doctrinal terms. In 1917, the Propagandists’ efforts paid off and they succeeded in joining together the diverse Catholic agrarian unions into a single national body, the *Confederación Nacional Católica Agraria* (National Catholic Agrarian Confederation), which joined smallholders and big landowners together in the aim of halting the advance leftist ideas in the

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>122</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 20.

countryside. As Quiroga notes, it is no surprise that it was this base of Castilian militant Catholics that most forcefully urged the creation of the *primorriverista* single party, *Unión Patriótica*, in 1924.<sup>123</sup> Citizenship, according to the Social Catholic perspective, was inextricably linked to religious identity.

Primo made frequent reference to the ideas of the regenerationist thinkers who had been so influential on Spanish political thought in the years preceding the dictatorship, even if this was mostly superficial and often reduced to cliché in his articles and speeches. Nevertheless, there was an important symbolic value to this intellectual tradition and the idea of national regeneration became a *leitmotif* which served to justify the repression and administrative reforms carried out by the dictatorial government in its earliest months.<sup>124</sup> *Caciquismo*, as González Alcantud tells us, is the natural enemy of political centralisation; it supposes a fragmentation of power and a diminished role for the modern state. It is little wonder, he argues, that the chief antagonists to the practice were Spain's twentieth-century dictatorships.<sup>125</sup> Following from the thesis of Hernández Hernández, to which we referred in the literature review, the dictatorship, far from being a parenthesis, was an autocratic project to reconstruct a state that had been paralysed by *caciquismo*, the exhaustion of the liberal-parliamentary model specific to it, labour unrest and other factors through a concentration of power in the hands of the executive branch of the central state ahead of any other centres of power. This desire for centralisation led it to carry out extensive purges to local and provincial government, as well as the public administration, in the name of rooting out the so-called 'old politics' which diluted state power; close the *Cortes* indefinitely; and reorganise the judiciary.<sup>126</sup> These measures will be discussed in Chapters Three, Four and Five, respectively. Following the logic of 'governmentality,' described earlier in this chapter, the fortified *primorriverista* state became obsessed by the need to 'dispose' the population

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-24.

<sup>124</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 263–65.

<sup>125</sup> José Antonio González Alcantud, "Jerarquía versus igualdad: el clientelismo político mediterráneo desde la antropología," in *Política en penumbra: patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea*, ed. Antonio Robles Egea and José Álvarez Junco (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1996), 35.

<sup>126</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 11–12; Hernández Hernández, "¿Regeneración o reconstrucción?"; Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 44–49.

towards being ruled; to organise and homogenise it for this purpose through a discourse of citizenship which simultaneously emphasised Spain's historic qualities as a nation and the centrality of the state to their lives.

Behind this vision was a belief that the civil society of citizens could be awoken from above by the state, the second trend in the *primorriverista* discourse on citizenship.<sup>127</sup> The most complete analysis of this process is made in Alejandro Quiroga's *Making Spaniards* (2007), which was described in the introduction.<sup>128</sup> The topic is worthy of monographic treatment in its own right. Here I would like to make some general observations about how this was to be achieved, before examining some of the material produced on the topic of citizenship in prolific fashion by the regime. This will be followed by a short reflection on the 'public sphere' during the regime. In the chapters that follow, we will examine how this was interpreted, invoked and reconfigured by these citizens in their interactions with the state by petition.

The regime's initial efforts to create a 'new citizen' revolved around the eradication of *caciquismo*, as we have seen. In the medium- to long-term, Primo invested considerable hope in the two civic organisations that the regime co-opted, its militia, the *Somatén Nacional*, and its political party, *Unión Patriótica*. The *Somatén* was to serve in two capacities: first, as a deterrent against public disorder and, second, as a school of citizenship that would indoctrinate members of all classes in the nationalist values of the regime. The organisation was placed under the command of the military, a decision that highlights Primo's belief in the Army as an agent of mass nationalisation.<sup>129</sup> The *Somatén* was a far sight from the Fascist Blackshirts and emphasised social peace above all else. Primo conceived of *Unión Patriótica* as an 'anti-party' in order to differentiate it from the traditional parties of the *turno pacífico*; it would be a gathering of individuals of different political outlooks who shared the

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<sup>127</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 154.

<sup>128</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*. Many of the same aspects are also described in González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 129–211.

<sup>129</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 149–50.

same ideal of the *Patria* and would be “free of the sickness of politics, which hinders government in Spain and other countries.”<sup>130</sup>

In a 1928 article in the party’s official newspaper, Primo emphasised the principle of necessity and placed it ahead of the will of individual citizens. “True political liberty,” he wrote, “must become more and more despotic towards the individual and protective towards the community.”<sup>131</sup> Yet Primo did not entirely reject the liberal notion that individuals should have rights as citizens. “Freedom and democracy,” he wrote elsewhere, “are the basic principles which inspire Christian civilisation, but... they have been progressively discredited to the point of placing true freedom, all well-founded rights and all respect and social etiquette in danger by turning authority into a slave and thugs into rulers.”<sup>132</sup> The notion of authority, with the state as its supreme embodiment, was essential to this vision, therefore. This led Primo to emphasise the duties dimension of citizenship ahead of the rights element, a vision that coincided with the military nationalism that had become politically influential during the twilight of the Restoration era.<sup>133</sup>

*Unión Patriótica* provided the regime with a core of ideologues who contributed to its discursive production on citizenship through its newspapers and their own books. None of these thinkers could be said to belong to the vanguard of European conservative thought in the 1920s, their thinking a mix of the ideas of Spanish traditionalism, in the form of Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, Juan Vázquez de Mella and Juan Donoso Cortés, with trends from Italian Fascism, the *Action Française*, Portuguese *Integralismo* and the vitalist philosophy of Oswald Spengler, Henri Bergson and José Ortega y Gasset. Much of their rumination focused on a binary opposition between a ‘real Spain,’ made up of the Catholic working masses, and an ‘anti-Spain’ formed by liberals, republicans, regionalists and the parties of the left. It was a form of

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<sup>130</sup> Miguel Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento de Primo de Rivera: sus notas, artículos y discursos* (Madrid: La Junta de Propaganda Patriótica y Ciudadana, 1929), 60.

<sup>131</sup> *Unión Patriótica*, 15/01/1928. Cited in José Javier Díaz Freire, “La reforma de la vida cotidiana y el cuerpo femenino durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera,” in *El rumor de lo cotidiano: estudios sobre el País Vasco contemporáneo*, ed. Luis Castells Arceche (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial, Universidad del País Vasco, 1999), 228.

<sup>132</sup> Miguel Primo de Rivera, *Disertación ciudadana: destinada a mantener la comunicación entre el Gobierno y los gobernados sobre algunos aspectos de la vida pública*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Clásica Española, 1930), 37.

<sup>133</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 186; Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 17–19, 37–38.

‘negative integration,’ which sought to create national unity by emphasising the regime’s foes.<sup>134</sup> One of the foremost of these essayists, the poet José María Pemán, made clear that the regime was not strictly opposed to democracy but that it regarded this primarily as a form of civic education which would be achieved through *Unión Patriótica*.<sup>135</sup> His cousin and counterpart, José Pemartín, identified what he saw as the three key elements in the formation of Spain as a nation: the historic *Patria*, the Christian conviction that washed over this to create “moral unity” and shared values, and the monarchy that maintained the permanent link between the traditional and the modern. All of these processes were prior to and independent of the people; nations were not formed by their citizens but by Providence.<sup>136</sup> Primo expressed a similar view in September 1926, as he called the *Plebiscito Nacional* (National Plebiscite), by insisting that Spain could not be allowed to die while the “soul of the [Spanish] race” lived in its people.<sup>137</sup> The primary connection of these people to the nation was as vessels for its eternal essences, rather than as citizens in the true sense.

Primo’s administration also presented more systematic statements of its views on citizenship. In 1923, Teodoro de Iradier y Herrero, a cavalry officer and founder of the *Exploradores de España*, Spain’s equivalent to the Boy Scouts, wrote a short book entitled *Catecismo del ciudadano* (Catechism of the Citizen), which served as an initial presentation of the regime’s views on the topic.<sup>138</sup> The name was no coincidence as the publication was presented in the style of the Catholic statements on doctrine that were memorised by Spanish schoolchildren. De Iradier summarised the four main tasks of the citizen as the defence of the *Patria* as a soldier, the support of the public finances as a taxpayer, the selection of legislators as an elector and the production of wealth as a worker. There were also fundamental rights, like the freedoms of religion,

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<sup>134</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 58–63, 93.

<sup>135</sup> José María Pemán y Pemartín, *El hecho y la idea de la Unión Patriótica* (Madrid: Imprenta Artística Sáez Hermanos, 1929), 21–23.

<sup>136</sup> José Pemartín, *Los valores históricos en la Dictadura española* (Madrid: Publicaciones de la Junta de Propaganda Patriótica y Ciudadana, 1929), 31, 43–45.

<sup>137</sup> Miguel Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento de Primo de Rivera: sus notas, artículos y discursos* (Madrid: La Junta de Propaganda Patriótica y Ciudadana, 1929), 36.

<sup>138</sup> The government endorsed the *Catecismo*. In December 1923, the Secretary of Primo’s bureau, Colonel Godofredo Nouvilas, reported to the Subsecretary of the Ministry of the Interior, General Martínez Anido, that the Army had printed 100,000 copies of the publication and that they would soon be ready for distribution in schools across Spain. AHN, Primo, Bundle 57, File 2352.



gathering and expression, in de Iradier's vision, although the regime failed to respect most of these as a consequence of the state of exception which it created.<sup>139</sup>

Primo gave a more elaborate presentation of the regime's conception of citizenship in a similar publication, entitled *Disertación ciudadana* (Dissertation on Citizenship), which appeared in 1926.<sup>140</sup> The work, Primo declared, was intended as an "act of preaching... to fortify the soul of the citizen in the faith, principles and practice that stimulate it to the observance of its duties."<sup>141</sup> The general borrowed de Iradier's understanding of the four main obligations of the citizen, but added that the third of these was not merely to vote, as de Iradier had said, but *to act*. This meant carrying out public roles and using one's talents in collective activities for the benefit of all. The citizen was to form his or her own beliefs privately, but should only express these through legal means and in a non-partisan manner. Primo was less inclined to ruminate on the rights of citizens than de Iradier, yet he made clear that the public administration should be at the service of the people and that they should have the right to complain if they felt ignored or unfairly treated by its officials.<sup>142</sup> This, as we will see in the chapters that follow this one, was keenly felt by the Spanish population.

In March 1929, the government organised a two-week lecture series in Toledo to train Army officers in how to indoctrinate the population in civic values. The leadership of the regime attended and gave addresses on topics of national import, which the administration gathered in a book, *Curso de ciudadanía* (Course on Citizenship), and distributed using its propaganda machine, the *Junta de Propaganda Patriótica y Ciudadana* (Board of Patriotic and Civic Propaganda).<sup>143</sup> The contribution of José María Pemán echoed Primo's emphasis on the need for civic action and described what he saw as a "dualism" to the Spanish character. "We understood the supreme heroism of war..." he declared,

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<sup>139</sup> Teodoro de Iradier y Herrero, *Catecismo del ciudadano* (Madrid: Publicaciones del Directorio Militar, 1923), 16–17. Copy found in AHN, Primo, Bundle 423 1.

<sup>140</sup> The book was published after a competition held by the government to encourage the production of patriotic texts suitable for use in pro-regime ceremonies. In the first instance, each province was sent 200 copies of the book for this purpose. González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 206.

<sup>141</sup> Primo de Rivera, *Disertación ciudadana*, 9–10.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 22–23, 30.

<sup>143</sup> Eduardo Pérez Agudo, ed., *Curso de ciudadanía. Conferencias pronunciadas en el Alcázar de Toledo. Marzo 1929* (Madrid: Junta de Propaganda Patriótica y Ciudadana, 1929). The JPPC printed 20,000 copies initially. Some 2,000 of these went straight to the military. Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 80–81.

but we did not understand that other heroism of peace, that anonymous, quiet, continuous heroism that is citizenship; we knew how to answer the call of the *Patria*, but we were not able to realise that the *Patria* is also an everyday reality, that it is present in all of the trivial acts of our lives as citizens.<sup>144</sup>

With lofty ideals came the picaresque; for every Don Quijote, there was a Sancho Panza. Drawing on the regenerationist writers of a generation before, Pemán identified public apathy as the great problem affecting Spain. The public did not need to be created, however; it was merely ill-disciplined and in need of new ideals. He saw these in the family, one's profession (but *not* class) and respect for authority. For Pemán, like Primo, discipline and obedience to the law were the greatest duties of citizenship. Moreover, modern society had, in his view, come to be organised around nothing more than a minimum set of political rights, which could not, by any means, serve as a "total or foundational ideology for an order or political discipline."<sup>145</sup>

To a certain degree, there was a republican current to the citizenship which Primo and his ideologues were promoting due to its strongly public orientation, although it was a highly authoritarian vision which emphasised duty above all else. There is considerable room for interpretation regarding the sincerity of this call for civic action. Citizenship, as we have seen, is tied to ideas of what is considered legitimately 'public' and the process of defining this represented a clear trend in the *primorriverista* discourse on citizenship. To date, there has been no monographic study of the 'public sphere' during the dictatorship, although certain critical aspects of this have already been explored in detail.<sup>146</sup> To overcome this, we can take some cues from

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<sup>144</sup> José María Pemán y Pemartín, "El espíritu de ciudadanía," in *Curso de ciudadanía. Conferencias pronunciadas en el Alcázar de Toledo. Marzo 1929*, ed. Eduardo Pérez Agudo (Madrid: Junta de Propaganda Patriótica y Ciudadana, 1929), 250.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 256–66, 265.

<sup>146</sup> These have tended to focus on the repressive activities of the regime. On press censorship, for example, see Gonzalo Santonja, *Del lápiz rojo al lápiz libre: la censura previa de publicaciones periódicas y sus consecuencias editoriales durante los últimos años del reinado de Alfonso XIII* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1986); Juan Francisco Fuentes and Javier Fernández Sebastián, *Historia del periodismo español: prensa, política y opinión pública en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 1997); Lluís Costa Fernández, "Comunicación y propaganda durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1923-1930)," *Historia y Comunicación Social*, no. 18 (2014): 385–96. A description of censorship from within the administration in Eduardo Hernández Vidal (alias Celedonia de la Iglesia), *La censura por dentro* (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1930). There has also been considerable interest in the regime's relationship with intellectuals: Victor Ouimette, *Los intelectuales españoles y el naufragio del liberalismo, 1923-1936* (Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1998); Genoveva García Queipo de Llano, *Los intelectuales y la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera* (Madrid: Alianza, 1988). A contemporary account of the experience of exiled intellectuals can be read in Francisco Madrid, *Los desterrados de la Dictadura:*

studies of the public and private divide during the Fascist period in Italy. Fascism, Paul Corner suggests, would appear to be far removed from the rational-critical discourse that is essential to the public sphere described by Habermas: “The ‘public sphere’ implies debate, discussion, representation of position, exchange of ideas, respect of other people’s opinions, and so on. ... Fascism, of course, rejected all this.”<sup>147</sup> Fascism, as is well known, was overtly hostile to politics and openly blamed rational-critical discourse for Italy’s post-war difficulties. The Primo de Rivera regime, though by no means as radical as its Italian counterpart, also sought to legitimate itself by discrediting the political process and labelling it as the source of Spain’s social divisions and national decline. To this end, Primo declared that the state had been usurped by *caciques* and corrupt, career legislators and began the process of purging them; then, once these elements had been removed from government, the regime claimed to transcend these differences in a new form of politics that was centred on the state and *Unión Patriótica*.<sup>148</sup> Despite being removed from the political decision-making process, the people were essential to the systems which both regimes inaugurated. “It is,” Corner writes, “inescapable that at least in some ways the ‘people’ were more politically present under fascism than they had been before, the political process more public than it had ever been before.”<sup>149</sup> The same is true of the Primo de Rivera regime, during which public acclamation served as an essential element in its programme of state-centred pageantry and symbolic politics. As Corner reminds us, however, this “public theatre of politics” is not, by any means, a Habermasian public sphere.<sup>150</sup>

The historiography of the Spanish dictatorship has never been dominated by a discussion of the notions of popular ‘consensus’ or ‘consent’ in the same way as its Italian counterpart, perhaps due to the comparative brevity of Primo de Rivera’s rule –

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*Reportajes y testimonios* (Madrid: Galo Sáez, 1930). A general history of civil society and the public sphere in the Restoration and Republican eras, but with only general observations about the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, can be consulted in Riley, *Civic Foundations*, 72–112. A concise examination of nationalism and the public sphere during the Restoration period in Archilés Cardona and Carrión, “En la sombra del Estado.”

<sup>147</sup> Paul Corner, “Habermas, Fascism, and the Public Sphere,” in *Mass Dictatorship and Modernity*, ed. Michael Kim and Michael Schoenhals (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 101.

<sup>148</sup> This is the central thesis in Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*.

<sup>149</sup> Corner, “Habermas, Fascism, and the Public Sphere,” 102.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

a little over six years pales in comparison to the Fascist *Ventennio*.<sup>151</sup> Naturally, researchers are also faced with the difficulty in defining this supposed consensus. Whether or not this truly existed, the *image* of unity was the most important aspect of this, hence their emphasis on organisation and mobilisation of the population. As Quiroga has shown, there was a concerted attempt on the part of the Spanish regime to orient elements of civil society towards the state through the creation or co-optation of, amongst other civic organisations, *Unión Patriótica*, the *Somatén*, the *Exploradores de España* and the *Tiro Nacional* (National Rifle Association).<sup>152</sup> However, this never reached the levels of coordination behind the Italian Fascists' "selective totalitarianism" or the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* policies.<sup>153</sup> The two regimes also implemented corporative systems to regulate national production and limit class struggle; neither was successful in these aims.<sup>154</sup> The Spanish and Italian regimes certainly made recourse to plebiscites – used to endorse the continuation of the dictatorship in Spain in 1926 and to replace elections in Italy in 1929 and 1934, respectively – as a means of achieving public participation in politics, although these were used to approve certain proposals, rather than suggest them. Similarly, the *Asamblea Nacional* created by Primo de Rivera in 1927 had only consultative powers and could not legislate in its own right. Despite this, as is detailed in Chapter Six of this thesis, there is clear evidence from Spain that the plebiscite served as an opportunity for sincere civic mobilisation, which offered a chance for previously marginal or excluded members of the national polity, most notably women, to enter the public sphere for the first time.

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<sup>151</sup> The classic exposition on the supposed "consensus" under Fascism in Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini: Il Duce* (Torino: Einaudi, 1974). On the question of "consent" see Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Some elements of this in the Spanish case are discussed in Alejandro Quiroga, "Cirujano de Hierro. La construcción carismática del General Primo de Rivera," *Ayer* 91, no. 3 (2013): 147–68. Alf Lüdtke suggests that the notion of 'consensus' (or 'consent') is a 'core topic' in the structuralist approach to history. He criticises studies of this nature because "the very terms indicate a 'state of being' but omit the ways this state was produced, is sustained, or can be changed or dismantled." Alf Lüdtke, "Ordinary People, Self-Energising, and Room for Manoeuvring: Examples from 20th Century Europe," in *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship: Collusion and Evasion*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 23.

<sup>152</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*.

<sup>153</sup> De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent*, 19.

<sup>154</sup> Corner, "Habermas, Fascism, and the Public Sphere," 106–8. On the Spanish case see González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 153–63.

If the public sphere was largely suppressed during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, then how were government decisions taken? In short: almost entirely by Primo de Rivera himself, although Martínez Anido, his *de jure* and *de facto* deputy during the *Directorios Militar* and *Civil*, also operated with some autonomy. Even after the restoration of the ministerial portfolios upon the creation of the *Directorio Civil* in December 1925, the technocratic panel of ministers which Primo installed carried out these roles only in an advisory, rather than executive capacity; they were effectively administrative functionaries.<sup>155</sup> Two leading figures in the regime, Emilio Tarduchy and José de Yanguas, the latter of whom served as Minister of State (1925-1927) and President of the *Asamblea Nacional* (National Assembly), mocked the idea that the citizen should play a meaningful role in the decision-making process. They acknowledged that dictatorship could be tyrannical but declared that it was for the citizenry to choose a just dictator and not act in such a way as to deserve to be ruled by “despots, tyrants or executioners.” “The danger is not in Dictatorship,” they added. “It is usually in the Dictator, or, rather, in citizens that have become debased.”<sup>156</sup> Control was never absolute, however, as Primo, like Mussolini, was to some extent also limited by the need to maintain the support of the monarch, particularly in the latter half of the dictatorship as Don Alfonso became more hostile towards the dictator’s failure to fix an endpoint to his exceptional administration.<sup>157</sup>

None of this is to say that the regime was entirely unresponsive to the desires of the population, nor that it repressed all forms of social protest, individual or collective. As this thesis will demonstrate clearly, the government was generally tolerant of the views expressed by ordinary people in petitions and actually dedicated

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<sup>155</sup> This was a characteristic which Primo shared with Mussolini, who attempted to have his say on most issues. Corner, “Habermas, Fascism, and the Public Sphere,” 113. A description of the workings of the cabinet during the *Directorio Civil* is given in José Calvo Sotelo, *Mis servicios al Estado* (1931; repr., Madrid: Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, 1974), 159–83. González Calleja, “La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo,” 43. Primo’s initial programme for the *Directorio Civil* instructed the new Ministers to suggest improvements to his ideas, rather than to propose new ones altogether. This set the tone for the rest of the period. Miguel Primo de Rivera, *Epistolario de la Dictadura. La figura del General Primo de Rivera, trazada por su propia mano*, ed. José Manuel De Arminan and Luis De Arminana (Madrid: Ediciones Morata, 1930), 333–38.

<sup>156</sup> Emilio R. Tarduchy and José de Yanguas Messía, *Psicología del dictador y caracteres más salientes, morales, sociales y políticos, de la dictadura española* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Junta de Propaganda Patriótica y Ciudadana, 1929), 144–45.

<sup>157</sup> González Calleja, “La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo,” 46.

considerable resources to engaging in correspondence with them about their concerns, even modifying its policies as a result upon occasion. Although Corner does acknowledge instances of open protest at the government in the Italian case, particularly through denunciation, he suggests that the “‘fascist public sphere’, such as it was, did not accept criticism willingly; the concept of accountability of authority to the people was totally absent.”<sup>158</sup> Petitioning, as we will see in Chapter Two, was an inherently public act, which aimed to make personal concerns matters of public import. In this way, the Fascist government diverges from the Primo de Rivera regime.<sup>159</sup> Corner’s ultimate assessment that the people were present in the Fascist public sphere only as “audience and as consumers (of myths, of political theatre, of benefits and happenings)” seems to forget the personal agency of individual actors, their capacity to dissent and resist, even in this truncated public sphere.<sup>160</sup> As such, it cannot be extended to Spain. In this light, to the extent that all nation-states (be these liberal-democratic, authoritarian or totalitarian) require their citizens to sacrifice some part of their private selves to the state in the shape of military service, the payment of taxes, etc., the *primorriverista* state was not characterised by any special, ideological denial of the traditional separation of public and private, nor did it attempt to synthesise the two directly in the state, as in Italy.<sup>161</sup> This reflects its nature as what Roger Griffin calls an ‘authoritarian mass dictatorship,’ rather than a ‘totalitarian’ one.<sup>162</sup> Even so, the ‘state of exception’ which it created meant that it could arbitrarily infringe on the private arena as it saw fit, as we will see in the coming pages.

### **The state of exception**

Primo de Rivera ruled Spain as dictator through the creation of a ‘state of exception,’ which, though presented as provisional upon his seizure of power, remained in force for the entire duration of the regime. This allowed the government to stray from the

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<sup>158</sup> Corner, “Habermas, Fascism, and the Public Sphere,” 110.

<sup>159</sup> It must also be acknowledged that both regimes passed through a number of different phases during which they both became progressively more repressive. In Italy, this process may have fluctuated to a greater degree. In the case of Spain, the space for dissent constricted considerably during the twilight years of the dictatorship. This is discussed in Chapter Five.

<sup>160</sup> Corner, “Habermas, Fascism, and the Public Sphere,” 113.

<sup>161</sup> Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self*, 25–27.

<sup>162</sup> Griffin, “Mass Dictatorship and the ‘Modernist State.’”

bounds of the Restoration Constitution of 1876 and impose restrictions on civic life by suspending the key freedoms of expression, association and gathering, while also dismantling opposition and repressing its enemies. The regime's tendency to negate these basic liberal rights stood in opposition to its discourse on citizenship, a concept which, as Somers tells us, is rooted in the constitutionally-guaranteed rule of law. As we will see below, despite Carl Schmitt's claims that 'states of exception' are fundamentally tied to the law, the work of Giorgio Agamben shows that not only is this not the case, the anomie which they create is also used by states to create the conditions of 'rightlessness' which Hannah Arendt denounced in *Origins*.

### ***From Schmitt to Agamben***

My thinking in this section has been influenced by the work of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben and, by extension of this, that of the German jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt, whose seminal works *Dictatorship* (1921) and *Political Theology* (1922) Agamben analyses in his books *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998) and *State of Exception* (2005).<sup>163</sup> Agamben's views have been particularly useful in elucidating the nature of dictatorial government. It is his assertion that in the twentieth century the state of emergency became the rule, rather than the exception, both in overtly authoritarian regimes and in democratic political systems. As his reviewer Humphreys notes, his thesis goes beyond this, to present "a theory of law to account for a realm of human activity not subject to law."<sup>164</sup> Agamben finds a precedent to this zone of anomie in Carl Schmitt's definition of the sovereign as "he who decides the exception," the means through which the German jurist tied the state of exception to the juridical order.<sup>165</sup> It is the figure of the sovereign or dictator that unites the legal and non-legal realms through the extra-legal decision to suspend the

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<sup>163</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Dictatorship: From the Origin of the Modern Concept of Sovereignty to Proletarian Class Struggle*, trans. Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward (1921; repr., Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014); Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (1922; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>164</sup> Stephen Humphreys, "Legalizing Lawlessness: On Giorgio Agamben's State of Exception," *The European Journal of International Law* 17, no. 3 (2006): 678.

<sup>165</sup> Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.

legal order. To understand what Agamben means by this we must briefly review Schmitt's first work on the topic.

In *Dictatorship*, Schmitt describes the history and theory of the 'state of exception,' a constitutional device through which the normal legal order could be temporarily suspended during a time of emergency in order to guarantee the survival of that order thereafter. In Schmitt's view, like Agamben's, the exception has moved beyond these confines and now refers to a "general concept in the theory of the state, and not merely to a construct applied to an emergency decree of state of siege."<sup>166</sup> This can be observed in the modern-day institution of dictatorship, that is, "the exercise of state power freed from any legal restrictions, for the purpose of resolving an abnormal situation – in particular, a situation of war and rebellion."<sup>167</sup> Schmitt gives over the bulk of the work to describing a genealogy of this form of government as it develops from a Roman institution towards the Marxist-Leninist dictatorship of the proletariat, which had emerged shortly before his time of writing.

Schmitt identifies two forms of dictatorship: commissarial and sovereign. In a 'commissarial dictatorship,' the constitution is temporarily suspended and a dictator appointed with extraordinary powers to rescue the state from the emergency it faces. Although the dictator acts outside the law, his actions are nevertheless tied to the legal order because, first, the constitution has been temporarily suspended, not abolished, and, second, the suspension is regulated by "norms of the realisation of law."<sup>168</sup> In other words, it has been provided for constitutionally and aims to bring about a return to that constitutionality. A 'sovereign dictatorship,' in comparison, occurs during a revolutionary moment and acts outside the law in order to create a *new* legal order; no law exists other than the sovereign decision. This lawless action, nevertheless, maintains a connection to the legal order due to the distinction between what Schmitt refers to as 'constituted' and 'constituent' power (*pouvoir constitué* and *pouvoir*

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<sup>166</sup> Cited in Renato Cristi, "Decisionism," *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 832.

<sup>167</sup> Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, "Introduction," in *Dictatorship*, by Carl Schmitt (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), xxiii.

<sup>168</sup> Daniel McLoughlin, "The Fiction of Sovereignty and the Real State of Exception: Giorgio Agamben's Critique of Carl Schmitt," *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 12, no. 3 (2016): 514.



*constituant*, in his terminology).<sup>169</sup> The archetypal moment which sees the amalgamation of sovereignty and dictatorship, through the state of exception, is the French Revolution. As Humphreys notes, Schmitt's intention in making this distinction was to show that the violence of martial law and sovereign decree is "legitimate over and against other manifestations of extrajudicial violence," something which we will explain further in due course.<sup>170</sup>

Having tied dictatorship to sovereignty, Schmitt moves to an analysis of the second of these elements in *Political Theology*. Here he discards the terms 'constituent' and 'constituted' power and replaces them with the idea of 'decision.'<sup>171</sup> Schmitt, a pessimist, believed that legal norms were abstractions and could not always count on the predictability of the situations which they were meant to regulate. They could not, for example, govern in circumstances that threatened the established order due to their *abnormality*. In the event of such an incident, Schmitt held that a polity should be allowed to suspend the application of its norms so that an orderly situation could be restored. This, in turn, meant that some form of authority must be empowered to make a sovereign decision in order to identify this abnormality, suspend prevailing norms and, ultimately, replace deliberative politics in times of extreme emergency.<sup>172</sup>

Agamben believes that there is a paradox at the heart of Schmitt's thinking on sovereignty. Schmitt's analysis seeks to establish "within the body of law a series of caesurae and divisions whose ends do not quite meet, but which, by means of their articulation and opposition, allow the machine of law to function."<sup>173</sup> Yet, as Agamben writes, these divisions are not at all clear:

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<sup>169</sup> Schmitt, *Dictatorship*, 123. As Agamben explains, "Though [constituent power] is juridically formless, it represents a 'minimum of constitution' inscribed within every politically decisive action and is therefore capable of ensuring the relation between the state of exception and the juridical order even in the case of sovereign dictatorship." Agamben, *State of Exception*, 34.

<sup>170</sup> Humphreys, "Legalizing Lawlessness," 680.

<sup>171</sup> Cristi, "Decisionism," 832. The intellectual basis of this idea arises from Schmitt's opposition to the thinking of Hans Kelsen, the Austrian legal scholar who, in short, argued that "every case of judicial interpretation could be mechanically derived from a positive juridical norm, pushing aside the notion of sovereignty and its decisionist disposition." *Ibid.*, 831. Schmitt expounds on his differences with Kelsen in Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 16–35.

<sup>172</sup> Michael Hoelzl, "Ethics of Decisionism: Carl Schmitt's Theological Blind Spot," *Journal for Cultural Research* 20, no. 3 (2016): 236. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.

<sup>173</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 35.

The paradox of sovereignty consists in the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order. If the sovereign is truly the one to whom the juridical order grants the power of proclaiming a state of exception and, therefore, of suspending the order's own validity, then 'the sovereign stands outside the juridical order and, nevertheless, belongs to it, since it is up to him to decide if the constitution is to be suspended in toto.'<sup>174</sup>

The meaning of this becomes clearer when we consider the motivation behind Schmitt's thesis. A Catholic conservative and counter-revolutionary, Schmitt sought to relate the apparent lawlessness of the state of exception back to the legal order, for the absence of such order, he argued, is akin to what Hobbes once called the *bellum omnium contra omnes* in the state of nature. Schmitt's analysis, therefore, relies upon an "ordering of space," in which the state of exception serves to delineate the territory occupied by order and chaos.<sup>175</sup> Such a clear distinction, in Agamben's view, is impossible, though, due to the paradox of sovereignty, what he identifies as the 'included exclusion,' the ambiguous in-between space at the limit of seemingly oppositional forces (e.g. chaos and order). According to Agamben, then, "what was at issue in [Schmitt's definition of sovereignty] was nothing less than the limit concept of the doctrine of law and the State."<sup>176</sup> Thus it is a realm of *indistinction*, rather than distinction, that the state of exception gives rise to as it becomes more and more commonplace.<sup>177</sup>

In Agamben's view, the state of exception is not a "state of law," but rather a space without law, a "zone of anomie."<sup>178</sup> The dictatorship, a state in which laws continue to be made and applied (non-democratically), therefore, cannot be the paradigmatic representation of the state of exception.<sup>179</sup> Following Schmitt's example, Agamben returns to the history of Roman imperialism to find a more appropriate metaphor which can account for the lawlessness which seems to prevail in the state of exception and allow him to reclaim it as a zone of anomie. He finds this in the institution of the *iustitium*, which "literally means 'standstill' or 'suspension of the law'... a suspension not simply of the administration of justice but of the law as

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<sup>174</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 15.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 19. Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, trans. G.L. Ulmen (Candor: Telos Press, 2006).

<sup>176</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 11.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>178</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 50–51.

<sup>179</sup> Humphreys, "Legalizing Lawlessness," 681.

such.”<sup>180</sup> Whereas the essential quality of dictatorship, as it emerged in ancient Rome, was to temporarily concentrate power into the hands of one person, *iustitium* “called upon the consuls... and even, in extreme cases, all citizens, to take whatever measures they considered necessary for the salvation of the state.” This means that “the state of exception is not defined as a fullness of powers, a pleromatic state of law, as in the dictatorship, but as a kenomatic state, an emptiness and standstill of the law.”<sup>181</sup>

Agamben’s worry throughout his work is that attempts, like Schmitt’s, to legislate for anomie deny the existence of an extra-legal reality, an alternative to the oppression of prevailing juridical orders.<sup>182</sup> He observes a similar concern in the work of the German philosopher Walter Benjamin, who, at Schmitt’s time of writing, was also attempting to theorise an anomic form of violence. In his essay *Critique of Violence* (1921), Benjamin posits the idea of a form of violence “that lies absolutely ‘outside’ and ‘beyond’ the law and that, as such, could shatter the dialectic between lawmaking violence and law-preserving. Benjamin calls this other figure of violence ‘pure’ or ‘divine,’ and, in the human sphere, ‘revolutionary.’”<sup>183</sup> For Schmitt, in comparison, this violence is “the last frontier to be annexed by the sovereign by means of the state of exception.”<sup>184</sup> There is documentary evidence that Benjamin and Schmitt briefly corresponded during the 1930s and on this basis Agamben attempts to construct a largely imagined conversation between the two on sovereignty.<sup>185</sup> The contents of this are occasionally esoteric and it would go beyond the scope of this study to describe them in their full detail. Agamben uses it to show that when a state of exception is declared it cannot be easily un-declared, meaning that it becomes extended, even permanent. This has crucial implications for Schmitt’s thinking. His idea of sovereignty, Agamben suggests, relies on a clear distinction between the rule and the exception; this distinction breaks down when these become confused due to the

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<sup>180</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 41.

<sup>181</sup> Both quotations from *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>182</sup> Humphreys, “Legalizing Lawlessness,” 682.

<sup>183</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 53. See Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 277–300.

<sup>184</sup> Humphreys, “Legalizing Lawlessness,” 681.

<sup>185</sup> In 1930, Benjamin sent a copy of his habilitation thesis, *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*, to Schmitt and, in the letter he sent with it, expressed his admiration for the legal scholar’s thought. McLoughlin, “The Fiction of Sovereignty,” 509.

extension of the state of emergency.<sup>186</sup> Such a breakdown shatters the nexus between violence and law, which Schmitt proposes, thus leaving only the anomie which he sought to claim in the latter's name. The result, therefore, is not a concentration of power, as in Roman dictatorship, but rather an inability to locate it and to know what it can do: this is precisely what Agamben describes as *iustitium*.<sup>187</sup> Thus, the more exceptional legal rules that are introduced by a state, the more incapable one becomes of knowing what is the norm and what is the exception, and the law, as such, becomes unknowable. This is the legal fiction behind the state of exception, according to Agamben.

Agamben suggests that the Fascist and Nazi regimes in Italy and Germany respectively should not be thought of as dictatorships in the classical Roman sense, but rather as cases of *iustitium* as they ruled without fully suspending the existing constitutional order in either country. Echoing the views of Ernst Fraenkel, he suggests that both regimes instead created 'dual states' which were divided into 'normative' and 'prerogative' sections and ruled both with and without the law.<sup>188</sup> While the Primo de Rivera administration would not reach the same murderous conclusion as its Fascist and Nazi counterparts, elements of this duality certainly emerged, as we will see below.

Agamben's thinking is complex and often obscure. Nevertheless, he is making an important observation about the state of exception, which has critical implications for our understanding of the authoritarian regimes of the twentieth century. It is, as we have been observing, a characteristic of modern dictatorship that they claim to rule in the name of the people, through the 'sovereign decision' to declare a state of exception. If this is, as Agamben suggests, "a zone of absolute indeterminacy between anomie and law," then it fundamentally undermines the foundations upon which citizenship is based.<sup>189</sup> This is because the claims behind this 'instituted process' are rooted in the common reference point of the law. Through these letters of petition

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<sup>186</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 58.

<sup>187</sup> Rasmus Ugilt, *Giorgio Agamben: Political Philosophy* (Penrith: HEB, 2014), 74.

<sup>188</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 48. For Fraenkel's theory see Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State: A Contribution to the Theory of Dictatorship*, trans. E. A. Shills (1941; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). On Fascist Italy as a 'dual state' see Gert Sørensen, "The Dual State and Fascism," *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions* 2, no. 3 (2001): 25–40.

<sup>189</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 57.

which document how ordinary Spaniards attempted to make such claims to the dictatorial government from 1923 to 1930, this thesis explores how they experienced these opposed forces of law and lawlessness in their daily lives.

### ***The Primo de Rivera regime as a 'state of exception'***

The Primo de Rivera regime operated at the fringe of the law in a manner that is similar to what Agamben describes. There is no question that the dictatorship was unconstitutional. It would be overly reductive, however, to suggest that the regime was made possible by a suspension of the Constitution of 1876. The reality is far more insidious. Primo did not suspend the whole Constitution, as it has often been suggested; rather, he abrogated only the guarantees expressed in Articles 4, 5, 6, 9 of the document, while voiding parts of Article 13.<sup>190</sup> This left the Constitution in a state of *semi-suspension*, thus creating a political situation of extreme ambiguity.<sup>191</sup> In keeping with the military mentality of the regime, maintaining public order also became one of its supreme values. As a result, the same decree declared a nationwide *estado de guerra* (state of war/emergency), which subjected Spain to martial law for nearly two years. These two measures were separate to the suspension of the aforementioned constitutional guarantees and when the latter was eventually rescinded in May 1925, they were *not* reinstated.<sup>192</sup>

Primo captured the uncertainty of this state of constitutional “undeath” in May 1925, when he responded to comments made by the former Prime Minister José Sánchez Guerra about a controversial interview given by the King to the *Paris-Midi*

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<sup>190</sup> See, for example, Quiroga, “Cirujano de Hierro,” 152; Mercedes Cabrera, “El rey constitucional,” in *Alfonso XIII: un político en el trono*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003), 110. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 17/09/1923.

<sup>191</sup> Article 4 limited detention by the authorities without charge to a maximum of 24 hours, while also requiring that individuals either be released or formally transferred to prison within 72 hours of their case being seen by a judge. Prisoners were also to be informed of any rulings made in relation to their case. Article 5 required that any governmental detention that lasted more than 24 hours after the time of arrest be ordered by a suitable judge. Article 6 prohibited arbitrary house searches and made it necessary for the examination of any seized documents to be carried out in the presence of the suspect, a member of their family, or, in the absence of either of these, two witnesses from the suspect’s local community. Article 9 recognised the freedom to decide one’s place of residence and, finally, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Article 13 established the freedoms of expression, gathering and association respectively. For the Constitution in full see *Gaceta de Madrid*, 02/07/1876.

<sup>192</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 17/05/1925. Ballbé also makes this observation in Manuel Ballbé, *Orden público y militarismo en la España constitucional (1812-1983)* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1983), 312.

newspaper the previous month. In an open letter which Sánchez Guerra sent to the press shortly after this, he announced that he could no longer support the King on the basis of the latter's comments that, "General Primo has allowed us to leap over the Constitution," as they suggested to him that Spain was now subject to an absolute monarchy.<sup>193</sup> Primo took advantage of the censorship laws which he had introduced in 1923 to publish his own views on the matter in a *nota oficiosa* (informal note) which was inserted into newspapers alongside Sánchez Guerra's letter. In it, he retorted:

To suggest that we live in a regime of Absolute Monarchy is completely arbitrary, as the King has not taken any steps or initiatives, nor made any determinations that are not endorsed by his current advisors. ... Certainly, some of the Directorate's proposals will have seemed radical to the King, or their text crude, and because of this he has refused to sanction them. As such, we live in a fully *constitutional regime* [my emphasis], which is suspended in part and still of a length that has yet to surpass recent Governments of a civilian nature.<sup>194</sup>

Primo's insistence that the regime remained tied to the constitutional order at this juncture reflects what Julio Aróstegui, in a Schmittian analysis, referred to as 'pseudo-legality' (*pseudo-juridicidad*) when attempting to describe the Franco dictatorship amid the seemingly never-ending debate over its nature in the 1990s.<sup>195</sup> The chief ambition of the Franco regime, in Aróstegui's view, was "to furnish a continuous situation of *illegitimacy* [Aróstegui's emphasis] with *legality*, without, in reality, creating a new law, but rather by basing itself on the longest-established legal ideas, and without even fully discarding elements of liberal law." The purpose of this was "to make an *eternal Spain* which is not a new Spain, rather a '*historic*' one." This was not an attempt to build a new 'social order' by any means. The function of repression, according to Aróstegui, was to restore, not create. For this reason, Francoism was not merely a form of dictatorial repression; it was a calculated and relentlessly pursued attempt to present itself as a legitimate system.<sup>196</sup>

There is a significant tension between the conflicting desires to 'create' and to 'restore' during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. As Gómez Navarro writes, using the terminology of Eric Nordlinger, Primo's administration transitioned from a 'guardian'

<sup>193</sup> Fernando Soldevilla, *El año político (1925)* (Madrid, 1925), 164, 180–82.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>195</sup> Julio Aróstegui, "Opresión y pseudo-juridicidad. De nuevo sobre la naturaleza del franquismo," *Bulletin d'histoire contemporaine de l'Espagne*, no. 24 (1996): 31–46.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 40–42, quotations 40, 41.

to a 'ruler' regime over the course of its existence. The former "intend[s] to correct what are seen to be the malpractices and deficiencies of the previous government," while the latter "attempt[s] the root-and-branch destruction of monarchies, traditional oligarchies, and political parties... Polity, economy, and society are to be penetrated from above."<sup>197</sup> Guardian regimes are characterised by a desire to maintain the *status quo*, something which Primo's publicly supported in his manifesto. At the same time, however, he pursued the destruction of *caciquismo*, while also extending military influence across the government, thus altering the existing conditions of the Restoration. Upon the formation of the *Directorio Civil* in December 1925, the regime abandoned its 'guardian' status and developed a more ambitious programme of economic and political objectives, thereby becoming a 'ruling' regime, even if this project would not fundamentally alter the distribution of power in Spanish society. Notwithstanding his frequent discussion of a return to 'normality,' upon which the institutionalisation of a 'ruling' regime could be based, Primo remained deeply ambivalent about the future of the Constitution until his eventual decision to replace this around 1926-1927. The new Constitution was intended to bring an orderly close to the dictatorship, though, in reality, this never happened, thus perpetuating the state of exception until the regime's collapse in 1930.<sup>198</sup> This left the administration in a constant battle to present itself as legitimate and legal.

The regime surpassed the Restoration governments' obsession with public order, but it is clear that the courts, both civilian and military, did not directly serve the regime to the degree it wished, despite Primo filling them with judges of his own selection, particularly in the *Directorio Civil* period.<sup>199</sup> The topic has yet to be given monographic treatment, but it appears that the lack of a firm connection between the repressive apparatus of state and the courts was one of the greatest limitations to the

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<sup>197</sup> Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera*, 70–71. English citations taken from original: Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 25, 26–27.

<sup>198</sup> See Primo's repeated declarations on this in Miguel Primo de Rivera, *La Dictadura a través de sus notas oficiales*, ed. Dionisio Pérez (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1930), 32, 53–58, 123–26, 184.

<sup>199</sup> Peter Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials: Terror and Complicity, 1939-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Ángela Cenarro, "Matar, vigilar y delatar: la quiebra de la sociedad civil durante la guerra y la posguerra en España (1936-1948)," *Historia Social*, no. 44 (2002): 70–71; Aróstegui, "Opresión y pseudo-juridicidad," 40.

state of exception created by Primo.<sup>200</sup> This did not prevent the regime from repressing its enemies through extra-judicial means, including the widespread use of denunciation in 1923 and 1924 and arbitrary imprisonment, as Chapters Three and Five will outline. As we will see over the course of this thesis also, both the law and the concept of justice became focal points around which ordinary people sought to base their claims to the state authorities, even when they could not cite specific legislation. This highlights the value of the regime's claims to '(pseudo-)legality.'

As González Calleja remarks, until 1926 the regime had acted in the mould of a classical dictatorship, which had largely respected the ideology and regime of liberal-parliamentarism. Thereafter this conservative mentality gave way to the conscious elaboration of a distinctly anti-liberal ideology based on corporativism and state interventionism.<sup>201</sup> A major rhetorical shift occurred in May of that year, when Primo granted his government sweeping powers to repress opposition "with no other limit than what the circumstances and health of the country decide."<sup>202</sup> In the preamble to this, Primo recognised that such measures might not be "adapted to the letter of the law" but overcame this difficulty by declaring in Article 4 of the Decree that, "[t]he constitutional and legal precepts which oppose what this Royal Decree mandates are suspended." Thus, in a *single sentence*, Primo sought to set a new precedent that would ostensibly allow him to alter the entire constitutional framework of the Restoration political system.

In September of the same year, Primo called the *Plebiscito Nacional* (National Plebiscite), which laid the foundations for the creation of the *Asamblea Nacional Consultiva* (National Consultative Assembly) in September 1927, the body which he charged with preparing an *Anteproyecto de Constitución* (Draft Constitution), meant to replace the Constitution of 1876. This would mark a new, liquidationist phase of the dictatorship. The *Asamblea Nacional* was a transitory representative chamber, but not

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<sup>200</sup> Emilio Javier De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del poder judicial durante la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1923-1926): realidad o ficción," *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, no. 85 (2015): 343–75; Emilio Javier De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del poder judicial durante la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1926-1930) y el epílogo de los gobiernos Berenguer y Aznar-Cabañas (1930-1931): Deterioro evidente," *Cuadernos de Historia del Derecho*, no. 22 (2015): 73–100.

<sup>201</sup> González Calleja, "La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo," 51.

<sup>202</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 17/05/1926.



a parliament, and existed alongside the still-suspended *Cortes*.<sup>203</sup> Unsurprisingly, it never served to grant the regime any new legitimacy.<sup>204</sup>

As we will see in Chapter Five, although the *estado de guerra* was lifted in May 1925, albeit barring some brief interludes, the regime continued to introduce punishing, exceptional measures designed to closely regulate public order and repress opposition. This followed a long precedent of Army involvement in policing matters in Spain. The Restoration had been built to keep the military from interfering in politics. This meant giving the Army autonomy over its internal affairs.<sup>205</sup> The activities of the civilian and military parts of the state were organised along the same geographical lines, meaning that the Army occupied a central position in the state administration despite efforts to isolate it. As Ballbé has shown, political continuity was guaranteed by a very close nexus between Restoration elites and the Army, which revolved around frequent recourse to *estados de guerra*.<sup>206</sup> The dictatorship perpetuated this logic through the construction of its own state of exception.

There has been some debate as to whether Primo's seizure of power in September 1923 was a *golpe de estado* (coup d'état) or a *pronunciamiento* (pronouncement) more akin to the military-sponsored changes in government in nineteenth-century Spain.<sup>207</sup> Aside from his decision to order the occupation of a number of official buildings in Cataluña, Primo's seizure of power initially resembled a *pronunciamiento*. On the night of 13-14 September, however, as the rebellion seemed

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<sup>203</sup> The preamble to this made a clear that the Assembly was not equivalent to the *Cortes* and would not share sovereignty with the King. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 14/09/1927.

<sup>204</sup> González Calleja, "La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo," 49.

<sup>205</sup> Gabriel Cardona, *El poder militar en la España contemporánea hasta la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Sigloveintiuno, 1983), 46–49.

<sup>206</sup> Ballbé, *Orden público y militarismo en la España constitucional (1812-1983)*, 225–303.

<sup>207</sup> The former, Finer reminds us, involves violent action against the agencies of power, while the latter occurs when one or more sections of the army declare their opposition to the government, usually from the barracks, and wait for the uncommitted garrisons to indicate if they support this or not. S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (1962; repr., New Brunswick; London: Transaction, 2002), 154–56. Tusell describes the events of 13-14 September, 1923 as a *golpe de estado* in Javier Tusell, *Radiografía de un golpe de estado: el ascenso al poder del general Primo de Rivera* (Madrid: Alianza, 1987). Studies which call the incident a *pronunciamiento* include González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 78–79; Julio Busquets, *El militar de carrera en España; estudio de sociología militar* (Esplugues de Llobregat: Ariel, 1971), 69. Ben-Ami suggests that while the technique of Primo's rebellion resembled that of a *pronunciamiento*, his actions departed from that model due to his intention to govern without political parties. During the Isabelline era, in contrast, the military had always pronounced in favour of some other group, thus never actually ruling directly. Ben-Ami, *Dictadura*, 47–48.

to be losing momentum due to the silence of the King, Primo became anxious and instructed the Captain General of Madrid, Diego Muñoz Cobos, to inform Don Alfonso that he was prepared to take action “of a bloody nature” if the monarch did not give his backing soon.<sup>208</sup> Ultimately, the Army’s response was something of a *pronunciamiento negativo* (negative *pronunciamiento*) in that most sections simply did nothing and waited for the King to make his views known before legitimising the change of government *a posteriori* via their cooperation with the new administration. Thus, Primo’s case lay somewhere between the two methods.<sup>209</sup>

It is clear that since Primo’s seizure of power could not be justified constitutionally, nor on the basis of a military victory, as in the case of Franco, the King, Alfonso XIII, played an essential role in legitimating it. The Constitution of 1876 followed the Moderate tradition of that century by rejecting the notion of popular sovereignty in favour of shared sovereignty (*cosoberanía*) between the *Cortes* and the King. This granted the latter significant powers across the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government. The most important of these was the freedom to choose Ministers in his role as a ‘moderating power.’<sup>210</sup> In September 1923, it was not until Alfonso withdrew his support for García Prieto’s government, thus implicitly siding with Primo in the rebellion, that the coup was assured success.<sup>211</sup> Alfonso’s intervention, therefore, gave the seizure of power the appearance of yet another change of government during the Restoration, which, in line with the Crown’s constitutional responsibilities, had typically come at the King’s behest.<sup>212</sup>

Although no mention of it would be made in the decree which dissolved the elected parts of the *Cortes* on 15 September, 1923, Don Alfonso was making use of the

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<sup>208</sup> Cited in González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 46; González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 72.

<sup>209</sup> González Calleja, “La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo,” 42.

<sup>210</sup> Cabrera, “El rey constitucional,” 87.

<sup>211</sup> While the true extent to which Don Alfonso was informed of Primo and the other generals’ conspiracies in 1923 may be debated, the rattle of sabres had been apparent for some time and the King had certainly contributed to this atmosphere by implying a need to break with constitutionality in two speeches which he gave in Córdoba and Barcelona in 1921 and 1922 respectively. José Luis Gómez-Navarro, “El rey ante la dictadura,” in *Alfonso XIII: un político en el trono*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003), 342–43.

<sup>212</sup> Rafael Cruz, “Dos rebeliones militares en España, 1923 y 1936. La lógica de la guerra política,” *Historia y Política*, no. 5 (2001): 42. Gómez-Navarro, “El rey ante la dictadura,” 347.

faculties granted to the Crown by Article 32 of the Constitution.<sup>213</sup> Crucially, though, the King was obliged to summon these again within three months of their suspension. As one commentator on the regime, Francisco Hernández Mir, rightly argued in 1930, the King's decision to grant Primo's demand that a *Directorio Militar* be formed in place of the *Consejo de Ministros* (Cabinet) had absolutely no constitutional basis.<sup>214</sup> Thus, the moment the new government was formed marked an end to what was once known as the Restoration and the beginning of a new, exceptional situation.<sup>215</sup>

Paradoxically, Alfonso's actions in straying from the Constitution and endorsing the creation of the *Directorio Militar* led to a significant reduction of his own power. By closing the *Cortes* and allowing Primo to rule by decree, Alfonso gave him the power of co-legislation, which had previously been shared between parliament and the Crown. This destroyed the liberal separation of powers. In theory, Alfonso remained absolute arbiter of this process, as Primo only proposed decrees to the former. However, there was no means of resolving disputes between the two figures and Primo often used the fact that their fates had become tied to force the monarch to acquiesce to his demands; there was no longer any possibility of rotating governments, as there had during the Restoration.<sup>216</sup>

The King's role in legitimising Primo's seizure of power was emphasised by the regime's ideologues. José María Pemán cared little for suggestions about legality or illegality and spoke of an "internal constitution, or rather one's own mode of being and living" to which the King had remained loyal ahead of the "paper constitution," which was artificial.<sup>217</sup> José Pemartín, likewise, argued that the dictatorship derived legitimacy from the historic permanence of Spain, which the monarchy had saved from

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<sup>213</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 30/06/1876.

<sup>214</sup> Francisco Hernández Mir, *La dictadura ante la Historia: un crimen de lesa patria* (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1930), 121–22.

<sup>215</sup> Cruz, "Dos rebeliones militares en España, 1923 y 1936. La lógica de la guerra política," 49. In fact, the lack of any kind of precedent to this arrangement led to the absurd scene in which the outgoing Minister of Justice, the Count of López Muñoz, was required to administer Primo's oath of office on the night of 15 September, before immediately being dismissed from the role by the general. These events highlight the regime's pseudo-legal nature at the fringe of the law. González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 46.

<sup>216</sup> Gómez-Navarro, "El rey ante la dictadura," 349–53. González Calleja, "La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo," 45.

<sup>217</sup> Pemán y Pemartín, *El hecho y la idea de la Unión Patriótica*, 326–28.

disintegration.<sup>218</sup> He also denied that the Constitution of 1876 was even a pact between the crown and the Spanish people, insisting instead that it was a *carta otorgada* (charte octroyée).<sup>219</sup> Primo himself wrote that the King's role was to intervene in public life as a moderator in accordance with a Statute or Constitution, but insisted that the government was allowed to suspend these.<sup>220</sup> In a more idiosyncratic approach, Enrique Díaz Retg suggested that the King had acted as a *citizen* as well as the supreme representative of the state in granting Primo power.<sup>221</sup>

These observations raise the questions of how and when the dictatorship formally departed from legality and became a state of permanent exception. In a view that echoes Hernández Mir's, Rafael Salazar Alonso, a future Minister of the Interior during the Republican era, argued that the fact that the regime was brought about by an illegal seizure of power and a decree that suspended parts of the Constitution meant that this break occurred on the very day of its creation, 15 September.<sup>222</sup> In a more recent account, González Calbet places the definitive rupture with constitutionality at 12 November, 1923, when the King refused the request by Melquíades Álvarez and the Count of Romanones, the Speakers of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate respectively, that he re-convene the *Cortes* before the constitutionally-mandated period of 90 days had elapsed.<sup>223</sup> Gómez Navarro and González Calleja agree with this view, but the latter also highlights the formation of the *Directorio Civil* in December 1925 as a moment that "clearly placed the Primo de

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<sup>218</sup> Pemartín, *Valores históricos*, 41.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 34–39.

<sup>220</sup> Primo de Rivera, *Disertación ciudadana*, 17.

<sup>221</sup> Enrique Díaz Retg, *España bajo el nuevo régimen: cinco años de gobierno Primo de Rivera, 1923 - septiembre 1928* (Madrid: Mercurio, 1928), 99.

<sup>222</sup> Rafael Salazar Alonso, *La justicia bajo la Dictadura* (Madrid: Zeus, 1930), 77.

<sup>223</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 122. The following day they were dismissed from their posts by Primo, who had been informed of the meeting by the King. While the legality of Romanones' dismissal may be debated, given that the Speaker of the Senate was appointed at the discretion of the King, there is no doubt that Álvarez's removal was in breach of the law, as the election of the Speaker of the Congress of Deputies corresponded exclusively to the members of that chamber. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 14/11/1923. In his letter in response to Álvarez's and Romanones' request, Primo insisted that the *Cortes* would be reopened once the political system had been made healthy and was able to "base itself on a legitimate representation" of the people. Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 27–30.

Rivera regime on the margin of constitutional legality and set it on the path to a regime of permanent exception.”<sup>224</sup>

To these suggestions we could also add the establishment of the *Asamblea Nacional Consultiva* in September 1927. Undeterred by the King’s hostility to the idea, Primo charged this body with the preparation of the Draft Constitution, which was to be put to the monarch and then to the people for their approval, thus providing the general with the political end he sought to bring to his rule. Although the King ultimately rejected the new constitution, for Calleja, this process too was a pivotal moment as it began a new and clearly liquidationist phase of the dictatorship, thus drawing it further still from legality.<sup>225</sup> The Draft Constitution which the *Asamblea Nacional* eventually proposed in July 1929 was a monstrosity, which displeased even Primo. It envisaged granting the King wide-ranging executive powers and denied the notion of executive responsibility before the legislature. The executive would also be given the capacity to declare states of emergency without restriction and national sovereignty was to be transferred from the King and *Cortes (cosoberanía)* to the state, thereby obscuring its origin totally.<sup>226</sup> The King ultimately refused to even countenance putting the document to the people, while the cabinet was deeply divided by it also. The impossibility of bringing about a constitutional end to the dictatorship highlights its character as a regime of permanent exception.<sup>227</sup>

For the purposes of this study, it is my belief that Hernández Mir’s and Salazar Alonso’s are the most convincing of these assessments, as, putting aside all arguments about the alternatives to the *golpe de estado* in September 1923, that is to say, whether or not the Restoration system was capable of reforming itself, the very illegality of the *Directorio Militar* meant that the regime was immediately engaged in a struggle to establish its legitimacy, something that would continue until its collapse in 1930.<sup>228</sup> Moreover, Primo and his ideologues wrapped the dictatorship in the language

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<sup>224</sup> Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera*, 493; González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 279–80.

<sup>225</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 140.

<sup>226</sup> Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera*, 298–304.

<sup>227</sup> Gómez-Navarro, “El rey ante la dictadura,” 348.

<sup>228</sup> See Quiroga, “Cirujano de Hierro.”

of exceptionality, equally when speaking of its provisional nature as when proposing an alternative to the Restoration political system from 1926-1927 onward.

Despite these observations, the unconstitutionality of the dictatorship did not prevent it from ruling for over six years, even if its legitimacy was steadily eroded during this time. In Italy and Germany, for example, Mussolini and Hitler respectively came to power via largely constitutional means. In Spain this was not the case due to Primo's act of rebellion, but the King's intervention meant that the general's rise to power *mostly* conformed to the logic of Restoration-era changes in government. This seemed to be enough to allow Primo to govern in the first instance and meant that he could base the illegal regime on a semi-suspension of the constitutional order and rule by exceptional means that existed in parallel to this. In certain, critical aspects, therefore, this resembles the 'dual state' posited by Ernst Fraenkel and referred to by Agamben. As the regime struggled to institutionalise itself, the rift between the 'normative' and the 'prerogative' elements of this state became greater and greater, as we will see in the chapters that follow. Very often, ordinary people would attempt to overcome the excesses of the 'prerogative' state through reference to norms, which remained the supreme reference point in their interactions with the state. In the next chapter we will consider how petitions allowed them to make such claims.

## Chapter Two | The history of ordinary writing and petition in Spain and Europe, c. 1870-1930

### Ordinary writing and petitioning in comparative context

Writing underwent a democratisation in Europe in the nineteenth century, thereafter becoming an indispensable feature at every level of society.<sup>1</sup> As Martyn Lyons has written, at this time “writing was becoming mundane rather than magical. It could demonstrate its practical value in the lives of ordinary people.”<sup>2</sup> Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries popular literacy transformed itself into a vast proliferation of ordinary writings that was drafted by the newly-literate masses.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of the analysis that follows here and in the rest of this thesis, by ‘ordinary writings’ I mean “the appropriation and use of an ability (knowing how to write) away from both the places that hold power over its learning... and the institutionalised practices to which it was limited.”<sup>4</sup> It is to one specific form of ordinary writing that this study turns its attention: the petition.<sup>5</sup>

Such a definition may seem to exclude petition from the category of ordinary writing. However, while it is clear that this means of communication was, to some degree, an institutionalised practice in Spain and elsewhere in the world, as will be discussed below, by the twentieth century they were typically written in a spontaneous manner by the supplicant him or herself without prompting by the authorities. Furthermore, many of the formal and often ritualised requirements involved in making a petition, which emerged in the medieval and early-modern eras, had, by then, largely faded away. On the evidence of letter-writing practices of the

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<sup>1</sup> Martyn Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing in the Western World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 171–84.

<sup>2</sup> Martyn Lyons, *The Writing Culture of Ordinary People in Europe, c. 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

<sup>3</sup> By popular literacy I mean the actual *use* of reading and writing skills by the large sections of the population in their daily lives, rather than the mere *ability* to read and write. Lyons refers to the latter as *mass* literacy. *Ibid.*, 170–221.

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Castillo Gómez, “De la suscripción a la necesidad de escribir,” in *La conquista del alfabeto: escritura y clases populares*, ed. Antonio Castillo Gómez (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2002), 23.

<sup>5</sup> For reasons which I will make clear in Chapter Three, I include denunciations within this broad category as well.

Spanish population during the dictatorship, it was an accepted and often mundane feature of everyday life in the 1920s.

It is only recently that historians have turned their attention to the writings of the ordinary people who were becoming literate from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Previously they had primarily engaged with the social strata for whom writing came easily: the educated middle classes, comprising professionals, state bureaucrats and bourgeois families.<sup>6</sup> Such an approach was certainly justified, for these were the groups that left the records most typically found in archives. What, though, of the apparently ‘silent masses’ to whom the social historians often referred?<sup>7</sup>

We have already discussed some of the limitations in the work of the first wave of history-from-below scholars, though not in the context of ordinary writing. The French *Annales* School, for example, paid little attention to the written culture of the anonymous poor, preferring instead to examine their lives on a collective basis. The British neo-Marxist school of Eric Hobsbawm and E.P. Thompson, amongst others, though they sought to restore a sense of power and agency to the working classes, preferred to focus on public action, rather than private lives.<sup>8</sup> More recently, researchers writing since the cultural and linguistic turns in the humanities have been accused of failing to give sufficient consideration to the social frameworks in which these writings were produced.<sup>9</sup>

The ‘new’ history from below, as described by Van Ginderachter and Beyen, has shown a special interest in the history of ordinary writing.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the trends in social history which preceded it, Lyon remarks, it is “more sensitive to the

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<sup>6</sup> Lyons, *Writing Culture*, 1–2.

<sup>7</sup> Andreas Würzler, “Voices from among the ‘Silent Masses’: Humble Petitions and Social Conflicts in Early Modern Central Europe,” in *Petitions in Social History*, ed. Lex Heerma van Voss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11.

<sup>8</sup> Lyons, *Writing Culture*, 15. As I have already outlined in Chapter One, I do not consider this strict public/private distinction to be analytically useful.

<sup>9</sup> Antonio Castillo Gómez, “Los manuales epistolares: entre el uso y la representación,” in *Aprender a escribir cartas. Los manuales epistolares en la España contemporánea (1927-1945)*, by Verónica Sierra Blas (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2003), 15. For a concise overview of the historiography concerning ordinary writing see Verónica Sierra Blas, *Aprender a escribir cartas. Los manuales epistolares en la España contemporánea* (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2003), 28–34.

<sup>10</sup> Van Ginderachter and Beyen, *Nationhood from Below*.



voices of the poor. ... It searches for the personal and private voices of ordinary people, and it considers ordinary readers and writers as active agents in the shaping of their own lives and cultures."<sup>11</sup> A focus on these dimensions does not imply a retreat from issues of a wider significance, like questions of national identity, for example. In fact, occurrences related to these topics – war, conscription, displacement, for example - very often provided the very reasons which motivated ordinary people to take up their pen and write in diaries, letters and other formats. "Industrialisation and modernity," Lyons writes, "challenged the social identities of peasants and workers. Just at the moment when social evolution made them feel like anonymous parts in an impersonal machine, they started to write, in order to re-assert their individuality in a changing and unstable world."<sup>12</sup> Echoing this view, Castillo Gómez has called writing an "instrument of survival" to which ordinary people have turned in response to new and challenging experiences.<sup>13</sup> Ordinary writings, "represent true acts of memory, triggered, in general, by the intensity of lived experiences and by a will not to abandon them to silence."<sup>14</sup> During the dictatorship in Spain, writing spontaneously to the government became an important symbol of ordinary people's desire not to be forgotten by those in power, a theme that would occur in many letters.

Since the Transition to democracy in Spain, the process of rehabilitating the history of the 'defeated' in the Spanish Civil War has led to considerable interest in popular voices and ordinary writing in the *franquista* 'New State.' "Social history 'from below,' popular history, the history of social movements (not just the workers' movement), women's history (and later gender history) and the history of the poor and marginalised, amongst other things," Gómez Castillo and Montero García write, "are playing an decisive role in the recovery of the memory of the defeated, the victims of reprisal, the purged and the exiled from the war and the Francoist dictatorship."<sup>15</sup> If we wish to take seriously the claim that the Primo de Rivera regime

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<sup>11</sup> Lyons, *Writing Culture*, 16.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Antonio Castillo Gómez, "Tras la huella escrita de la gente común," in *La cultura escrita y clases subalternas: una mirada española*, ed. Antonio Castillo Gómez (Guipúzcoa: Sendoa, S.A., 2001), 22–23.

<sup>14</sup> Castillo Gómez, "De la suscripción a la necesidad de escribir," 37.

<sup>15</sup> Antonio Castillo Gómez and Feliciano Montero García, "Prólogo," in *Franquismo y memoria popular. Escrituras, voces y representaciones*, ed. Antonio Castillo Gómez and Feliciano Montero García (Madrid: Siete Mares, 2003), 10.

really did, as the historiography on the topic has suggested since the 1980s, prefigure the later Franco dictatorship, then it is essential that we recover the voices of the ordinary people who lived through this repression, both as victims and perpetrators. Reflecting on the nature of that repression, Castillo Gómez has argued that “one of the effects pursued by all kinds of dictatorship and repressive institution, especially when these respond to an ideology, involves the negation of the subject, the depersonalisation of the individual, followed by the will to create a different person, the ‘new man.’”<sup>16</sup> The value of reading and writing in such situations is clear: they offer ways of “combating that negation, transcending captivity and resisting the so-called re-education.”<sup>17</sup>

Petitions, the broad category of document upon which this thesis is based, are understood here as “demands for a favour, or for the redressing of an injustice, directed to some established authority.”<sup>18</sup> These may be written by an individual, or by a group or collective, as we often understand the term nowadays. The nature of these documents will be discussed in greater detail in the chapters which follow, though for now we can make the following observations. Petitions have long been a feature of human civilisation. Even the most authoritarian governments tended to make use of them as a source of information on popular feeling.<sup>19</sup> These served as a window into the mind of the general population, which statesmen and bureaucrats could consult. Behind the deferential façade, however, lurked an implicit threat that hinted at anything between malicious compliance and open revolt. Yet they could also offer the

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<sup>16</sup> Antonio Castillo Gómez, “Escribir para no morir. La escritura en las cárceles franquistas,” in *Franquismo y memoria popular. Escrituras, voces y representaciones*, ed. Antonio Castillo Gómez and Feliciano Montero García (Madrid: Siete Mares, 2003), 20.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>18</sup> Lex Heerma van Voss, ed., *Petitions in Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>19</sup> There is a burgeoning literature on the history of petitions during the dictatorship of the twentieth century. On the Soviet, German, Italian and Spanish cases respectively, see, for example Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Supplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s,” *Slavic Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 78–105; John Connelly, “The Uses of Volksgemeinschaft: Letters to the NSDAP Kreisleitung Eisenach, 1939–1940,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 899–930; Anne Wingenter, “Voices of Sacrifice: Letters to Mussolini and Ordinary Writing under Fascism,” in *Ordinary Writing, Personal Narratives: Writing Practices in 19th and Early 20th-Century Europe*, ed. Martyn Lyons (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2007), 155–72; Christopher Duggan, “The Internalisation of the Cult of the Duce: The Evidence of Diaries and Letters,” in *The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians*, ed. Stephen Gundle, Christopher Duggan, and Giuliana Pieri (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 129–43; Antonio Cazorla Sánchez, *Cartas a Franco de los españoles de a pie* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2014).

state a means of forming coalitions with the population to outmanoeuvre intermediate power-holders and thus strengthen its position, as was the case in Spain during the Primo de Rivera regime's short assault on *caciquismo* in 1923 and 1924.<sup>20</sup>

Petitions, admittedly, are potentially problematic as sources on the everyday lives of their writers. They cannot, for instance, be regarded as pure 'ego-documents,' that is, sources which offer privileged information about the 'self' or 'selves' that produced them.<sup>21</sup> As Würgler notes, they are embedded in a functional context and, though this was more common in the early-modern period, they often followed established rules, which may have been laid down in ordinances. Furthermore, in eras in which mass literacy had not yet been established petitions were frequently translated from oral to written language by intermediaries, like professional scribes or literate family members, naturally leading to some doubt as to who exactly is being read in a petition, a topic to which we will return in due course.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, sources of this nature have very infrequently been designated petitions by their authors, their recipients and those who archived them (be this in a formal or an informal capacity). As such, a variety of names have been used to describe them, often according to the political climate in which they were written.<sup>23</sup> Petitioners also had reason to tell only one side of the story. As one particularly well-known study on the topic makes clear, petitions very often contained fictive elements, much like other autobiographical sources.<sup>24</sup>

Petitioning may seem like the relic of a traditional society, a proxy for audiences with the kings of the Hebrew Bible or the *gravamina* of the *Ancien Régime*, which has now lost some of its former significance. Yet, as Heerma van Voss argues, "the right to petition could easily develop into a crystallization point for other popular

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<sup>20</sup> Heerma van Voss, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Fulbrook and Ulinka Rublack, "In Relation: The 'Social Self' and Ego-Documents," *German History* 28, no. 3 (2010): 263. A discussion of ego-documents as objects of historical investigation in Kaspar von Greyerz, "Ego-Documents: The Last Word?," *German History* 28, no. 3 (2010): 273–82.

<sup>22</sup> Würgler, "Voices from among the 'Silent Masses,'" 32.

<sup>23</sup> The terms used to describe petitions are discussed in some detail in Würgler, "Voices from among the 'Silent Masses.'"

<sup>24</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987).

rights.”<sup>25</sup> It is for this reason that the act of petitioning became tied to the rise of constitutionalism in the (late-) eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe, in time coming to be recognised in nearly all of the world’s democratic constitutions.<sup>26</sup> In Spain the situation was no different. In the nineteenth century, “the petition formed part of revolutionary politics, but did not fade away there.”<sup>27</sup> Instead, it was progressively institutionalised in the constitutions which emerged during the long struggle over the nature of the liberal state, beginning with that of 1837.<sup>28</sup> Despite its generally conservative outlook, the Restoration Constitution of 1876, which was in force at the time of Primo de Rivera’s seizure of power in 1923, incorporated a number of innovations relating to petitioning from both the post-Glorious Revolution Constitution of 1869 and the Republican Draft Constitution of 1873. Article 13 of the 1876 charter, like that of 1869, granted “all Spaniards” the right “to direct petitions, on an individual or collective basis, to the King, the Cortes and the authorities,” although this was prohibited to members of the Armed Forces in 1876.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the 1869 Constitution, the 1876 version did not limit its definition of legitimate petitions to those presented in written form, a provision that had first been proposed in 1873. During the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, Article 13 of the Constitution was formally suspended, though, crucially, this was limited to its first three paragraphs only (the freedoms of public expression, gathering and association).<sup>30</sup> Thus, petitioning government remained a perfectly legal, and, indeed, tolerated, feature of Spanish society during this period. In fact, as this thesis will make clear, it became an essential and often dynamic form of communication between the regime and the population, even as the former imposed increasingly severe curtailments on civil rights, particularly as it entered its decline from 1927 onward.

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<sup>25</sup> Heerma van Voss, “Introduction,” 3. Margaret R. Somers, “Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere: Law, Community, and Political Culture in the Transition to Democracy,” *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 5 (October 1993): 587–620.

<sup>26</sup> Antonio M. García Cuadrado, “El derecho de petición,” *Revista de Derecho Político*, no. 32 (1991): 122.

<sup>27</sup> Diego Palacios Cerezales, “Ejercer derechos: reivindicación, petición y conflicto,” in *La España liberal (1833-1874)*, ed. María Cruz Romero and María Sierra (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2014), 262.

<sup>28</sup> A brief summary of these developments can be read in Lucrecio Rebollo Delgado, “El derecho de petición,” *Revista de Derecho Político*, no. 53 (2002): 83–87.

<sup>29</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 02/07/1876.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 17/09/1923

At a general level, I use Sheila Fitzpatrick's term 'public letters' to describe the petitions and denunciations that were sent to Primo de Rivera between 1923 and 1930.<sup>31</sup> These communications occupy a sort of intermediate space between society, down below, and the authorities, up above; between the public and private realms, despite what their name would suggest. As in Soviet Russia during the 1930s, the focus of Fitzpatrick's work, most of the letters sent to the government in Spain during the dictatorship were written by single authors, rather than by groups or associations. Thus, in Spain, as in Russia, "'public' letter-writing was essentially a form of individual, private communication with the authorities on topics both private and public."<sup>32</sup> Modifying Fitzpatrick's thinking a little to better suit the Spanish case, this suggests that the writing and reading of such letters constitutes an essential element of the public sphere that is truncated under the dictatorship. It is through this medium that the population could make the claims and engage in the practice essential to *being* citizens. Most of the letters sent to Primo, *even denunciations*, were signed by their authors. As in Russia, these also tended to demonstrate a paternalistic construction of authority, like the one promoted by the regime, typically while invoking universal concepts like justice and compassion. Although some presented themselves according to conventional social stereotypes, many others emphasised their individuality and related vivid and highly personal histories.<sup>33</sup>

Why, then, should a state pay any heed to these demands? Firstly, any state, no matter how authoritarian it may be, must make some ideological claim to rule on some or other element of the population's behalf. It must therefore take popular opinion into account.<sup>34</sup> Yet these interactions between ruler and ruled also have a legitimising function. Legitimacy, as we saw in Chapter One, is an obsession of dictatorial states, which present themselves in 'pseudo-legal' terms in order to make a claim to this. As André Holenstein points out, recent research carried out from a from-

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<sup>31</sup> Fitzpatrick, "Suplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s."

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>34</sup> Here I echo Corner's concern that using the term "public opinion," instead of my choice of "popular opinion," would suggest the kind of pluralistic debate within the public sphere of civil society that authoritarian regimes sought to eliminate. Paul Corner, "Introduction," in *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism*, ed. Paul Corner (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2.

below perspective into the process of state-formation in Europe has highlighted how the state “did not stand above and outside society acting upon it, but was closely engaged with it, the routines of administration being conducted within a much larger web of social relations and expectations.”<sup>35</sup> According to this view, the state emerged not from the concerted efforts of modernising elites but

from the initiative of officeholders and all the other local actors, who were able to influence and instrumentalise it for their interests. This state was the outcome of a multitude of practices, which succeeded in transforming individual and group interests into court judgements, laws or administrative measures, so that these particular interests gained authoritative validity and legitimacy.<sup>36</sup>

This vision has clear parallels with Somers’ definition of citizenship as an ‘instituted process,’ as outlined in Chapter One.<sup>37</sup> Holenstein proposes a model for the communicative process between state representatives and members of society which he denominates ‘empowering interactions.’ This holds that the *exercise* of the state’s power has a strong reciprocal effect on its *authority* to do so. By appealing to state representatives or institutions to take action, by petition, for example, “groups or individuals also accepted them as sources of legitimate authority and power;” if their request was granted then these petition-makers “gained the authoritatively sanctioned support of the state,” thus becoming invested with its legitimacy and power themselves.<sup>38</sup> These indications of tacit support from the state could then be used by these groups or individuals in their competing interactions with others. As the state came to be invoked more formally as a mediator in disputes amongst these different interest groups, it became infused with legal-bureaucratic authority, which it then used in other contexts, but not necessarily due to the conscious initiative of the power-holders. The effect of this was to legitimate the state and the demands it made of the population as a feature in everyday life.

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<sup>35</sup> André Holenstein, “Introduction: Empowering Interactions: Looking at Statebuilding from Below,” in *Empowering Interactions: Political Cultures and the Emergence of the State in Europe, 1300-1900*, ed. Willem Pieter Blockmans, André Holenstein, and Jon Mathieu (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 25.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Somers, “Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere.”

<sup>38</sup> Holenstein, “Introduction,” 26.

### Representations of authority

The petitionary format requires letter-writers to mix expressions of deference with other elements of formal rhetoric. As de Costa writes, not only are petitions recognitions and appeals to authority, they are “implicit descriptions of moral worlds in which particular claims are sensible and legitimate. Thus petitions act to articulate the identity and status of the petitioner and that of authority in a shared moral order.” Even so, these often rely on an enlarged vision of morality in order to justify themselves.<sup>39</sup> Also implicit in expressions of grievance is the expectation that rulers will reconsider and choose to act benevolently by overruling a previous decision, usually one that has been taken in another centre of power. The rationale behind this is that the petitioner’s case is somehow an exception, be this due to some extraordinary circumstance or the misapplication of a law or norm. The solutions they require are, therefore, typically extra-judicial and beyond the operation of standardised bureaucratic procedure.

This presented the authorities with administrative problems. The new forms of interaction which the *primorriverista* regime demanded from citizens – like the need to present administrative complaints in public arenas, which will be described in Chapter Three - were meant to replace the mediation of middlemen like *caciques*, who dispensed favours and state resources to their clients on a largely *ad hoc* basis. The petitions sent to the authorities, however, sat at an intersection between traditional views of norms and obligations and more formalised rights. This was certainly exacerbated by the state of exception which existed in Spain as this seemed to attack the very rights attached to citizenship. Many of these petitions relied on traditional constructions of authority, which assigned the benevolent leader, Primo de Rivera, a role in dispensing largesse or correcting the disorders in justice.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the most striking thing about the letters sent to Primo is the sense of his accessibility, despite the regime’s efforts to ‘charmatise’ him as an exceptional,

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<sup>39</sup> Ravi De Costa, “Identity, Authority, and the Moral Worlds of Indigenous Petitions,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 03 (2006): 670.

<sup>40</sup> Indeed, this was also the case with Franco, as the letters sent to him by the population show. See Cazorla Sánchez, *Cartas a Franco de los españoles de a pie*.

Providential figure.<sup>41</sup> There was, however, a long tradition of writing to military figures in Spain.<sup>42</sup> Letters were invariably addressed directly to Primo himself, rather than to faceless government offices. Of course, this made perfect sense within the practice of petition. Primo, after all, was the supreme representative of the state administration, particularly so as the dictatorship concentrated so much power in his hands.<sup>43</sup> It is also clear that there was a low threshold for petitioning him. People wrote for diverse reasons and in many different formats, even within the petitionary genre. For some, writing a letter to the general was a speculative activity, which might or might not bring some kind of reward. Because of this, they gave it little time or thought. For others, it clearly required a herculean effort to gather the resources, both material and intellectual, needed in order to draft and dispatch such a missive.

Primo encouraged this feeling by issuing his *notas oficiosas* (informal notes), the press communiqués of mandatory publication, which he sent to newspapers as much as twice per week in order to explain his decisions. These were not monologues that were simply *directed* at the Spanish people, as has been suggested, however.<sup>44</sup> Petitioners very often made reference to these short articles, as well as to Primo's speeches and even the preambles to the laws which he introduced. The dictator also deliberately cultivated an image of being concerned for the popular classes, even if there was some paternalistic sincerity behind this. Famously, he intervened to stop an eviction which he witnessed from his car and twice ordered that budget surpluses be spent on redeeming the bedding of the poor from pawn shops.<sup>45</sup>

The representations of Primo in these letters also highlight lingering notions of regality in public representation of power, even in the twentieth century. It has been remarked that fascist paternalism was more limited in Italy than in Germany because

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<sup>41</sup> On propagandistic representations of Primo see Quiroga, "Cirujano de Hierro." Duggan also observes this of Mussolini. Duggan, "The Cult of the Duce," 129.

<sup>42</sup> Adrian Shubert, "Being – and Staying – Famous in 19th-Century Spain: Baldomero Espartero and the Birth of Political Celebrity," *Historia y Política. Ideas, Procesos y Movimientos Sociales*, no. 34 (2015): 211–37.

<sup>43</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, most petitions were directed to the Grand Vizier, rather than the Sultan. Yuval Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan: Protests and Justice in Late Ottoman Palestine, 1865-1908* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 48.

<sup>44</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 33.

<sup>45</sup> James H. Rial, *Revolution from Above: The Primo de Rivera Dictatorship in Spain, 1923-1930* (London: Associated University Presses, 1986), 68.



Mussolini had to vie with a monarch, Victor Emmanuel III, for the role of father to the nation.<sup>46</sup> Hitler, in comparison, only had to cohabit briefly with President von Hindenburg, who was partly charismatised in his own right, until the latter's death in August 1934.<sup>47</sup> Yet, in contrast to the near omnipresence of Primo in these letters, there was an absence of all but the most cursory reference to the King, Alfonso XII. In general, when Don Alfonso was indeed mentioned, he was invoked only as a symbol of loyalty, much like the flag, rather than as a direct political actor who could improve a petitioner's circumstance. Primo thus challenged the King for the role of what Nubola has called "father, judge, legislator, and reference point of justice and of fairness, to whom subjects [could] turn."<sup>48</sup> Even if this notion of kingly dispensation may represent a remnant from a more traditional society, it was also strategy which a citizen could use to navigate and, ultimately, overcome a potentially confusing, ineffective and erratic bureaucratic structure, particularly one which, as the regime never tired of informing them, had been usurped by *caciques*.

The absence of the King from the letters sent to Primo does not mean to say that there was no culture of petition to the Spanish monarchy. Reaching a deeper understanding of how the treatment of Primo in petitions compared to that of Alfonso, however, is hampered by the fact that few of the letters directed by ordinary people to the King at this time survive today.<sup>49</sup> From the small sample available to researchers now, it is clear that those who did decide to petition the King specifically made use of a similar petitioning schema, which emphasised the paternal character of the monarch as well. In this way, the public image of the Spanish crown matches those of the other liberal monarchies in Europe, which, since the eighteenth century, had come to be

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<sup>46</sup> Luigi Zoja, *The Father: Historical, Psychological and Cultural Perspectives* (Sussex: Routledge, 2013), 197.

<sup>47</sup> Aristotle A. Kallis, "Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charimatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic Domination' and Interwar European Fascism," *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions* 7, no. 1 (June 2006): 35.

<sup>48</sup> Cecilia Nubola, "Supplications between Politics and Justice: The Northern and Central Italian States in the Early Modern Age," in *Petitions in Social History*, ed. Lex Heerma van Voss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 36–37.

<sup>49</sup> For petitions of a general nature readers may consult the materials held in the Royal Palace, Madrid. See Archivo General de Palacio, Reinados: Alfonso XIII, 'Remitentes particulares' & 'Anónimos y locos.' On the image of Alfonso XIII in the decade after his coronation see Javier Moreno Luzón, "Alfonso el Regenerador. Monarquía escénica e imaginario nacionalista español, en perspectiva comparada (1902-1913)," *Hispania* 73, no. 244 (2013): 319–48.

presented as the servants of their people.<sup>50</sup> That Primo and the King were, for the most part, treated in the same manner in the petitions sent to them at this time suggests that the former was able to mine into the traditional form of legitimation represented by Alfonso. This is supported by the manner in which Alfonso's popularity declined sharply with that of the dictator in the final stages of the regime.<sup>51</sup>

The propaganda which focused on presenting Primo as a man of providence, sent to save the nation in its time of need, translated into strong paternalistic feeling within the population. Petitioners consistently made use of the image of the general as a father figure in their letters. "The Most Excellent President of the Directorate is the common father to all and most of all to the helpless," wrote one widow from a rural village in León early in the regime.<sup>52</sup> Another woman, whose husband had been dismissed from his role as municipal Secretary, insisted shortly before the fifth anniversary of the regime that he be given a pardon on the occasion because "[General Primo de Rivera] has been more than a father to us all [and] I want that day to be a day of happiness in my home."<sup>53</sup> Others identified with Primo because he was a parent like them. A doctor, who sought to obtain the release of his son, a communist, from prison, excused himself for taking up Primo's time because "[Your Excellency], who is also a father, will not be shocked if I distract your attention... in the observance of my duty."<sup>54</sup> Other petitions made declarations that implied rather implausible parentage. A prisoner, who was being held in Valencia, noted in his request for a

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<sup>50</sup> Maarten Van Ginderachter, "Public Transcripts of Royalism. Pauper Letters to the Belgian Royal Family (1880-1940)," in *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 224. Luzón suggests that this image was most dominant in Spain between Alfonso's coronation in 1902 and 1913. After this point, Alfonso's interventions in politics became more and more frequent, resulting in repeated polemics. Javier Moreno Luzón, "¿'El Rey de todos los españoles'? Monarquía y nación," in *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX* (Barcelona: RBA, 2013), 18, <http://tinyurl.com/hcwzozu>.

<sup>51</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 382–83. Gómez-Navarro, "El rey ante la dictadura."

<sup>52</sup> Original: "El Excmo. Sr. Presidente del Directorio es el padre común de todos y sobre todo de los desvalidos," wrote one widow from a rural village in León early in the regime. AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3569, 26/01/1924.

<sup>53</sup> Original: Another woman, whose husband had been dismissed from his role as municipal Secretary, insisted shortly before the fifth anniversary of the regime that he be given a pardon on the occasion because "[el General Primo de Rivera] ha sido más que Padre para todos [y] quiero ese día sea un día de alegría en mi hogar." AHN, Primo, Bundle 78, File 13969, 03/09/1928.

<sup>54</sup> Original: One doctor, who sought to obtain the release of his son, a communist, from prison, excused himself for taking up Primo's time because "VE que también es padre no estrañará seguramente que distraiga su detención... en cumplimiento de mi deber." AHN, Primo, Bundle 79, File 14888, 13/04/1929.

pardon that he considered Primo to be the “only and true... father of our beloved mother Spain.”<sup>55</sup>

The power dynamics that exist between subordinates and dominants often require that both parties engage in deliberate misrepresentations which help to smooth relations between them. During these interactions subordinates are required to engage in elements of public performance which they shape in order to appeal or appear to conform to the expectations of the dominant.<sup>56</sup> One such discursive strategy is what Arjun Appadurai calls ‘coercive subordination.’ This is an ostentatious display of deference which implies hierarchical dependence and, therefore, entitles the giver of this deference to kindness and compassion. This means that there is a certain power to compel in these performances of subordination, as Cody notes.<sup>57</sup>

In Córdoba, a teenager, who contacted Primo to request a place in the local sanatorium, complained that despite coming from an otherwise comfortable family he had been relegated to the unhygienic house of a neighbour by his parents since contracting tuberculosis. He asked that Primo grant him the grace of his “magnánimo corazón” (kind heart) and secure him a hospital bed so that he could some day serve his King and *Patria* in the Army.<sup>58</sup> To deny this request, his letter implied, would be to rob the nation-at-arms of one of its sons. Similarly, an orphan girl, who had been bedridden in a provincial hospital since an accident two years before, suggested that she had not hesitated in writing to Primo due to his “proverbial benevolence and kind heart.” “If you take pity on me,” she added, “I will await your reply in this hospital with confidence.”<sup>59</sup> Again, this situation seemed to rely on a personal willingness to take action in the letter-writer’s case. While imagery of this nature was common to

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<sup>55</sup> Original: A prisoner, who was being held in Valencia, noted in his request for a pardon that he considered Primo to be the “único y verdadero padre... de nuestra querida madre España.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 73, File 11947, 03/02/1927.

<sup>56</sup> This is the central thesis in James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

<sup>57</sup> Francis Cody, “Inscribing Subjects to Citizenship: Petitions, Literacy Activism, and the Performativity of Signature in Rural Tamil India,” *Cultural Anthropology* 24, no. 3 (2009): 363. Appadurai cited in same source.

<sup>58</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 78, File 14038, 18/09/1928.

<sup>59</sup> Original: Similarly, an orphan girl, who had been bedridden in a provincial hospital since an accident two years before, suggested that she had not hesitated in writing to Primo due to his “proverbial benevolencia, y buen corazón.” “Si se compadece de mí,” she added, “espero confiada su contestación en este hospital.” AHN, Primo, Box 80, File 15045, 18/05/1929.

petitions world-over, reference to Primo's generous heart suggested a robust constitution, which contrasted starkly to decadent Spain and the sick bodies of the impoverished letter-writers who contacted him in great number. The reality, or course, is that Primo was a diabetic and that the condition, combined with his unrestrained sweet tooth, would send him to a premature grave aged 60 in March 1930.<sup>60</sup>

### **Literacy and mass nationalisation**

As Lyons observes, Eugen Weber's influential work on the process of nationalisation in France neglected the writings of peasants.<sup>61</sup> The masses, in his view, were illiterate and inarticulate, politically at least, before a national identity was imposed on them by the government of the Third Republic.<sup>62</sup> Yet as Weber makes clear, linguistic homogenisation, and the elimination of 'patois,' in particular, was an essential element of the nationalisation process both in France and in other states.<sup>63</sup> It is unusual that little reference is made in the book to the evolution of literacy rates, something that must surely be regarded as a key factor in this process. It is no coincidence, then, that anthropologist and historian James C. Scott makes a literacy metaphor central to his theory of state-imposed 'legibility;' that is the attempts made by the state "to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion."<sup>64</sup> "The premodern state was," he writes, "in many crucial respects, partially blind; it knew nothing about its subjects, their wealth, their landholding and yields, their location, their very identity."<sup>65</sup> To counter this, he argues, the modern state initiated processes like the creation of permanent last names, the standardisation of weights and measures, the establishment of cadastral

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<sup>60</sup> There has been some discussion over the role of Primo's fondness for drink in his death, especially considering Gerald Brenan's oft-quoted characterisation of Primo as being from "a hard-drinking, whoring, horse-loving aristocracy." Capella, his biographer, denied that he drank much, however. His real vice seems to have been cake. Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (1943; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 79. Jacinto Capella, *La verdad de Primo de Rivera: intimidaciones y anécdotas del dictador* (Madrid: Imprenta Hijos de T. Minuesa, 1933), 101–2.

<sup>61</sup> Lyons, *Writing Culture*, 6.

<sup>62</sup> Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), xi–xii.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 67–94.

<sup>64</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

surveys and population registers, the invention of freehold tenure, the standardization of language and legal discourse, the design of cities, and the organization of transportation as a means of simplifying the procedures of government and making their subjects and citizens more 'legible' to those carrying out these tasks. These simplifications became the basis of modern statecraft.<sup>66</sup> Significantly for the purposes of this thesis, language occupied a central position in this project. Indeed, the imposition of a single, official language may have been the most powerful simplification of all, upon which many others rested.<sup>67</sup> Reflecting on the case in France, Scott writes:

The campaign of linguistic centralization was assured of some success since it went hand in hand with an expansion of state power. By the late nineteenth century, dealing with the state was unavoidable for all but a small minority of the population. Petitions, court cases, school documents, applications, and correspondence with officials were all of necessity written in French. One can hardly imagine a more effective formula for immediately devaluing local knowledge and privileging all those who had mastered the official linguistic code. It was a gigantic shift in power.<sup>68</sup>

The Spanish case is somewhat more complex than the French one to which Scott, citing Weber, refers due to the emergence of regionalisms and peripheral nationalisms, both of which were tied to linguistic revivals, at the end of the nineteenth century. Yet, as Mar-Molinero argues, in the nineteenth century Castilian (Spanish) was "indisputably the national language" of Spain. "In fact," she adds, "it is strange to note that there is arguably more uniformity and acceptance of this national marker than many others, with constant political struggles challenging the continuing efforts to create a sense of Spanish nationhood which might be shared by all."<sup>69</sup> Despite the crisis in national identity brought on by the loss of empire in 1898, Castilian became a central marker of national identity in the first half of the twentieth century, both in the ruminations of the Generation of '98 intellectuals spawned by the

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<sup>66</sup> Scott regards these simplifications as relatively unremarkable in and of themselves. When they are combined with what he calls a "high-modernist ideology," in an authoritarian state that is willing to carry out these high-modernist designs and where civil society is unable to resist these plans, however, certain "development fiascos" are made possible. While this is an intriguing idea, unfortunately, we cannot delve into it further here. *Ibid.*, 4–6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>69</sup> Clare Mar-Molinero, *The Politics of Language in the Spanish-Speaking World: From Colonisation to Globalisation* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 23.

Disaster and in the nationalist discourse promoted by the state.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, it is notorious that both of Spain's dictatorships in the twentieth century were hostile to political expressions of regionalism and sought to impose Castilian as the language of government and society. Weber's (and, therefore, Scott's) view on linguistic homogenisation rests on a modernist and somewhat deterministic view of history, which is hampered by the co-existence (rather than mere persistence) of what they might regard as 'traditional' practices, alongside the 'modernising' simplifications imposed by the state.<sup>71</sup> In linguistic terms, however, it is worth pointing out that in my time researching in the Spanish state archives I encountered *no* instances of letters written in *any* of the languages now classified by the Spanish state or its Autonomous Communities as 'co-official' (Basque, Catalan/Valencian/Balearic, Galician and Aranese) or 'recognised' (Aragonese or Asturian/Leonese), a clear sign of the discursive dominance of the Castilian language during the dictatorship. It is not clear if the central government received letters in any of these regional languages and simply chose not to archive them, or whether none were ever written.

Interpreting literacy rates is notoriously complicated and, because of this, there exists a considerable literature on the subject.<sup>72</sup> In Spain, data of this nature was recorded for the first time in the census of 1860, although over the decades that followed the type of information that was collected would change, as would the manner in which it was broken down. It is nevertheless quite clear from this information that the literacy rate in Spain remained low until the mid-twentieth century when compared to its European neighbours.<sup>73</sup> Before 1887, censuses did not take age into account when breaking down literacy rates. For this reason, Vilanova and Ribas and Moreno Juliá, from whose work I draw my figures, use this as their starting point. The five censuses between 1887 and 1930, which are shown below, were structured in a similar manner and asked similar questions in relation to literacy levels. As we will see, from 1887 onward, there was an increase in literacy levels nationally;

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 23–25.

<sup>71</sup> Fernando Molina Aparicio, "¿Realmente la nación vino a los campesinos? Peasants into Frenchmen y el 'debate Weber' en Francia y España," *Historia Social*, no. 62 (2008): 78–102..

<sup>72</sup> An overview of this can be read in Mercedes Vilanova Ribas and Xavier Moreno Juliá, *Atlas de la evolución del analfabetismo en España de 1887 a 1981* (Madrid: CIDE, Centro de Publicaciones del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1992), 65–67..

<sup>73</sup> The reasons for this are discussed in Ibid., 71–75..

until 1920 this was gradual, whereupon it accelerated. Illiteracy continued to affect a greater proportion of the female population throughout this period, as was the case in most other countries. Between 1887 and 1940 (the first census after the dictatorship and the regimes that followed it), there were on average between 1.4 and 1.6 illiterate women for each illiterate man.<sup>74</sup> The most relevant data can be represented as follows, beginning with the crudest figures:

**Table 1: Population levels in Spain by census year<sup>75</sup>**

Census	Population (in thousands)			Population 10 years or older (in thousands)			Illiterate population (in thousands)		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>1887</b>	17,560	8,608	8,952	13,534	6,569	6,965	8,766	3,399	5,367
<b>1900</b>	18,594	9,072	9,522	14,324	6,917	7,407	8,400	3,263	5,136
<b>1910</b>	19,927	9,674	10,253	15,241	7,309	7,932	7,931	3,084	4,848
<b>1920</b>	21,303	10,316	10,988	16,732	8,015	8,718	7,317	2,851	4,467
<b>1930</b>	23,564	11,498	12,066	18,394	8,872	9,522	5,871	2,142	3,729

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 168.

**Table 2: Rates of illiteracy in Spain by census year<sup>76</sup>**

Census	Total Rate of Illiteracy (%)	Male Rate of Illiteracy (%)	Female Rate of Illiteracy (%)
<b>1887</b>	65	52	77
<b>1900</b>	59	47	69
<b>1910</b>	52	42	61
<b>1920</b>	44	36	52
<b>1930</b>	32	24	40

**Table 3: Variations in population in Spain by gender<sup>77</sup>**

Intercensal period	Population 10 years or older (%)		Illiterate population (%)		Overall illiteracy levels (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>1888-1900</b>	+4	+5	-3	-3	-7	-8
<b>1901-1910</b>	+6	+7	-6	-6	-10	-12
<b>1911-1920</b>	+10	+10	-8	-8	-15	-16
<b>1921-1930</b>	+11	+15	-25	-17	-32	-23

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 166.<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 168.



High rates of illiteracy need not be a hindrance to historians studying a given period. Illiterates, as Lyons notes, have never been fully excluded from participation in written culture. This has been due partly to the work of scribes, who could be hired to assist in the writing process.<sup>78</sup> It is possible that some of the letters sent to the authorities during the dictatorship were written on behalf of the supplicants by these clerks. If this was the case, I have found no direct evidence of it, as it appears not to have been the practice for scribes to mark the letters which they wrote with a stamp or any other form of identifier. Nevertheless, we should not discount the mediating role played by these scribes, even if their services were used infrequently. The extent to which these figures were able to influence the composition of letters has been the matter of some debate. Nancy Zemon Davis, for example, has illustrated how in the early-modern context of pleas for royal pardon the voice of the supplicant survived the letter-writing process, mediated as it was by the scribe.<sup>79</sup> Supplicant and scribe would engage in an elaborate, collaborative effort in which the former's intentions were described, reshaped and, ultimately, submitted to authority. Martyn Lyons has shown that this was also the case well into the twentieth century, including in Spain. Indeed, writing was often a collaborative process even when the services of a professional scribe were not employed. Family members and friends, for example, could be enlisted as intermediaries by those whose literacy was precarious, or by others who simply felt less assured when expressing themselves.<sup>80</sup> For this reason, the presence of third-party writers in the letters examined in this thesis remains undeterminable.

While there is little firm evidence that scribes were used in the letters sent to Primo de Rivera during the dictatorship, it is much more probable that supplicants made use of another form of aid when composing their missives: letter-writing guides. These became popular in the late nineteenth century and were produced cheaply for a mass audience, becoming, in their own right, an important resource in the 'democratisation of writing' in the contemporary era.<sup>81</sup> However, as Verónica Sierra Blas has shown, in Spain, as in other countries, these guides carried a powerful

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<sup>78</sup> Lyons, *Writing Culture*, 46.

<sup>79</sup> Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*.

<sup>80</sup> Lyons, *Writing Culture*, 46–52.

<sup>81</sup> Sierra Blas, *Aprender a escribir cartas. Los manuales epistolares en la España contemporánea*, 95–105.

normative function, both in terms of formal writing style and in the diffusion of moral, religious and patriotic ideals, particularly to children.<sup>82</sup> In the classroom, letters became an important structure around which reading and writing were taught to students, featuring frequently in textbooks because of this. The ability to write a letter came to be regarded as a minimum of linguistic competence, something which would allow a child to function in society, maintain relations with others and gain knowledge of him or herself.

There are two main characteristics of the letters written to the authorities during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship which suggest the use of these guides. The first is the largely uniform structure which they employed. One particularly noticeable example of this is the ‘preamble rule’ – that is, the tendency to acknowledge receipt of any earlier messages and to set off from this point in one’s response.<sup>83</sup> Although most letter-writers followed these rules when contacting the government, their omission can be revealing. Those whose literacy was more precarious, for example, might not know to how to structure their letter, while outraged supplicants might consciously choose to dispense with such considerations for rhetorical effect. The second characteristic, which is linked to this, is the formulaic use of greetings and titles. Primo, therefore, is almost exclusively referred to as *Vuestra Excelencia* (Your Excellency), though this is often shortened to *V.E.* Any mention of the King, Alfonso XIII, though surprisingly uncommon, is typically followed by the courtesy formula *q.D.g.*, an abbreviated form of *que Dios guarde* (may God keep [him]). Signing the letter legibly, a topic which is discussed in more detail in the context of denunciation in Chapter Four, was also regarded as an essential element of this, both by letter-writer and reader.

The achievement of widespread literacy was fundamentally tied to the nationalisation process, as we have seen. The importance of the school system to this is clear. Yet, as Quiroga Valle has shown, the Spanish Army, another of the state’s foremost nationalising agents, which became all the more important during the

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<sup>82</sup> Verónica Sierra Blas, “¡Cuidado con la pluma! Los manuales epistolares en el siglo XX,” *Litterae. Cuadernos sobre Cultura Escrita*, no. 3–4 (2003): 281–325.

<sup>83</sup> Verónica Sierra Blas, “«Al otro lado de las rejas». Correspondencia a los presos del Centro Penitenciario de El Dueso (Santander, 1936),” in *Franquismo y memoria popular. Escrituras, voces y representaciones*, ed. Antonio Castillo Gómez and Feliciano Montero García (Madrid: Siete Mares, 2003), 77.

dictatorship, played an important role in increasing literacy rates among the population too, limited as it was to males who carried out their obligatory military service, only about 54% of those eligible between 1914 and 1923.<sup>84</sup> The beginning of the twentieth century saw a growth among the military leadership of an appreciation that the Army should provide a minimum level of education to its recruits, both for reasons of operational effectiveness and in order to contribute to the wider regeneration of Spanish society, the army's so-called social mission.<sup>85</sup> This led to the introduction, from 1905 onward, of a series of laws which made special provision for the basic primary education of all recruits who could not prove that they were already in position of such.<sup>86</sup> According to Quiroga Valle's statistical analysis, which compares the enlistment records of recruits to the data which corresponds to their age group in the next census, between 1911 and 1915 (the period which can be traced in the 1920 census) 6.39% of the men who carried out their military service across the whole of Spain were taught how to read and write during this time. In the case of Andalucía, where the change was highest in these years, some 12.91% of the recruits learned these skills. Between 1921 and 1925 (tracked in the 1930 census), the average fell to 1.01% nationally, although 7.17% of recruits from Galicia, the region with the highest increase, became literate during this time. This suggests that on average approximately 3.7% of the men who served in the Army between 1911 and 1925 were taught basic literacy (if we discount the hidden period of 1916-1920).<sup>87</sup> Considering that military service was made universal by the Canalejas government in 1912, this represents a very significant proportion of the adult male population.

Having made these preliminary observations, we may now proceed to a brief discussion of the primary sources which feature in the analysis that follows this chapter.

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<sup>84</sup> Maria Gloria Quiroga Valle, *El papel alfabetizador del Ejército de Tierra Español (1893-1954)* (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa; Secretaría General Técnica, 1999). Eugen Weber makes the same observation about the French military in the nineteenth century: Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 298. Recruitment figures in Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 78.

<sup>85</sup> On the development of ideas concerning this social mission see Geoffrey Jensen, *Irrational Triumph: Cultural Despair, Military Nationalism and the Ideological Origins of Franco's Spain* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2002).

<sup>86</sup> Quiroga Valle, *El papel alfabetizador del Ejército*, 63–75.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 131–62, statistics from 139.

### Sources: letters to the authorities

The original findings of this thesis are derived primarily from a significant and previously unexamined corpus of letters that were sent by ordinary Spanish people to the Ministries of the Interior (*Gobernación*) and Justice & Religious Matters (*Justicia y Culto*) during the dictatorship. These documents are now stored in the Primo de Rivera *Presidencia del Gobierno* (Head of Government) holdings at the *Archivo Histórico Nacional* (National Historic Archival; AHN) in Madrid, what is by far the most important archival resource on government activity during the regime. Roughly one quarter of the materials held in the Primo de Rivera Ministry collection (140 of the 525 entries) pertain to the government ministries (*Presidencia*, State, Interior, etc.) that existed during the dictatorship period. These are not independent archival series, however; they catalogue the relationship between Primo de Rivera's bureau and the ministries beneath it.<sup>88</sup> This is a reflection of the administrative structure of the regime, which placed Primo at the centre of the decision-making process in government. The vast majority of these materials came to the attention of the dictator while they were being processed, therefore. Primo's personal archive is no longer in the public domain, although there is a range of testimony to suggest that this did once exist.<sup>89</sup>

Chapter Four is supplemented by materials collected from two additional archival resources. The first is the Series A (Politics and Public Order) collection of files from the Ministry of the Interior holdings in the AHN.<sup>90</sup> These are independent of the Primo de Rivera *Presidencia* collection and did not necessarily pass through the dictator's bureau on the course to their resolution. The second of the resources is a small cluster of documents relating to the activities of the *Delegados Gubernativos* (Government Delegates) in the *Archivo General de la Administración* (General Administrative Archive; AGA) in Alcalá de Henares. These proceeded from the Ministry of the Interior. The AGA collections may be of further use to those researching the dictatorship, although the highly fragmented nature of its holdings from this period

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<sup>88</sup> "Guía de Sección: Fondos Contemporáneos, Archivo Histórico Nacional" 5.

<sup>89</sup> M. Teresa González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera. El Directorio Militar* (Madrid: Ediciones el Arquero, 1987), 16–17. See also José Calvo Sotelo, *Mis servicios al Estado* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, 1974), 183, f.n. 1.

<sup>90</sup> This will be referenced as AHN, Gob. (A).

means that it is best suited to the study of specific themes, rather than the regime in its entirety. With this in mind, it may be useful to describe the functions of the two main ministries with which this study will be concerned.

Established in 1847 during the reign of Isabel II, the functions of the Ministry of the Interior underwent a steady evolution in the 19th and 20th centuries. Initially, it was responsible for a vast section of the Spanish State administration but during the years of the Restoration, as more specialised government Ministries and Directorates-General emerged, its functions became concentrated around the following areas: oversight of the municipal and provincial administrations of peninsular Spain and its overseas territories (including budget supervision); regulation of politics, voluntary associations and elections (including organisation of the *encasillado* and *pucherazo*, which guaranteed the election results desired by the political parties of the *turno pacífico*); posts and telegraphs; social welfare and state charity (*beneficencia*); and public security. Thus, on the eve of Primo de Rivera's coup d'état, the Ministry of the Interior played a prominent role in the daily lives of the Spanish population across a number of different areas.<sup>91</sup>

The Ministry of Justice crystallised into its modern form after the reforms of 1851, though it would continue to undergo structural modifications for the rest of the century. Its functions, naturally, were of a more technical nature than those of the Ministry of the Interior, which was quite visible to ordinary people in their daily lives. The activities which were most likely to directly affect these people, however, were the oversight of the courts of law (including administrative appeal courts), the land and civil registries, the electoral register and the prison service. Throughout the Restoration period, municipal courts were a notorious hotbed for corruption, with judges and district prosecutors the prime culprits. These courts typically had jurisdiction in civil cases, between, for example, landlords and renters, and had the power to rule on matters relating to mortgages, embargos and evictions, all of which

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<sup>91</sup> A short overview of the structure and administrative responsibilities of the Ministry of the Interior can be read in "Ministerio del Interior," *PARES | Portal de Archivos Españoles*, accessed July 18, 2017, <http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/167459>. The Ministry of the Interior section of the Primo de Rivera *Presidencia* archive has no specific identifier in the coding system used by the AHN. For the sake of clarity, when I make reference to this I mean boxes 52-80 of the Primo de Rivera collection, i.e. AHN, Primo, Boxes 52-80.

were highly significant to the daily lives of ordinary people.<sup>92</sup> Because of this, the Ministry of Justice and judicial system became the object of substantial reforms during the dictatorship. These are detailed in Chapter Five.<sup>93</sup>

It is impossible to know how many letters were sent the authorities over the course of the dictatorship, or, indeed, how representative the surviving examples are of either the total quantity of letters sent or the general qualities of the same. Official archives, as Lyons reminds us, “exist to record legal decisions and, usually, they minute only the final resolutions agreed upon. They overlook the debate, the consideration of dissenting viewpoints or the objections which have led up to any particular decision.”<sup>94</sup> Where the original petition remains, the response may be missing, or vice versa. The materials originating in the Ministry of the Interior amount to around 16,000 file cards, while the Ministry of the Interior series contains approximately 10,000. Not all of these records were established at the behest of a supplicant, as some dealt with internal administrative matters alone. In addition to this, there are some 71 additional archival entries for letters that are sorted by surname only.<sup>95</sup> In many cases single numerical entries like these are made up of two boxes. If, as in the case of the documentation originating in the Ministries of the Interior and Justice, these contain on average roughly 500 files each, then there are at the very least 35,000 which have yet to be consulted.<sup>96</sup>

By the AHN’s own estimate some 50% of the files proceeding from the government ministries during the dictatorship are now missing their original

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<sup>92</sup> Javier Moreno Luzón, “‘El poder público hecho cisco’. Clientelismo e instituciones políticas en la España de la Restauración,” in *Política en penumbra. Patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea*, ed. Antonio Robles Egea (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1996), 186–88.

<sup>93</sup> See “Ministerio de Justicia,” *PARES | Portal de Archivos Españoles*, accessed July 18, 2017, <http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/167460>. The box numbers corresponding to the Ministry of Justice during the regime are 11-28, although this thesis will make reference only to the contained in number 18 and above (i.e. AHN, Primo, Boxes 18-28). These correspond to the *Directorio Civil* period of December 1925 onward.

<sup>94</sup> Lyons, *Writing Culture*, 21.

<sup>95</sup> AHN, Primo, Boxes 454-525.

<sup>96</sup> Mussolini, in comparison, received an average of 1,500 letters per day, while for Hitler this may have been as high as 2,000. In those cases, the cult of personality surrounding the dictator was much stronger than in Spain under Primo. Wingenter, “Voices of Sacrifice: Letters to Mussolini and Ordinary Writing under Fascism,” 158; Robert Gellately, “Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany: Aspects of Self-Policing in the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 950.

contents.<sup>97</sup> This is because documentation was often referred from one government department to another while being processed. As a result, many of the records relating to the petitions which I have examined are incomplete. For this reason I decided against making use of probability sampling in the course of my archival research. Instead, my approach may be described broadly as judgemental sampling; that is, a selection of materials based on what I found most illustrative of the themes I wished to highlight. My interest in these sources is always qualitative, rather than quantitative. Such an approach may be criticised for being vulnerable to the potential biases of the researcher. Yet it has served certain illustrious historians well in the past.<sup>98</sup> In any case, no historical study can truly escape its author's strategies of explanation.<sup>99</sup>

As a means of understanding the regime's discourse on nation and citizenship, this study will refer to a range of material emanating from the government, its ideologues and Primo de Rivera himself. This will include legislation contained in the Spanish state gazette, *La Gaceta de Madrid*, and will pay particular attention to the preambles of these laws, many of which were authored by Primo, speeches, articles, and official publications. Due to the limitation of time, this thesis has not made extensive use of press material, other than the so-called *nota oficiosas* (informal notes) written by Primo, which newspapers were obliged to publish throughout the dictatorship. Though the government's official mouthpieces, *La Nación* and *Unión Patriótica*, undeniably made important contributions to the discourse of the regime, their circulations of 50,000 and 6,000 respectively were very low, especially considering that *Unión Patriótica* itself claimed over one million members.<sup>100</sup>

Alejandro Quiroga has argued convincingly that nationalism is best studied through a microscopic lens, which can integrate nationalist messages, their channels of transmission and their recipients, and account for the entangled relationship between

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<sup>97</sup> "Guía de Sección: Fondos Contemporáneos," 5.

<sup>98</sup> Fitzpatrick, "Suplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s," 81/82.

<sup>99</sup> For the classic outline of this view see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

<sup>100</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards* 178.

these factors.<sup>101</sup> This suggests examining a given period from the point of view of a small town or neighbourhood, for example. In the case of written petitions, this would be less practical due to the difficulties associated with finding such sources. Yet there will always be a question over the degree to which generalisations can be made on the basis of as geographically disparate a body of material as the one that is analysed in this thesis. It is my belief, however, that the extraordinary nature of the sources, which exist in considerable quantity and catalogue the interactions of the population with what were perhaps two of the most significant government ministries for the entire duration of the dictatorship means that such an approach can also be justified. The relative scarcity of documents written by the newly-literate masses makes the petitions, never before consulted in a systematic manner, a highly significant resource for those seeking to understand the public mood during the Primo de Rivera regime.<sup>102</sup>

Although Sierra Blas argues in favour of a comprehensive reading of a letter, which takes into account its materiality, I chose a somewhat less rigorous approach in order to examine as many documents as I could.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, where possible I have attempted to take into account the factors which might indicate a supplicant's socio-economic background and circumstance where this is not specifically stated. For this reason, it is important to note that I have reproduced any orthographical, phonetic, grammatical or lexical errors which appear in the letters in the Spanish version of the text. Due to the inherently problematic nature of translating these errors, however, I have not attempted to render these into English. Even so, this thesis will be of interest to scholars of ordinary writing, as well as those interested in the Primo de Rivera regime.

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<sup>101</sup> Alejandro Quiroga, "The Three Spheres. A Theoretical Model of Mass Nationalisation: The Case of Spain," *Nations and Nationalism* 20, no. 4 (October 2014): 696.

<sup>102</sup> Javier Tusell made occasional reference to some of these resources in his work, though by no means methodically. Tusell, *La crisis del caciquismo*, 13–235.

<sup>103</sup> Sierra Blas, "«Al otro lado de las rejas»," 81–89.



## Chapter Three | The denunciation of *caciques*, 1923-1924

### Introduction

In 1930, Francisco Villanueva, the editor of the Madrid daily *El Liberal* (The Liberal) and a prominent opponent of the Primo de Rivera regime, wrote that “we must recognise that there was no greater terror [during the dictatorship] than the anonymous denunciation.”<sup>1</sup> He saw a connection between this and Primo’s tendency to publicly defame his enemies, sometimes in newspapers like Villanueva’s, without allowing them the right to reply. “He killed without spilling blood,” wrote the editor, “because there is not much difference between shooting and defaming.”<sup>2</sup> Accusations of this manner were invited by Primo at the earliest stages of the regime and became a notorious element of the dictatorship, which seemed to prefigure the widespread use of denunciation during and after the Civil War. Despite this, they have not yet been subject to systematic examination.

This chapter explores the practice of denunciation by ordinary Spanish citizens to the state authorities in the period from Primo’s *golpe de estado* in September 1923 to the implementation of one of the regime’s most significant pieces of legislation, the Municipal Statute (*Estatuto Municipal*), in April 1924. It begins by briefly discussing recent trends in the study of denunciation in authoritarian regimes, before outlining the wave of purges initiated by the Primo in the early months of the dictatorship. It then analyses how ordinary Spanish people collaborated in this process through an extensive examination of the letters sent by them to the authorities, which pays particular attention to the language and rhetoric which they used.

The period that will be examined is remarkable for a number of reasons. Firstly, it encompasses both the ninety-day period of rule with which Primo de Rivera was initially mandated by the King, Alfonso XIII, and Primo’s subsequent decision to extend the dictatorship beyond this point in November/December 1923. Secondly, it corresponds to a time at which the regime sought to revitalise Spain’s existing political

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Villanueva, *Obstáculos tradicionales T. II La dictadura militar: (crónica documentada de la oposición y de la represión bajo el directorio, 1923-1926)* (Madrid: Javier Morata, 1930), 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 115–16.

institutions by ridding them of corruption, rather than attempting to construct alternatives. This process was dominated by waves of purges, targeted at those deemed by Primo to represent *caciquismo*, the brand of clientelist politics that had characterised the Restoration era. During this seven-month period, the regime paid relatively little attention to the elaboration of an official, state ideology, choosing instead to exalt efficiency in government and the urgent need to resolve the political crisis that had endured in Spain since the summer of 1917.<sup>3</sup> Finally, this spell represents the period in which the Spanish population was most active in denunciation, to such an extent that the regime soon felt obliged to take measures to regulate the practice, as will be detailed in due course.

### **Denunciation and its place in the study of authoritarian regimes**

The fall of the Berlin Wall and dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 1989 and 1991 respectively, coincided with a shift in the way the authoritarian regimes of modern Europe were viewed by scholars. In case of the USSR and its allies, necessity had once dictated that these be examined primarily from above, that is, in relation to the state and its agents. The opening of new archives at the end of the Cold War allowed researchers to investigate new and often routine aspects of the repression which these regimes carried out.<sup>4</sup> The same methodologies were also applied to the study of repression in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union under Stalin, both of which had been at the centre of the revisionist debate in the 1980s on the nature of totalitarianism. This brought into question the degree to which such regimes were able to penetrate the lives of their populations and exert total control over them, as well the extent to which these populations were truly passive in this process, as famously suggested by Hannah Arendt.<sup>5</sup> In the case of the latter, the work of Robert Gellately was particularly

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<sup>3</sup> See the description of the phases of the regime in Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera*, 507–8.

<sup>4</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, "Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History," *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 749–50, 753. An initial historiographical overview of the topic, together with some theoretical pointers, can be read in the same article.

<sup>5</sup> A useful overview of the revisionist trend in the study of Stalinism can be read in Kevin McDermott, "Stalinism 'From Below'?: Soviet State, Society, and the Great Terror," in *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship: Collusion and Evasion*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 94–111. A similar essay for Nazi Germany can be read in the same volume. See Peter Lambert, "The Third Reich:

important in dispelling the myths of Gestapo omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence in society.<sup>6</sup> Much of the Gestapo's power, he argued, was actually derived from widespread collusion by ordinary people, often through the means of denunciation. Referring to these developments and how they fit into the revisionist trends in the 1980s, he and Sheila Fitzpatrick have remarked:

Denunciation was too ordinary a practice in these societies to have the exalted quality, the flavor of spiritual dedication, implied in the totalitarian literature. In the most literal sense, [denunciation] was an everyday practice - though, to be sure, this was not the *Alltag* of popular resistance celebrated in much German *Alltagsgeschichte* on the Nazi period, but rather an *Alltag* of popular collaboration.<sup>7</sup>

While it is not my intention to directly equate repression during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship to that of the more totalising and murderous regimes of Nazi Germany and the USSR in its Stalinist form, it anticipated certain aspects of the violence unleashed by the Francoist 'New State' due to the ideological overlap between the regimes, the prominence of military figures in both administrations (several of whom served in both), their use of purges and pseudo-legal means in persecuting their enemies, and their close chronological proximity to one another.<sup>8</sup> There are also crucial differences to the forms of repression initiated by the two dictatorships. Primo's seizure of power was essentially bloodless and faced very little mobilisation against it. This meant that, in the first instance, repression could be framed in Primo's own terms: as an exceptional measure needed to overcome the extraordinary crises which Spain was facing (the never-ending war in Morocco, parliamentary paralysis and the perceived threat of Catalan separatism, in particular). Over time, this exceptional quality would become more generalised, as we will see in Chapter Five. Franco's rise to power, in contrast, came after a civil war brought on by a

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Police State or Self-Policing Society," in *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship: Collusion and Evasion*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 37–54. The classic formulation of this total-control/passivity position can be read in Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, chaps. 12, 13. See also Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Gellately, "The Gestapo and German Society: Political Denunciation in the Gestapo Case Files," *The Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 4 (1988): 654–94; Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> Fitzpatrick and Gellately, "Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation," 756.

<sup>8</sup> On this view see González Calleja, "La dictadura de Primo de Rivera y el franquismo." A useful top-down overview of this process by the same author can be read in González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 278–302.

coup d'état which failed due to widespread resistance, both within the armed forces and in civil society. The repression that came after this, therefore, followed the hyper-violent logic of the conflict. This was clearly not the case in 1923. While repression must not be measured exclusively on the basis of the number of deaths inflicted on the population, it goes without saying that the scale of killing which took place during and after the Civil War dwarfed the number of executions under Primo de Rivera.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, scholars have given greater attention to the later dictatorship, though, as Cenarro argues, the fact that much of this repression took place in the context of a civil war obscured certain points of comparison between the Spanish case and those elsewhere in Europe.<sup>10</sup> The same might also be said about attempts at comparison between the Primo de Rivera and Franco regimes.

The duration of the Franco regime and the manner in which it silenced the defeated after the war meant that this repression only began to be studied in earnest in the mid-1980s. Initially, much of this focused on the role played by the armed forces, the leading segment of the rebel coalition that emerged in 1936.<sup>11</sup> For historians writing around this time, comparison between the atrocities committed by the National side in the Civil War and the Nazi state in Germany proved instructive, despite their clear ideological differences.<sup>12</sup> As Anderson points out, many of the early developments in this post-Transition historiography were motivated by a desire to denounce the Franco regime not merely as authoritarian, but as totalitarian. Ultimately, though, this went against the trend elsewhere in Europe to question the

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<sup>9</sup> Between 1936 and 1939 Nationalist death squads and tribunals were responsible for the killing of 100,000 people in the provinces for which reliable figures exist; that is, just under half. An additional 50,000 people were executed in the 10 years following the end of the war. Julián Casanova, "Una dictadura de cuarenta años," in *Morir, matar, sobrevivir: la violencia en la dictadura de Franco*, by Julián Casanova et al. (Barcelona: Editorial Critica, 2004), 8. Figures on the number of executions under Primo de Rivera have rarely been proposed by scholars. A report sent by the French embassy in Madrid to Paris on executions in Spain during the 1920s suggests that there was one in 1921, five in 1922, zero in 1923 and 16 in 1924 and early 1925 - clearly a significant increase during the dictatorship. González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 279, f.n. 81. Ucelay and Tavera also suggest that most of the executions occurred before the end of 1924 and that these were generally issued to the perpetrators of violent crimes, though they do not quantify them. Primo felt that he was in too weak a position to issue similar punishments in the aftermath of the failed coups against him in 1926 and 1929. Enric Ucelay-Da Cal and Susanna Tavera García, "Una revolución dentro de otra: la lógica insurreccional en la política española," *Ayer*, no. 13 (1994): 142. Some explanation of these executions is given in González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 208–10.

<sup>10</sup> Cenarro, "Matar, vigilary delatar," 67.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

reductions of totalitarian theory. This state-focused approach which emerged at this time entailed quantifying and identifying the victims of Francoism - a necessary task, certainly, but one that also presented the repression in terms of the passive experience of its victims, rather than the agency and complicity of those who carried out the punishments behind it.<sup>13</sup> Since the end of the 1990s, however, scholars have shown an increasing interest in how the 'Nuevo Estado' was assisted in imposing social control from below.<sup>14</sup> Amongst other things, these studies have shown that denunciation was an essential part of this repression, particularly in the years of the war and immediate post-war, thus opening many fruitful avenues of comparison with the other dictatorships of the era.<sup>15</sup> Through the study of denunciation, I believe that similar results can be yielded for the Primo de Rivera regime as there are still major lacunae in our understanding of the repression carried out between 1923 and 1930.

In this chapter, I argue that the distinction between resistance and collaboration to which Fitzpatrick and Gellately refer is often unclear in the letters sent to Primo, to such an extent that it can be discarded altogether. To begin with, there are certain structural differences between this and the cases cited above which make direct comparison difficult. Most significantly, Primo's dictatorship does not fit into Arendt's categorisation of totalitarian, even if it did drift towards "semi-totalitarian" positions as it entered its twilight years.<sup>16</sup> As for the denunciations themselves, despite the fact that the practice was closely tied to the repression carried out by the regime, ordinary Spanish people often used the genre to make claims to the authorities and negotiate the boundaries of citizenship in the *primorriverista* state, adding to the

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Anderson, "Singling out Victims: Denunciation and Collusion in the Post-Civil War Francoist Repression in Spain, 1939–1945," *European History Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2009): 11.

<sup>14</sup> A useful historiographical overview can be read in Ángela Cenarro, "Muerte y subordinación en la España franquista: El imperio de la violencia como base del 'Nuevo Estado,'" *Historia Social*, no. 30 (1998): 5–22.

<sup>15</sup> Conxita Mir, *Vivir es sobrevivir: justicia, orden y marginación en la Cataluña rural de posguerra* (Lleida: Milenio, 2000); Francisco Cobo Romero, Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco, and Teresa María Ortega López, "The Stability and Consolidation of the Francoist Regime. The Case of Eastern Andalusia, 1935–1950," *Contemporary European History* 20, no. 1 (2001): 37–59; Cenarro, "Matar, vigilary delatar"; Julián Casanova et al., *Morir, matar, sobrevivir: la violencia en la dictadura de Franco* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2004); Anderson, "Singling Out Victims"; Peter Anderson and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco, "Construyendo la dictadura y castigando a sus enemigos. Represión y apoyos sociales del franquismo (1936–1951)," *Historia Social*, no. 71 (2011): 125–41; José Antonio Parejo Fernández, "Fascismo rural, control social y colaboración ciudadana. Datos y propuestas para el caso español," *Historia Social*, no. 71 (2011): 143–59.

<sup>16</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 162. These measures are discussed in Chapter Four.

already considerable ambiguity surrounding the behaviour. This highlights what Anderson and del Arco have called the “grey zones” in social attitudes towards dictatorship.<sup>17</sup>

For the sake of clarity, I make use of Fitzpatrick’s and Gellately’s definition of denunciation, that is:

Spontaneous communications from individual citizens to the state (or to another authority such as the church) containing accusations of wrongdoing by other citizens or officials and implicitly or explicitly calling for punishment. Typically, denunciations are written and delivered privately to an addressee rather than published. They are likely to invoke state (or church) values and to disclaim any personal interest on the part of the writer, citing duty to the state (or the public good) as the reason for offering information to the authorities.<sup>18</sup>

Fitzpatrick’s and Gellately’s use of the word ‘spontaneous’ has, admittedly, received some criticism by one of the historians already cited in this chapter. As Anderson has argued, referring to the *Tribunales de Responsabilidades Políticas* (Tribunals of Political Responsibility) established by the Franco regime in February 1939, denunciation has sometimes been directly solicited by the state authorities in order to bring about the expeditious prosecution and conviction of its political enemies.<sup>19</sup> While this point is well argued, I do not believe that it should alter our definition here as the denunciations to which Anderson refers were largely collected after their subjects were already held in custody by the Francoist authorities and therefore seem to fall into the parallel pseudo-legal realm of the show trial, something which is beyond the scope of this chapter. Even so, there is no question that both of these practices contributed greatly to the generalised atmosphere of repression under Franco.

Studying denunciations allows historians the opportunity to explore both how repression was initiated from below by ordinary people and how the state organised itself to respond to such situations. In dictatorial regimes which limited participation in formal politics, they represent one of the few channels through which citizens could express opinions and articulate their personal interests. In authoritarian states which sought to regulate and, in some cases, even transform social life, these citizens quickly

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<sup>17</sup> Anderson and del Arco Blanco, “Construyendo la dictadura y castigando a sus enemigos,” 127.

<sup>18</sup> Fitzpatrick and Gellately, “Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation,” 747.

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, “Singling Out Victims,” 20–21.

realised that the authorities could not function without a constant flow of information on the attitudes and activities of society at large. This opened up countless avenues through which information could be offered, exploited or, quite simply, invented in order to achieve certain goals.<sup>20</sup> Thus, as Fitzpatrick and Gellately note, “we find ourselves exploring the core of citizens' commitment of loyalty to the state and their (perhaps incompatible) commitment of solidarity with their fellow citizens. Denunciation is a practice that tests the relative strengths of those fundamental and highly charged commitments.”<sup>21</sup> It is, in a sense, a practice that puts the state at the disposal of its citizens, much like a more generic claim.<sup>22</sup>

As I will make clear, although the regime initially elicited denunciations from the population as a means of eradicating *caciquismo*, this behaviour soon became problematic for it, particularly as they began to criticise the government's own reforms. For while the regime sought to articulate a new discourse on national citizenship, the denunciations it received from the population proved to be highly unreliable (but not typically anonymous) and soon began to undermine the exalted character of this vision. The arbitrary nature of the complaints made in many cases, combined with the state's failure to address them in a consistent manner, served to challenge the legitimacy of a regime that had styled itself as a radical departure from the corruption of the *turno pacífico*. By the time the regime moved to regulate its response to these denunciations in early 1924 it appeared to be paying very little attention to them at all.

### **The purge of *caciques* and corrupt officials**

General Primo de Rivera's attack on the Restoration political system began at the earliest moments of the dictatorship. In the preamble of the Royal Decree which granted him power on 15 September, 1923, Primo announced the formation of a *Directorio Militar* (Military Directorate) in which he would serve as President, a

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<sup>20</sup> Fitzpatrick and Gellately, “Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation,” 752.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 763.

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, “Singling Out Victims,” 12.

position equivalent to Sole Minister.<sup>23</sup> In this role, Primo would be assisted by a group of eight Brigadier Generals and one Rear Admiral, who were plucked from obscurity to represent the various sections of the armed forces and advise him on the activities of the government. To the Vice-Presidency of this Directorate Primo appointed Rear Admiral Antonio Magaz y Pers, the Marquis of Magaz, the figure who would assume the role of Interim President during Primo's state visit to Italy in 1923 and his later involvement in the military campaigns in Morocco in 1924 and 1925.<sup>24</sup> The power and autonomy of these newly-appointed *Vocales* was, in reality, extremely limited, as they were not Ministers, nor did the Military Directorate possess the powers of a conventional Cabinet. Until July 1924, they would not even be permitted to propose legislation to Primo.<sup>25</sup>

Article 4 of the same Royal Decree suppressed the Council of Ministers, the ministerial portfolios and the roles of departmental Subsecretary, save those of State and War. Shortly after this, Primo partially reversed this decision and restored the positions of Subsecretary of the Navy and of the Interior (*Gobernación*). To the latter of these Primo appointed his most trusted colleague, Major General Severiano Martínez Anido, the notoriously repressive former Military Governor of Barcelona, who would act as the regime's *de facto* number-two figure until his *de jure*

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<sup>23</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 16/09/1923. The earlier Royal Decree naming General Primo de Rivera as Head of Government appears in the same issue. Primo de Rivera's first act as Head of Government was to establish the Military Directorate.

<sup>24</sup> The representatives drawn from the Army were Francisco Gómez-Jordana, Antonio Mayandía y Gómez, Luis Navarro, Mario Muslera Planés, Alonso de Celado, Luis Hermosa y Kith, Francisco Ruiz del Portal y Martín and Adolfo Vallespinosa y Vior. James Rial has observed that the most striking feature of the group was its collective lack of distinction, to such a degree that most could be regarded as 'nonentities' both before and after the dictatorship, with the notable exception of Gómez-Jordana, who briefly became Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy-Prime Minister under Franco. Their legislative record at the end of the *Directorio Militar* period was mostly abysmal. Rial, *Revolution from Above*, 71, 73.

<sup>25</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 51. As noted in Chapter One, there was no provision in the Constitution for the creation of a Military Directorate. This meant that there was considerable ambiguity over the status of its members, other than Primo himself. Primo moved to reduce this by having them swear a ministerial oath, though the legislative powers which he granted them were entirely subordinated to his own.



appointment as Vice-President of the Council of Ministers when this was restored under the *Directorio Civil* (Civil Directorate) in December 1925.<sup>26</sup>

On 16 September, Primo began the first in a wave of purges directed against Spain's political administration. The Congress of Deputies and Senate were dissolved and certain constitutional guarantees were suspended across the country.<sup>27</sup> In addition to this, the *estados de guerra* (states of war/emergency) which had been declared by the other Captains General across Spain during the course of the coup d'état were elevated to a national level, a situation that would last until May 1925. In January 1924, the government deepened the state of exception by beginning to censor messages sent telegraphically by the public.<sup>28</sup> The same decree collectively suspended the Civil Governors of each of Spain's 49 provinces and replaced them with the provincial Military Governors.<sup>29</sup> For the sake of clarity, I refer to these new figures as the Military-Civil Governors throughout this thesis. This measure was a radical departure from Spanish political orthodoxy, as, since the early nineteenth century, the country had been organised into a highly centralised administrative system, based largely on the French model. Under this structure the role of Civil Governor corresponded roughly to that of the French *Préfet*. Unlike the *Préfets*, the Civil Governors were invariably party figures and, while never elected, were usually appointed after the party to which they were allied, Liberal or Conservative, took control of the Cabinet.<sup>30</sup> Given that changes of government often occurred due to the intervention of the King, who was empowered to name and dismiss Ministers as he saw fit, they frequently fell between scheduled elections. As such, the Civil Governors' first task in office was typically to carry out the vote management and electoral falsification required in order to fabricate their party's parliamentary majority, a

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<sup>26</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 23/09/1923. Martínez would be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General by Primo de Rivera on 15 December, 1923 in order to assert his status as Primo's *protégé*. See *Gaceta de Madrid*, 18/12/1923.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 17/09/1923. The suspension of constitutional guarantees is discussed in Chapters One and Five.

<sup>28</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 121.

<sup>29</sup> The Canary Islands (*Las Islas Canarias*) were divided into two distinct provinces (Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas, respectively) by Primo de Rivera on 21 September, 1927, thus establishing the modern-day 50 provinces of Spain. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 23/09/1927.

<sup>30</sup> A study of the background of these figures can be read in Bernard Richard, "Étude sur les gouverneurs civils en Espagne de la Restauration à la Dictature (1874-1923). Origine géographique, fonctions d'origine et évolution d'un personnel politico-administratif," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 8, no. 1 (1972): 441–74.

process that was carried out under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior and with help of regional *caciques*.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to this, the Military Governors were high-ranking Army officers who were directly subordinate to the Captain General of the military region to which the province in their charge corresponded.<sup>32</sup>

Primo's decision to depose the Civil Governors appointed by the previous government marked a radical departure from the *modus operandi* of the Restoration era as it immediately deprived the central government of the means it used to manipulate and rig elections. The militarisation of the nation's provincial administration also gave Primo additional time to search for a long-term alternative to the workings of *turno* politics, a problem that was exacerbated by the absence of a pro-regime mass movement from which to draw reliable followers. After the promulgation of the Municipal Statute in March 1924, Martínez Anido would oversee the gradual appointment of civilian figures to most of the Civil Governorships. Irrespective of their background, the Governors were given considerable scope to intervene in the workings of each province's *Ayuntamientos* and *Diputaciones* (town and provincial councils respectively), as well as in many aspects of the administration relating to the everyday lives of Spanish citizens, throughout the dictatorship.<sup>33</sup> As a result, they feature prominently in the regime's response to the letters which it received from the population.

On 30 September, Primo announced the dissolution *en masse* of the nation's 9,254 *Ayuntamientos* and the summary dismissal of their mayors, elected councillors and secretaries.<sup>34</sup> In the preamble to this Primo linked local government directly to the problem of *caciquismo* and declared his intention to eliminate the political class of old, which he regarded as both "seed and fruit of party and *caciquil* politics, which... has

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<sup>31</sup> Joaquín Romero-Maura, "Caciquismo as a Political System," in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 54.

<sup>32</sup> Their role in periods of constitutional normality typically consisted of commanding the military forces in each province, but in the not-infrequent event that an *estado de guerra* was declared they governed the province by martial law. Joaquim Nadal i Farreras, Horacio Capel Sáez, and Joaquim Clusa, *La organización territorial de empresas e instituciones públicas en España: Jornadas de la "Associació Catalana de Ciència Regional"* (Barcelona: Edicions Universitat Barcelona, 1985), 102. See also Cruz, "Dos rebeliones militares en España, 1923 y 1936. La lógica de la guerra política," 37–38.

<sup>33</sup> As González Calbet has noted, the political structure of the regime at provincial level had only three levels: the Governors, Martínez Anido and Primo de Rivera himself, in increasing order of magnitude. González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 218.

<sup>34</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 01/10/1923.

been hindering the administrative activity of villages.” The law ordered that the dismissed councillors be replaced by each council’s cohort of *Vocales Asociados* (Associate Members). These were corporate representatives drawn by lot from local taxpayers to represent the different professions and trades in each town and village. The immediate task of these *Vocales* was to elect a new executive administration for their locality by secret ballot. The members of each administration were to be drawn from the citizens who possessed a professional title, made use of technical knowledge in their work, or, failing either of the previous two criteria, were simply adult ratepayers. The confidence which Primo invested in *the Vocales Asociados* to elect new *Ayuntamientos* from amongst the ostensibly educated and productive members of society was a regurgitation of the regenerationist trope regarding the conflict between *la España oficial* (official Spain) of bureaucracy and parliamentarianism and *la España real* (true Spain), which lay beneath the illegitimate and artificial structures of the political system.<sup>35</sup> Primo’s naive trust in the *Vocales Asociados* to oversee the regeneration of local government was misplaced. As one historian has observed, as public representatives, they had certainly not been immune to the influence-peddling and political wrangling of the liberal regime.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in many cases they had been drawn from the same political parties and social groupings as those who had previously controlled the *Ayuntamientos*, as we will see below.

A fresh wave of purges began on 9 October, when Primo gave orders to the newly appointed Military-Civil Governors to commence a general inspection of the *Ayuntamientos* in each province.<sup>37</sup> In the preamble to the Royal Decree which dissolved the nation’s *Ayuntamientos* Primo had already acknowledged that the mass dismissals were a matter of expediency. Now, with these inspections, he sought to identify past corruption more systematically and purge the individuals who were responsible. In this new task the Military-Civil Governors were initially assisted by members of the *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard), the gendarmerie which operated largely in the countryside and often had links to the very *caciques* which Primo sought to

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<sup>35</sup> Álvarez Junco, “Redes locales,” 79.

<sup>36</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 220.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

eliminate.<sup>38</sup> Despite this, the autumn of 1923 was a particularly productive period, which saw the inspection of 815 *Ayuntamientos*, during which 379 irregularities were detected and 109 convictions made. One hundred and fifty-two secretaries were also dismissed from their posts.<sup>39</sup> These measures were only skin-deep, however. The purges were modestly successful in removing an intermediate layer of *caciquismo*, which operated within local government, but they ultimately failed to challenge the so-called *grandes caciques*, whose influence on national politics was far greater, or the *caciques* who never occupied any formal positions of power in the state administration. The mayors, secretaries, treasurers and councillors who were removed from office were very often merely middlemen and placeholders for these figures, as the denunciations about them make clear.

On 20 October, Primo de Rivera sought to address these deficiencies by ordering the creation of a specialised division of military inspectors known as the *Delegados Gubernativos* (Government Delegates), who would assist the Military-Civil Governors in their inspections of each province and “drive on the currents of a new civic life in the villages” of Spain.<sup>40</sup> Due to their close proximity to the population in their role, the *Delegados*, like the Civil Governors, feature prominently in the correspondence between the Spanish citizenry and the authorities during this period. The beginning of their work in December 1923 coincided with the end of Primo’s first 90 days in power and marked a new phase in the dictatorship at which the general began to consider the political future of the regime. It is at this time that we can observe a rhetorical shift, which moved beyond the task of merely ridding the government of corruption to a more expansive project of political, moral and cultural reconstruction. This transitional period would continue from January 1924 until April 1924, the month which saw the implementation of the *Directorio Militar’s* landmark

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<sup>38</sup> Antonio Robles Egea, “Sistemas políticos, mutaciones y modelos de las relaciones de patronazgo y clientelismo en la España del siglo XX,” in *Política en penumbra: patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea*, ed. Antonio Robles Egea and José Álvarez Junco (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1996), 233. On the *Guardia Civil* and its connections to rural elites more generally see Diego López Garrido, *La Guardia Civil y los orígenes del estado centralista* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1982).

<sup>39</sup> These figures are drawn from a *nota oficiosa* written by Primo in December 1923 and reproduced in Fernando Soldevilla, *El año político (1923)* (Madrid, 1923), 453–54.

<sup>40</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21/10/1923.

piece of legislation, the *Estatuto Municipal*, the point that marks the end of this chapter.

In the interim the *Delegados* were also charged with the replacement of the new municipal corporations established by their *Vocales Asociados*. In this role they were guided by a series of instructions issued by Martínez Anido, which stipulated that new municipal administrations should be selected when electoral manipulation was suspected, or when illiterates had been elected to office.<sup>41</sup> As a guiding principle, Martínez Anido demanded that the new corporation members be “persons of high social prestige, of well-known solvency and, if possible, in possession of a professional title, or, failing this, adult ratepayers.” The ultimate aim of this second round of municipal elections, he declared, was “to eradicate *caciquismo* and open the doors of a new municipal life for citizens.”

The final round of purges came with the dissolution and replacement of the majority of the nation’s 49 *Diputaciones* on 12 January, 1924.<sup>42</sup> In the selection of new representatives the Military-Civil Governors were ordered to make use of the same criteria as the *Delegados*. The regime’s investigation into the past activities of provincial councils was much more limited than in the case of the municipal administration. The newly-appointed *Diputaciones* were directed merely to submit short reports to the central government on any anomalies that had been detected in their records alongside suggestions on how to rectify them. By this time it was quite clear the anti-*cacique* zeal which had characterised the earliest moments of the dictatorship was waning. The dissolution of the *Diputaciones* was nevertheless a significant step towards removing the last vestiges of the Liberal and Conservative parties from the provinces, while in Catalonia it also deposed the regionalists, who, since June 1923, had enjoyed a majority in the *Diputación* of Barcelona.

Primo also directed his attention towards the conduct of civil servants, whom he accused of damaging the national interest with their lax attitudes. In one of the first

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<sup>41</sup> ‘Instrucciones reservadas que los Sres. Gobernadores civiles y Delegados gubernativos deberán tener presentes en sus misiones inspectoras de los Ayuntamientos,’ AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17a, File 12.

<sup>42</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 13/01/1924. The provinces of Álava, Guipúzcoa, Navarra and Vizcaya (the Spanish parts of the Greater Basque Country) were excluded from this Decree, due to remnants of the *fueros* (regional law codes) which had once been in place there. González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 133.

decrees issued by the new government, public employees were ordered to attend the office without fault between the hours of 9 and 2 on working days.<sup>43</sup> Public servants were also expressly banned from hoarding state jobs by working in more than one position (*pluriempleo*), while a freeze was placed on new appointments to the central administration so that the budget could be brought under control.<sup>44</sup> In a speech that Primo gave later that month, he declared that it was his intention “[to make] sure that behind every desk you [the people] find a civil servant that has had no contact with political interests.”<sup>45</sup> Indeed, as one regime apologist later claimed, these measures led some government departments to discover that there were not enough desks to accommodate all of their employees.<sup>46</sup> Despite these boasts, the decree did not amount to a major reform of the civil service. While Primo could dispense with the politicians of the Restoration regime, the state bureaucracy proved much more durable and, over time, learned to deflect his attacks. Indeed, there was significant continuity in personnel even in the transition to the Republic.<sup>47</sup> Many civil servants also became estranged from the regime due to its failure to improve pay and working conditions.<sup>48</sup>

Primo’s political iconoclasm continued in October with the promulgation of a Decree of Conflicts of Interest (*Incompatibilidades*), which forbade senior politicians from serving on the board of any company that held contracts with the state or was involved in the provision of public services.<sup>49</sup> This was also restricted for anyone who had served in a low-level political capacity in either the central or local administrations of the state for a period of four years following the cessation of this work, even if they had been elected to this position.<sup>50</sup> As Rial observes, the decree ultimately alienated

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<sup>43</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 18/09/1923.

<sup>44</sup> To this end, ministerial Subsecretaries and Heads of Department were also directed to indicate where economies could be made in the state administration. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 13/10/1923.

<sup>45</sup> Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 197.

<sup>46</sup> Mask (alias of Enrique Díaz Retg), *Hacia la España nueva: pasado, presente y porvenir del Directorio militar* (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1925), 109.

<sup>47</sup> Ucelay-Da Cal and Tavera García, “Una revolución dentro de otra,” 116.

<sup>48</sup> María de Sande Pérez-Bedmar, *Empleo y prestación de servicios en la administración pública* (Valladolid: Lex Nova, 2006), 50–51.

<sup>49</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 13/10/1923.

<sup>50</sup> Primo later clarified that the members of the interim *Ayuntamientos* formed immediately after the decree of dissolution would be excluded from this. Nevertheless, this was raised repeatedly in letters sent to government offices. See *Gaceta de Madrid*, 30/10/1923.

business elites, who feared losing the intimate relations that had previously existed between them and the government.<sup>51</sup>

As Wendy Goldman argues, referring to the Soviet case, the term ‘purge’ is often a vague descriptor as it does not distinguish between the “largely benign organizational practice of the 1920s and the murderous variant of it undertaken in the late 1930s.”<sup>52</sup> In the Primo de Rivera dictatorship there was no totalitarian terror, as in the second case Goldman cites, but it would be incorrect to directly equate this with purging. Whereas the former attempts to eliminate all sources of opposition to the regime and, ultimately, remake society, the latter primarily affects ruling bodies and asserts the primacy of their leadership, whatever that may be.<sup>53</sup> In Spain, the majority of those purged from the municipal and provincial administrations were targeted indiscriminately immediately after the *golpe de estado*, leading primarily to a loss of livelihood. As we will see later in this chapter, their effectiveness was quite limited and the criminal convictions which the regime promised were rare. Because of this, it came to favour disciplining purged public employees via administrative ordinances which often prevented them from occupying their previous positions again. In this way, they represented a form of generalised punishment, which the regime justified as a consequence of the state of exception which it had declared. In reality, this lack of finesse illustrated the limited resources and reach of the new government at this time.

### **Denunciation: the first wave**

The inspections that the government carried out to the nation’s *Ayuntamientos* were guided by a wave of popular denunciation, which was submitted to the authorities in vast quantity in the early months of the dictatorship. While the regime would quickly take measures to regulate this behaviour, it would continue in lesser degree until the very final days of Primo’s rule, often in a format which implicitly criticised his administration. In general, these denunciations took one of two forms. Either they were written as letters that were then sent to the offices of the government – usually

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<sup>51</sup> Rial, *Revolution from Above*, 65–66.

<sup>52</sup> Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy*, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, “The Pattern of Political Purges,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 317, no. The Satellites in Eastern Europe (1958): 80.

addressed directly to Primo de Rivera – or they were made in person to representatives of the states, like the *Delegados Gubernativos*.<sup>54</sup> The majority of materials that survive in the archives are from the first of these categories. This second variety will be discussed in the context of the *Delegados* in the next chapter, but suffice it to say here that officials resented being forced to take time-consuming dictations of allegations that may very well have been proven false.

None of the denunciations that are analysed in this chapter are political in the narrow sense of accusations that are pointed at a person of a different ideological outlook. Instead, they targeted the state administration and instruments of local government, and very often identified cases of criminal wrongdoing, whose place in the statute books long preceded the establishment of the dictatorship, even if these had rarely been enforced.<sup>55</sup> When the regime did introduce new measures, it is often very difficult to distinguish cases of denunciation for breaches of criminal law from political denunciations due to the inconsistent manner in which many of these directives were implemented. In the state of exception created for and by the dictatorship these two categorisations become highly ambiguous as the concepts of ‘criminality’ and ‘the political’ were bundled up in the rather arbitrary term ‘*caciquismo*’.<sup>56</sup> This was compounded by the fact that the regime went to great lengths to discredit liberal politics in general and to equate the deliberative process with patronage, personal interest and corruption, that common trope of right-wing authoritarian discourse.

There were several catalysts to the wave of popular denunciation that accompanied the regime’s purges. The first of these came in Primo’s manifesto, ‘*Al País y al Ejército*’ (To the Country and the Army), which he issued during the *golpe de*

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<sup>54</sup> In a very small number of instances, denunciations and petitions were also handed to Primo in person after rallies and ceremonies.

<sup>55</sup> Fitzpatrick makes the same observation about the USSR under Stalin, though it is clear that there was a specifically Bolshevik culture of official denunciation, which the government encouraged there. Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 833.

<sup>56</sup> This was also the case in Nazi Germany and the GDR. Gellately, “Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany,” 932. For this reason I do not think that any binary categorisations of criminal and political, or private and ideological are useful when describing denunciations here. For the latter of these distinctions see Francisco Miguel de Toro Muñoz, “Policía, denuncia y control social: Alemania y Austria durante el Tercer Reich,” *Historia Social* 34 (1999): 123.



*estado*. In this, Primo criticised the political class for failing to rid Spain of corruption and made an appeal for the population's support in carrying out the purges:

We do wish to do this, because we believe that it is our duty. And before all reports that justice has been perverted, of bribery or immoral acts that are properly founded, we will begin a legal process that will relentlessly punish those who have committed crimes against the *Patria* by corrupting it and dishonouring it. We guarantee the most absolute discretion to accusers, even if they are made against our very profession and class, even if they are made against us, because there are accusations that bring honour.<sup>57</sup>

Primo's words were quite unequivocal and created a logic of denunciation, even if he did not mention it by name. The national regeneration he spoke of could only be achieved in this manner. He elaborated upon this further in a document which he furnished to the press for mandatory publication on 5 October, 1923. This was one of the first of the so-called *notas oficiosas* (informal notes) through which he engaged in communication with the Spanish people over the six-year duration of the dictatorship. Meant as a clarification and expansion of his initial manifesto, the note claimed that the new government would rule in the public interest, rather than for any parties of right or left. In its closing lines, Primo addressed complaints that he had defamed certain politicians from power, chiefly the former Foreign Minister, Santiago Alba, and added:

We believe that what is appropriate in this respect is to gather information, certainly not in short supply, which will be obtained by examining the Public Administration, so that we can submit this to the Courts for their judgement in due course. The gathering of this information and of these records forms part of the work which the Directorate proposes to carry out in its first phase of intervention.<sup>58</sup>

Fernando Soldevilla, the editor of the well-known Restoration-era annual, *El Año Político* (The Year in Politics), remarked that the note was much commented upon in public at the time, as it seemed to offer further encouragement for denunciation, which was already the subject of considerable rumour due to the enthusiasm which the population had shown for it in the first month of the dictatorship.<sup>59</sup>

The decree which Primo issued on work standards in the civil service on 17 September, 1923, also ordered the creation of *Servicios de Reclamaciones e*

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<sup>57</sup> Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Soldevilla, *El año político (1923)*, 377.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 377–78.

*Informaciones* (Complaint and Information Services) in all government departments and offices of the state administration.<sup>60</sup> These were to be open to the public during standard office hours and all matters denounced to them were to be passed on to the head of that section. In the case that irregularities were detected these were to be reported directly to the *Directorio Militar*, something which explains why, within the bureaucratic structures inaugurated by the regime, so many cases of denunciation received Primo's attention in the early months of the dictatorship, as evidenced by the vast proliferation of such files in the *Presidencia* series of the AHN.

Instructions issued by Primo de Rivera to the newly-appointed Military-Civil Governors of the provinces on 9 October also approved of the use of denunciation as a means of gathering information for the inspection work that they were to carry out.<sup>61</sup> This was followed by a set of directives sent by Martínez Anido to the *Delegados Gubernativos* on 7 December, which ordered them to make edicts stating that the residents in each of the villages they inspected would be able to make administrative complaints to them both in writing and in person at specified times.<sup>62</sup> We know very little about the denunciations made directly to the *Delegados Gubernativos*, as most of these appear to have been resolved on an *ad hoc* basis, without the need to inform Madrid. Due to the highly fragmented nature of the documents remaining in the archives it would be almost impossible to estimate the full scale of the denunciation that these edicts encouraged. The memoir of E.T.L. (Enrique Tomás y Lucas), a *Delegado* at this time, reports that he received some 216 denunciations and complaints during the first month of his assignment in Toledo alone.<sup>63</sup> The number of denunciations received by the *Delegados* and state administration alike declined rapidly after the introduction of the Municipal Statute, as the government's priorities focused on securing the future of the regime and the *Delegados'* responsibilities were reduced accordingly.

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<sup>60</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 18/09/1923, Article 5.

<sup>61</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 221.

<sup>62</sup> 'Previsiones que para el mejor desempeño de sus cargos deben tener presentes los Delegados gubernativos,' AHN, FF CC, Gobernación (Serie A), Bundle 17, File 12, 07/12/1923.

<sup>63</sup> E.T.L., *En la dictadura. Por pueblos y aldeas: de las memorias de un delegado gubernativo* (Toledo: Editorial Católica Toledana, 1928), 51–52. These files, and the many others like them, then entered the ministerial archives and found themselves mixed with the letters that were sent directly to Primo de Rivera in Madrid.

On 30 October, 1923, the government formalised the process for making official complaints about the conduct of municipal governments, the primary battle ground in Primo's campaign to eradicate *caciquismo*.<sup>64</sup> In the preamble to this law the dictator invoked a regenerationist form of populism by declaring that the government wished citizens to assist it to an even greater degree in the eradication of corruption. However, he also warned that "it is essential to encourage all of the social classes to make their complaints publicly, without hiding behind odious anonymity or resorting to taking refuge in grievous, useless and sterile pessimism." To this end, all adult residents of Spain would be permitted to present written or oral complaints at designated sessions of their local municipal council. These would then be passed on to the provincial Civil Government. Complainants were to be given a prominent seat in the council chamber from which to make their opinions known and they were to be afforded the same protection from accusations of slander as councillors themselves. Details of the decree were to be posted on the doors of all of the nation's *Ayuntamientos*, separate from any other notices. Failure to heed these complaints would result in a fine of between 50 and 2000 pesetas, which would be doubled if a mayor was found to be responsible. Occasional denunciations were made to the authorities about the way in which such complaints were treated by municipal officials; often this was due to some misunderstanding by the aggrieved individual.<sup>65</sup>

The emphasis which Primo placed on publicity in this process is highly significant. The denunciations which the population made to the authorities in the early months of the dictatorship were not merely the expression of grievances, or petitions that demanded that some administrative wrong be righted; they were made in the clear understanding that punishment would be issued by the regime to the deviants they identified, where appropriate.<sup>66</sup> Yet by insisting that denouncers make their allegations in this public arena, Primo sought to transform the denunciation into

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<sup>64</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 30/10/1923.

<sup>65</sup> Félix Rodríguez of La Coruña, for example, was denied the opportunity to speak at a council meeting in the city by the Secretary. He alleged that the decision had been taken nefariously at the request of the Mayor-*cacique* but the Ministry of the Interior found that it was because he had brought no identification with him, as required by the law. AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 1807, 27/11/1923 & 08/01/1924.

<sup>66</sup> As Calbet notes, from October to December 1923 the pages of most Spanish newspapers were filled with reports on the dismissal and detention of municipal administrators by the regime. González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 221.

a claim; that is, into a positive act of citizenship. This can also be detected in the regime's eventual insistence that all denunciations be signed by their writers. As we will also see below, the conversion of denunciation into claim was assisted by the ambiguity of the language which Primo, figures in the state bureaucracy and denouncers alike employed when describing the practice. Despite this measure, many citizens continued to send their complaints directly to the state administration in Madrid, often while explicitly calling for officials responsible to be punished for their excesses, with the latter party unaware that this was taking place, thus negating the element of publicity Primo called for. This would eventually require the introduction of additional regulations by the government, which will be detailed later in this chapter.

### **The language of denunciation and the myth of anonymity**

As Fitzpatrick and Gellately have remarked, nothing about denunciation is more striking than the contradictions of its representation. In the French language, they observe, there are two separate words to describe the practice, one positive and the other negative, both with roots in the revolutionary period and each with its surrounding discourse: these are *délation* and *dénonciation*, respectively. The first of these is associated with betrayal and feelings of malice; the second is a publicly-spirited act of civic virtue, often invoked in the name of truth and justice.<sup>67</sup> Colin Lucas has explored this dichotomy in detail in relation to the French Revolution. For the leaders of the Revolution, whose education had been conducted through reference to the classical world, ancient Rome, with its informal legal system based largely on denunciation, had provided a useful but tainted model, for those patricians who denounced others – *delatores* in Latin – typically received rewards.<sup>68</sup> The revolutionaries in France sought to overcome this by reconceiving denunciation as a 'critical act of citizenship,' which expressed disinterested civic virtue – this was '*dénonciation*.' As a means of discouraging the baser temptations associated with denunciation, including the settling of private scores, they placed a new emphasis on publicity by demanding that denouncers sign their statements and be subject to

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<sup>67</sup> Fitzpatrick and Gellately, "Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation," 763–65.

<sup>68</sup> Colin Lucas, "The Theory and Practice of Denunciation in the French Revolution," *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 772.

punishment should their claims be found to be untrue.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, their measures sought to add a double lock of popular oversight to the equation, that of public opinion as ultimate arbiter. While this seemed to appeal to Enlightenment notions of the general will, it came with the very real danger that mass involvement might cause the denunciatory process to overflow from the confined legal and civic space in which it had been meant to operate. Revolutionary democracy, as Lucas notes, was an unstable idea. Although the revolution's leaders espoused the sovereignty of the people, it was inherently fallible and could be lead astray, hence, perhaps, some of the excesses of the subsequent Terror. As it stood, one of the first acts of the Thermidorian Reaction was to limit the impact of denunciation by declaring that counter-revolutionary acts committed without counter-revolutionary intentions were not crimes.<sup>70</sup> That said, the duality of this discourse of 'good' and 'bad' denunciation was by no means absolute, nor was it universal. As Megan Koreman has shown, this time in twentieth-century France, civic-minded *dénonciation* was exhorted successfully by the Vichy government in patriotic tones in order to hunt down its political enemies. The Liberation of France in 1944 and the subsequent waves of punishment, the *épuration légale*, together with its spontaneous, informal counterpart, the *épuration sauvage*, though, saw this activity reclassified as the more negative *délation* and it was harshly punished both by the courts and by the mob.<sup>71</sup>

The history of Spain does contain some historic precedents to the practice of denunciation, even if this was a matter of saving souls, rather than the *Patria*. What is striking about the denunciation seen during the Inquisition is its often petty nature, made against a backdrop of community and family disputes. As Henry Kamen notes, in such situations the Inquisition itself was manipulated by ordinary people, to such an extent that, here quoting Fabio López-Lázaro, he writes, "the public nature of this vengeance was a pious legal fiction that hid private affairs, private concerns and

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<sup>69</sup> This was also the case in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany at the height of their respective dictatorships' totalitarian violence. Fitzpatrick, "Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s"; de Toro Muñoz, "Policía, denuncia y control social."

<sup>70</sup> Lucas, "The Theory and Practice of Denunciation in the French Revolution," particularly 772-778.

<sup>71</sup> Megan Koreman, *The Expectation of Justice: France, 1944-1946* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999), 94.

private vindictiveness, transforming the private world of recrimination and victimization into the public world of judgements and sanctions.”<sup>72</sup>

The Spanish language nowadays does not distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ denunciation in the same way as French, nor did the discourses related to this distinction emerge around the practice in the nineteenth century. In the modern usage, the Spanish terms *delación* and *denunciación* broadly mirror the French ones of *délation* and *dénonciation* in structure and spelling, though the second of these terms – *denunciación* - is now antiquated. Instead, it is more common to see or hear the word *denuncia*, which has a variety of meanings, including ‘complaint’ and ‘report’ (made formally to the authorities), as well as ‘denunciation’ itself.<sup>73</sup> *Delación* is often the term preferred in academic writing as its meaning as an accusation is clearer, but there are exceptions to this observation.<sup>74</sup> Letter-writers in Spain would often deliberately miscategorise their denunciations as other forms of petition by employing these words. It is quite common, therefore, to encounter the use of words like *queja*, which means ‘complaint’ both in a formal and an informal sense, or simply *mensaje* (message) or *carta* (letter) by those who denounced others.<sup>75</sup> When the residents of the village of Constantina (Sevilla) collectively denounced the local *Secretario-cacique*, for example, they referred to the contents of their letter as “complaints and claims

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<sup>72</sup> Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 226–33, quotation 228.

<sup>73</sup> This was also the case in Soviet Russia during the latter years of Stalin’s rule. Vladimir A. Kozlov, “Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance: A Study of Denunciations and Their Bureaucratic Handling from Society Police Archives, 1944-1953,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (1996): 874.

<sup>74</sup> Note the title of one of the works already cited in this chapter: de Toro Muñoz, “Policía, denuncia y control social.” A survey of historical dictionaries can help us understand the nuances in the meaning of these words. The first edition of the authoritative *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, published by the Spanish Royal Academy in 1780, states that *delación* and *denunciación* are synonymous, with both meaning either “notice” (aviso) or “The accusation, or report, which is given in the judgement/trial of a person for a crime which they are supposed to have committed.” By the 12th edition (1884), however, *denunciación* had become synonymous with *denuncia*, as well as *delación*. This remained the case in the 15th edition, published during the dictatorship in 1925. Nevertheless, it was uncommon to see either the words *delación* or *denunciación* in the letters sent by ordinary people to the authorities, or, indeed, official responses to these. Uniquely, the 1925 edition is the first that contains the sub-entry of *denuncia falsa*, something it describes as a “false accusation of a crime punishable by law, made before a public servant who is obliged to pursue it.” It is not clear if this was meant as a form of social commentary by the Royal Academy. See *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 1st ed. (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1780); *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 12th ed. (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1884); *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 15th ed. (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1925).

<sup>75</sup> This was common in the Soviet case also. Fitzpatrick, “Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s,” 865.

which demand justice, for the good of our Patria.”<sup>76</sup> Government officials also seemed to avoid making direct reference to the practice of denunciation by employing similar terms in their internal correspondence.<sup>77</sup> In doing so, they were attempting to place denunciation within permissible bureaucratic genres, thereby avoiding posing themselves difficult questions about their conduct.<sup>78</sup> In some cases the authorities could also misinterpret the intentions of letter-writers or miscategorise their petitions due to the ambiguity of what they read, as a resident of Almegíjar (Granada) discovered.<sup>79</sup> “It was not my intention to personally denounce anyone,” he clarified. “If I did so it was through error or a lack of sufficient intelligence to understand the gravity of words which I found, because of this I ask that [Your Excellency] permit me to withdraw said words and apologise to the person that I have offended with them.”<sup>80</sup> It is not clear if the letter-writer did this under duress or of his own volition.

Denouncers would also typically state their credentials as good citizens, loyal supporters of the regime and apolitical observers, a reflection of Primo’s efforts to discredit liberalism. The residents of Valtablado del Río (Guadalajara), for example, wrote:

Of their own accord and as good citizens, lovers of order, truth and justice, [the below signed] see themselves required to turn to the Military Directorate and make it known to it that the municipal administration of this village on this date is ruled over by the Secretary of the Ayuntamiento Olallo Guerrero (the master of the village and great political *cacique* of the *Romanonista* faction, who is known as such in all of this land).<sup>81</sup>

Written in an impersonal and rather passive voice, the letter repeats the common trope of disinterested intervention. Few, of course, would admit that their motivation

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<sup>76</sup> Original: When the residents of the village of Constantina (Sevilla) collectively denounced the local Secretario-*cacique*, for example, they referred to the contents of their letter as “quejas y reclamaciones, que demandan justicia, para bien de nuestra Patria.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1221, 14/11/1923.

<sup>77</sup> Tomás y Luque, for example, makes repeated use of the word *queja* in his memoir, which catalogues the purges. Amongst other instances, see E.T.L., *Por pueblos y aldeas*, 47.

<sup>78</sup> Fitzpatrick and Gellately, “Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation,” 758–59.

<sup>79</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1222, 19/11/1923.

<sup>80</sup> Original: “No fue mi objeto denunciar personalmente a nadie,” he clarified, “si lo hice fue por error o falta de inteligencia para conocer la importancia de las palabras que conseguí, por ello ruego a VE me permita retirar dichas palabras y pedir perdón a la persona que con ellas haya ofendido.”

<sup>81</sup> Original: The residents of Valtablado del Río (Guadalajara), for example, wrote: “Movidos por impulso propio y como buenos ciudadanos, amantes del orden, la verdad y la justicia, se ven precisados a acudir ante la presidencia del Directorio militar y poner en su conocimiento que la administración del municipio de este pueblo de la fecha está regida por el Secretario del Ayuntamiento Olallo González (amo del pueblo y un gran cacique político romanonista, conocido por tal en toda esta tierra).” AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 1908, 18/10/1923.

was anything but a desire to see the *Patria* rescued from the crisis it faced. In another case, a man began his denunciation by stating plainly that “I write to your [Excellency] to let you know what has been happening in this village for several years due to cursed *caciquismo*,” before he detailed various abuses which he had observed in his village.<sup>82</sup> This was a popular strategy as it always kept the denouncer a step or two removed from any punishment that was subsequently imposed on their target – according to such a view, these were always at the discretion of the authorities, whom letter-writers merely informed of the truth. Similarly, a professor of veterinary surgery from Montefrío (Jaén) wrote as “a lover of my fatherland” to denounce his neighbour there, firm in the belief that, “we must all assist in the work of regeneration launched with great heart by the Directorate, informing it of everything that we believe to be harmful to the health of the State and rectifiable.”<sup>83</sup> In this case, a rather formulaic sense of civic duty seemed to leave the letter-writer with no choice but to denounce his target.

While the discourses surrounding the act of denunciation varied by period and circumstance, the format that these letters took in Spain was remarkably uniform. This was due in part to the school system, where formal letter-writing was taught to pupils using specialised textbooks oriented around everyday situations.<sup>84</sup> Most of those who denounced others during the regime, therefore, treated their letters as any other form of petition, often entreating the government to take action against their target in a rather formal manner that was infused with the language of deference. As Connelly has observed in another context, the language of petition and denunciation were often

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<sup>82</sup> Original: In another case, a man began his denunciation by stating plainly that “me dirijo a su E para hacerle saber lo que en este pueblo está ocurriendo hace varios años por el maldito caciquismo,” before he detailed various abuses which he had observed in his village. AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 2087, 10/12/1923

<sup>83</sup> Original: Similarly, a professor of veterinary surgery from Montefrío (Jaén) wrote as “yo como amante de mi patria” to denounce his neighbour there, firm in the belief that, “todos debemos coadyuvar a la obra de regeneración emprendida con ahínco por el Directorio, informándolo de todo aquello que creamos lesivo a la salud del Estado y subsanable.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 2213, 10/12/1923.

<sup>84</sup> The subject of how letter-writing was taught in schools in Spain has been treated in Sierra Blas, “¡Cuidado con la pluma! Los manuales epistolares en el siglo XX.”



conflated by letter-writers as the former was regarded as a zero-sum game, which required the exclusion of someone else in order to satisfy a given request.<sup>85</sup>

The letters written to the authorities, be these denunciations or petitions of a general nature, typically began with a short statement of biographical information - usually the name of the letter-writer, their age, employment, civil status, and, if in possession of such, the number of that person's identification card (*cédula personal*). In the absence of this information, the letters were, at the very least, usually signed by their author or authors. Thus, in the majority of cases letters of denunciation were *not* anonymous, as has been suggested in much of the literature on the period.<sup>86</sup> On the contrary, most authors seemed to regard the signing of their name as an essential element of the process, as if it were any other type of formal letter. The regime, for its part, placed particular emphasis on identifying denouncers as part of their investigations into the accusations they made. In most cases where letters were supplied anonymously, particularly from 1924 onward, the regime discounted their allegations by default.<sup>87</sup> To suggest that most letters were signed by their authors does not mean to say that the claims made in them were true. In fact, false, or simply unverifiable, denunciations represented a far greater problem for the authorities than anonymous letters, as did the very process of determining their veracity in general.

Writing and bureaucratic organisation, as Weber and Goody tell us, are inherently connected.<sup>88</sup> From a bureaucratic point of view, the expectation by the authorities that denouncers should sign their letters made the task of verifying their allegations much simpler. Signing such a letter implied an acceptance of this organisational logic by the complainant. By conforming to the processes of 'governmentality' individuals could interact with the state on the terms that it was

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<sup>85</sup> Connelly, "The Uses of Volksgemeinschaft," 905.

<sup>86</sup> For references to this in recent studies, see: Jordi Casassas Ymbert, *La dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1923-1930): textos* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1983), 33; Ben-Ami, *Dictadura*, 68; Leandro Álvarez Rey, *Bajo el fuero militar: la dictadura de Primo de Rivera en sus documentos, 1923-1930* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2006), 35; Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 45–46. Contemporary accounts in Soldevilla, *El año político (1923)*, 377–78; Villanueva, *La dictadura militar*, 123.

<sup>87</sup> As Fitzpatrick has pointed out in her work, this was also the case in Stalinist Russia, where the level of anonymous denunciation has been exaggerated in the popular imagination. Fitzpatrick, "Supplicants and Citizens," 85.

<sup>88</sup> Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. Hans Heinrich Gerth and Charles Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 197; Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 87–126.

identifying as acceptable, something which allowed them engage in a struggle to obtain benefits from it. There is, of course, also a symbolic meaning to the handwritten signature. In signing their denunciations, letter-writers gave them the hallmarks of claims made by citizens and rights-bearers. Signatures, as Cody has suggested, summarising the view of J.L. Austin, “are performative, tethering names to intentions, subjects, and agency, and doing things with words.”<sup>89</sup> Jacques Derrida proposed something similar, although, paradoxically, and quite deliberately, he argues that the signature may retrospectively create the subject which they are meant to represent.<sup>90</sup> This shows the inherent tension between representation (constative structure in the Derridean terminology) and creation (performative structure) in such claims.<sup>91</sup> In other words, in the act of signing there is a tension between acting like a citizen who already exists and becoming one through that very action. In the view of Cody, who writes about the post-colonial India, although the same might also be said about Spain during the dictatorship, the state’s obsession with creating proper citizens for the purposes of ‘governmentality,’ however it defines these citizens, means that the alignment of representation and creation is always deferred.<sup>92</sup> Yet if we take Somers’ assertion that citizenship is not a status granted by the state but rather an ‘instituted process’ that is mediated by specific institutional relations, then we appreciate, first, that this dynamic is always *on-going* and, second, that citizenship is never a static concept; rather it undergoes constant negotiation and re-negotiation.<sup>93</sup> Thus the act of signing, even with all of the ambiguity this entails, can be seen as a genuine declaration of the capacity for self-representation and a will to be a citizen, even if these are *incomplete*.

The length of accusations varied significantly from letter to letter. This seems to have depended on a number of different factors, including the letter-writer’s level of education, his or her economic resources (which determined the quantity of paper to be used) and the extent of his or her knowledge about the incident(s) in question. In the case of denouncers whose literacy was precarious, their messages often spoke

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<sup>89</sup> Cody, “Inscribing Subjects to Citizenship,” 2009, 366.

<sup>90</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Declarations of Independence,” trans. Tom Keenan and Tom Pepper, *New Political Science* 7, no. 1 (1986): 7–15.

<sup>91</sup> Cody, “Inscribing Subjects to Citizenship,” 2009, 367.

<sup>92</sup> Francis Cody, “Inscribing Subjects to Citizenship: Petitions, Literacy Activism, and the Performativity of Signature in Rural Tamil India,” *Cultural Anthropology* 24, no. 3 (2009): 367.

<sup>93</sup> Somers, “Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere.”

only of specific occurrences and made few attempts at generalisation. It was also rare for them to provide proof for any claims that appeared to them to be self-evident, despite the regime's insistence that complaints be accompanied by documentary evidence.<sup>94</sup> Some denunciations were made on the basis of rumour alone and had to be kept short by their authors by default. Others were written with extensive supporting documentation, including signed statements, copies of legal documents and even specially prepared booklets of evidence. Most included a formal petition that the government take action against the person or persons identified in the letter.<sup>95</sup> This was often interwoven with the other requests, something which made the distinction between denunciation and supplication all the more ambiguous. Some letter-writers would merely request that Primo order that an inspection take place to verify their accusations without explicitly calling for repression. Others would bypass this entirely and demand that the officials be punished summarily.

Whether or not a denouncer signed his or her letter became a serious matter of concern for the regime. In a letter to the Mayor of Cuenca, the provincial Military-Civil Governor suggested that he and his staff spent considerable time studying the signatures of letter-writers and cross-checking their names against official registers. The Governor of Valladolid made a similar comment to Martínez Anido in December 1923.<sup>96</sup> The practice of anonymous denunciation, while limited, provoked considerable ire in government.<sup>97</sup> To counter these problems, the regime tended to delve into the background of most denouncers, even if there was no immediate concern as to their identity. Membership of certain political parties, even in the past, for example, could influence the response of the authorities. Antonio Yrigoyen of Málaga detailed how he had contacted the authorities several times before to complain that the inspection of the *Ayuntamiento* in the city had failed to dislodge the local *cacique*. The Military-Civil Governor of Málaga, who was charged with investigating Yrigoyen's claims, however, reported to Martínez Anido that "this gentleman has written to me on repeated

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<sup>94</sup> Kozlov observes the same in the late Stalinist period in Soviet Russia. Kozlov, "Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance," 883–84.

<sup>95</sup> This resembles the format of *gravamina* presented by the estates to institutionalised representative assemblies in the early-modern period. Würgler, "Voices," 31–32.

<sup>96</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 256, 09/11/1923; AHN, Bundle 56, File 1849, 20/12/1923.

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, the case of the Army colonel who wished to have an anonymous letter-writer jailed for misleading the authorities. AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3419, 23/01/1923.

occasions” and that he was a former Maurista councillor “who likes to feature in politics, which he was part of permanently.”<sup>98</sup> Similarly, in the case of Cristobal Bonilla, a lawyer from Las Palmas, who denounced three local officials for serving the *cacique* in October 1923, the Military-Civil Governor of Canarias was quick to identify him as a trouble-maker, whose allegations should be disregarded. “I get the feeling that this is a rather lyrical and insincere complaint,” he wrote. “This (gentleman) lawyer has always featured in the most advanced political parties, standing out due to his lack of love for the regime and his fondness for rabble-rousing movements.”<sup>99</sup>

There is little evidence to suggest how the regime treated the authors of what it regarded as false denunciations in 1923, other than isolated cases of fines that were imposed *ad hoc* by provincial Governors.<sup>100</sup> To circumvent the problems presented by anonymous and false denunciations, the government introduced two important decrees in December 1923 and January 1924. The first sought to harmonise the process for civil servants who wished to make internal complaints about the conduct of their colleagues.<sup>101</sup> It provided that all such complaints should be submitted to the head of the relevant section, who would then be obliged to pass them on to the *Directorio Militar* in the space of five days. Article 3 also threatened that the complainants would be held responsible for the content of their claims and subject to punishment, including the possibility of trial, if these were proved to be malicious or false.

The second decree, issued on 27 January, 1924, was introduced after a key declaration of policy by Primo de Rivera. In a *nota oficiosa* published widely on 21 January, Primo announced the end of his purge of the old political élite and the “beginning of a new task of construction, which has long been in preparation.”<sup>102</sup> The

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<sup>98</sup> Original: The Military-Civil Governor of Málaga, who was charged with investigating Yrigoyen’s claims, however, reported to Martínez Anido that “en reiteradas ocasiones me ha escrito [este señor]” and that he was a former Maurista councillor “que le gusta figurar en la política en la que actuaba permanentemente.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1217, 10/11/1923.

<sup>99</sup> Original: “Me [produce] la sensación de una queja algo lírica y poco sincera,” he wrote. “Este Sr abogado ha figurado siempre en los partidos más avanzados, distinguiéndose por su falta de amor al régimen y su afición a los movimientos populacheros.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 150, 08/10/1923.

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, a case from Castellón in which the Military-Civil Governor imposed a 75 peseta fine on the author of an anonymous letter. AHN, Primo, Bundle 53, File 831, 05/12/1923.

<sup>101</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 14/12/1923.

<sup>102</sup> Reproduced in Fernando Soldevilla, *El año político (1924)* (Madrid, 1924), 20.

regime, he noted, had encountered little resistance to its earliest reforms and saw no reason to increase the severity of its actions. As such, Primo wrote that he had instructed all government authorities to avoid inflicting “any material or moral damage to citizens or causing unnecessary disruption to their businesses or legitimate lifestyles.” The *nota* came with the rare admission that in the first three months of the dictatorship “the need to act through quick initiatives, with overzealousness and even a lack of consistency” might have caused “some exaggerated behaviour, which is to be regretted and was sometimes even inflicted on people that are supporters of the current regime.”

The following week Primo established new rules aimed at reconciling “unavoidable mission of investigating and purging abuses, cases of negligence, offences and crimes that were occurring in alarming proportion, with serene and confident guarantees for citizens as to their freedom, rights and legitimate lifestyles.”<sup>103</sup> Of its five articles, the first was the most important. This stated that anonymous denunciations should no longer be investigated by the authorities, at least while the facts of the case had not yet been confirmed. The Military-Civil Governors were also forbidden from imposing sanctions on the basis of denunciations, unless the accusations were of a criminal nature, in which case they would also be obliged to pass these on to the courts. Government agents were also warned to take measures to ensure that the reputation of those under investigation was not sullied until any sanctions against them became definitive, while also avoiding any unnecessary invasions of their privacy. Furthermore, the decree stated that any cases not encompassed in the law should be guided by its spirit so as to achieve “a change in habits in any aspects where they are immoral and, through the strong and exemplary conduct of the Authorities, accustom the citizenry to fulfilling its duties.” This represented a major departure from the first three months of the regime, during which the Governors were given something of a free hand, and ultimately marked a decline in the use of denunciations by the regime.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, these measures

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<sup>103</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 29/01/1924.

<sup>104</sup> This contrasts starkly to the repression unleashed by the Nationalist state upon its victory in the Spanish Civil War. As Anderson notes, denunciations submitted to the post-war military tribunals did not have to be signed until 1941. Anderson, “Singling Out Victims,” 16.

were only skin-deep: the state of war remained in place and constitutional guarantees had not been reinstated. Indeed, the final years of the dictatorship would see a complete reversal of these policies as the regime resorted to increasingly severe methods of repression amid the disintegration of its fleeting coalition of supporters. This is a topic to which we will return in Chapter Five.

### **The excesses of *caciquismo***

It would be impossible to describe the practices of *caciquismo* in all the detail they require here due both to their variation by region and the manner in which they evolved during the course of the Restoration era. In this section I have grouped an exemplary selection of denunciations together according to loose themes, which follow on from one to the other. The analysis below does not seek to describe *caciquismo* itself, but rather the language that ordinary people used to denounce it. The letters upon which it is based do not describe any of the more technical aspects of *caciquismo*, like vote management or the division of state resources within clientelistic networks.<sup>105</sup> Instead, almost all discuss matters of a local nature, typically issues that fell within the realm of municipal government in Spain. This is hardly surprising, for, as Moreno Luzón has written, local administrations have been the privileged sphere of clientelistic politics world-over.<sup>106</sup> As such, these letters denounced many cases of what might be regarded as the bread and butter of local manifestations of *caciquismo* – interference in military service exemptions, unfair taxes and misappropriation of public funds, for example. Abuses of power, the neglect of duties and moral breakdowns were all common petitionary themes world-over, giving them what Kozlov has, in another context, called a “timeless character,” though in this case they were all framed in the regime’s language of anti-*caciquismo*.<sup>107</sup>

This did not mean that the focus of the letter-writers was confined to exclusively to the *patria chica*, that is to say, “the lived unit of existence whether

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<sup>105</sup> On these two topics, see, for example, Tusell, *La crisis del caciquismo*; Robles Egea and Álvarez Junco, *Política en penumbra*.

<sup>106</sup> Javier Moreno Luzón, “‘El poder público hecho cisco’. Clientelismo e instituciones políticas en la España de la Restauración,” in *Política en penumbra. Patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea*, ed. Antonio Robles Egea and José Álvarez Junco (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1996), 171.

<sup>107</sup> Kozlov, “Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance,” 871.

variably village, neighbourhood, town or city," or, indeed, to what Ferdinand Tönnies referred to as *Gemeinschaft*.<sup>108</sup> Their denunciations implied a widespread acceptance that national regeneration would begin in the towns and villages of Spain, and that the population's participation would be required in order to achieve this goal and stabilise the new regime. Thus, they tried to fold local problems into the big political questions posed by the regime about the future of the nation. Furthermore, they expressed a desire to be listened to by the government, a theme that arises in many of the letters below, as we will see. Because of this, and as alluded to above, these denunciations must always be understood in the context of certain "archaic survivals" in Spanish society, most notably what might have elsewhere been called "the lack of a tradition of legal resolution in disputes between political institutions and the individual."<sup>109</sup> In this way, despite their direct link to government repression, these denunciations also represented claims to citizenship rights.

A group of neighbours from Constantina (Sevilla) described a remarkable story of engaged citizenship and self-sufficiency in a letter which ultimately criticised the new regime, as well as the governments of the past.<sup>110</sup> For twenty years, the same individuals had controlled the local *Ayuntamiento* and inflicted "un incalificable caciquismo" (an indescribable *caciquismo*) on the population there. Despite voicing their complaints to every one of the Civil Governors in the province during that time, the government never took any action as the district was considered the "patrimony of the deceased former Minister of the Crown D. Pedro Rodríguez de la Borbolla."<sup>111</sup> Three years before their time of writing, the residents waged what they called a "titanic struggle" against the local notables in order to install five independent councillors, "whose only colours were to try to defend the interests of this city from the *caciques* who had it caught in their claws and now have it in a terrible state of

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<sup>108</sup> Helen Graham, "Spain 1936. Resistance and Revolution: The Flaws in the Front," in *Opposing Fascism. Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe*, ed. Tim Kirk and Anthony McElligott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 66. On the *cacique*-dominated world as *Gemeinschaft* see Robles Egea, "Sistemas políticos, mutaciones y modelos," 233.

<sup>109</sup> I have borrowed the language of Kozlov, who describes the late-Stalinist experience of denunciation richly. Kozlov, "Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance," 867.

<sup>110</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1221, 14/11/1923.

<sup>111</sup> Original: Despite voicing their complaints to every one of the Civil Governors in the province during that time, the government never took any action as the district was considered the "patrimonio del fallecido ex-ministro de la Corona D. Pedro Rodríguez de la Borbolla."

abandonment.” Their efforts, however, were in vain as “*caciquismo* was able to rely on the full protection of the links in the political chain of the old regime.”<sup>112</sup> Shortly after the creation of the dictatorship the neighbours took action and established a commission of citizens, which they sent to the provincial capital to denounce the activities of the “*Secretario-cacique*,” Don Rafael Sotomayor, in person to the new Military-Civil Governor there. In a passage which is worth reproducing here in full, they based their accusations on what they described as

the lavishness in which he lived, while enjoying a modest salary of 7,000 pesetas and having no other business dealings to speak of; on the fact that he was, and this is in the public domain, a road contractor, even though his accomplices had emerged; and on the fact that the municipal administration was disastrous and abominable, there being no human means of seeing any documents in the *Ayuntamiento*, even by the councillors themselves.<sup>113</sup>

When the regime ordered the dissolution of the nation’s *Ayuntamientos* on 30 September, Sotomayor stage-managed the selection of the new administration by issuing instructions to the *Vocales Asociados* on whom they were to vote for, something which the letter-writers regarded as “clear proof of *caciquismo* – still dominant in this city.”<sup>114</sup> This time the regime was more receptive to the complaints of the villagers and, in a response to the letter, wrote that it had moved to dismiss Sotomayor and pass his case on to the courts so that he could be formally prosecuted.<sup>115</sup>

Many denunciations took the personal wealth of municipal administrators as a sign of their corruption and status as *caciques*, as in the example just seen. In some

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<sup>112</sup> Original: Three years before their time of writing the residents waged what they called a “titánica lucha” against the local notables in order to install five independent councillors, “que solo tenían por bandera intentar defender los intereses de esta ciudad de las garras de los caciques que la llevaban y la tienen en lamentable abandono.” Their efforts, however, were in vain as “el caciquismo contaba con toda la protección de los eslabones que componían la cadena política del antiguo régimen.”

<sup>113</sup> Original: In a passage which is worth reproducing here in full, they based their accusations on what they described as: “la suntuosidad con que vive, disfrutando un modesto sueldo de 7,000 pesetas y no teniendo otros negocios confesables, en que era, y esto es del dominio público, contratista de carreteras, aunque aparezcan testaferrros y en que la administración municipal era desastrosa y detestable, no habiendo medio humano de ver ningún documento en el Ayuntamiento, ni aun por los mismos concejales.”

<sup>114</sup> Original: When the regime ordered the dissolution of the nation’s *Ayuntamientos* on 30 September, Sotomayor stage-managed the selection of the new administration by issuing instructions to the *Vocales Asociados* on who they were to vote for, something which the letter-writers regarded as “una prueba evidente del caciquismo – imperante aun, en esta hermosa población.”

<sup>115</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1221, 04/01/1924.



cases, this was clearly justified, as there were numerous incidents of fraud and improper bookkeeping by mayors and secretaries who misappropriated public funds across Spain. In others, this was merely speculation or rumour, even if such observations were offered to the authorities with few, if any, caveats by those who made them. In such circumstances, these denunciations tended to conform to conventional social stereotypes about the lifestyles of the rich. José Fernández Escobar, a resident of Escacena del Campo (Huelva), for example, complained that his father had been threatened with embargo by a corrupt mayor, the son-in-law of the principal *cacique* in the province, for failing to pay municipal taxes.<sup>116</sup> “This way of proceeding,” he alleged, “is all advised by a secretary who possesses no capital at all but has a very large family [sic] they eat and dress and walk about as if they were princes and princesses.”<sup>117</sup> A group of residents of Castro del Río made similar allegations about a property registrar in their municipality, José del Castillo y Martínez, who, they observed, “came to this village with even less than the most essential to meet the needs of his family.”<sup>118</sup> They had heard from private sources that del Castillo had only be able to complete his university degree while simultaneously working in the *Ayuntamiento* of Alcalá-Real (Jaén): “His economic situation was pressed [because] he came from a family without a céntimo of capital.” Since his arrival in the area he had been “committing multiple and infinite outrages against the residents, doubtlessly because he can rely on the support of the Deputy or *cacique*,” and had managed to amass impossible savings of 90,000 pesetas, various plots of land and shares in local factories, all while maintaining his family. They wondered if there was not some legal means of verifying this by collecting the testimony of local residents, “because we would know approximately the yield of the registry and it is not possible (unless by stealing) that one could gather such an enormous amount of capital by working conscientiously; we believe that this will be easy to look into and deduce the however-many per cent that correspond to him.” “The main part of the case,” they added, “is

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<sup>116</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 53, File 946, 06/11/1923.

<sup>117</sup> Original: “Estos modos de proceder,” he alleged, “son aconsejados todos por un secretario que no tiene ningún capital y si mucha familia comen y visten y se pasean como si fuesen príncipes.”

<sup>118</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 286, c. October 1923. Original version aggregated below.

the denunciation, and now, as to what happens next, the Directorate will know.”<sup>119</sup> Here again, the letter-writers sought to remove themselves from the ultimate end of the denunciation, which was to achieve the punishment of del Castillo. When the regime investigated the allegations further, all of the men who signed the denunciation denied knowledge of it and officials were forced to dismiss it. No further details were given.<sup>120</sup>

In the village of Bienservida (Albacete) a group of eight men denounced the activities of the municipal administration for infinite abuses.<sup>121</sup> Their denunciation followed a similar script to the one above. The local *cacique*, Luis Serrano Navarro, they wrote, “came to this village more than 30 years ago in canvas sandals [*alpargatas*] and dressed in rags to carry out the role of Secretary of the *Ayuntamiento*; today he is the richest man in the village and he hasn’t had any other income than the funds of the *Ayuntamiento*, which he has drawn upon at his whim.”<sup>122</sup> Their description of Serrano as wearing *alpargatas* was particularly evocative, as the rope-soled sandals were a symbol of the Spanish peasantry, a past he seemed to have transcended long ago through his corrupt acts. His colleague in the *Ayuntamiento*, the Mayor, José Antonio Judán, they alleged, had also amassed a considerable personal fortune and together they controlled access to the local forest area, from which they had surreptitiously harvested pine trees. This was all in the public domain, assured the

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<sup>119</sup> Original: A group of residents of Castro del Río made similar allegations about a property registrar in their municipality, José del Castillo y Martínez, who, they observed, “vino a este pueblo, cono menos aun, de lo indispensable para atender a las necesidades de su familia.” They had heard from private sources that del Castillo had only be able to complete his university degree while simultaneously working in the *Ayuntamiento* of Alcalá-Real (Jaén): “Su situación económica era apurada, [porque] procedía de familia sin un céntimo de capital.” Since his arrival in the area he had been “cometiendo múltiples e infinidad de atropellos con el vecindario, sin duda por contar con el apoyo del Diputado o cacique,” and had managed to amass impossible savings of 90,000 pesetas, various plots of land and shares in local factories, all while maintaining his family. They wondered if there was not some legal means of verifying this by collecting the testimony of local residents, “porque nosotros aproximadamente, sabremos el rendimiento del registro, y no es posible, (nada mas que robando) que obrando conscientemente se pueda reunir un capital tan enorme; creemos, que eso será facil de averiguar deduciendo el tanto por ciento que le puede corresponder.” “Lo principal del caso,” they added, “es la denuncia, y ahora el procedimiento a seguir, ya lo sabe el Directorio.”

<sup>120</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 286, 10/03/1924.

<sup>121</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 227, 25/10/1923.

<sup>122</sup> Original: The local *cacique*, Luis Serrano Navarro, they wrote, “vino a este pueblo en alpargatas y andrajoso, hace más de treinta años a desempeñar el cargo de Secretario del Ayuntamiento; hoy es el más rico del pueblo y no ha tenido más ingresos que los fondos del Ayuntamiento de los que ha dispuesto a su libre albedrio.”

letter-writers, who did not provide any other proof for any of their claims. “It seems impossible but it is true,” they concluded, before adding that Primo “would blush with shame and rage upon seeing that abuses and outrages typical of savage *kábilas* are being committed in Spain, a European country,” one of the many comparisons between Spain and its Moroccan Protectorate to appear in the denunciations from this time.<sup>123</sup>

The wealth which those denounced to the authorities in the examples above were alleged to have amassed contrasted starkly to the impoverished conditions which ordinary people were forced to endure under the old regime. In Castrillo de Cabrera (León), a man for whom writing was clearly not a common activity denounced the municipal Secretary, who had, he claimed, “forced many households into ruin all of us heads of household have to emigrate because it is not possible to live.” “I would like you to take this into consideration,” was his simple request to Primo.<sup>124</sup> Emile Juinin, a French farmer living in Arucas on Fuerteventura (Canarias), wrote in vivid terms to denounce “a *caciquismo* most typical of the old school.” It was public and notorious, he stated, that the market in the town charged vendors excise duties (*arbitrios*) in an arbitrary manner, without ever passing the receipts on the tax authorities, all “to the detriment of the consumer public that sees the cost of living increase on basic necessities.”<sup>125</sup> Moreover, there was little sign of where public moneys were being spent. Juinin’s letter rapidly turned into criticism of the regime, however:

The cause of this situation is naturally the work of the *caciquismo* that has been ruling here for so many years, and which still rules here, with the same methods, the same

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<sup>123</sup> Original: “Parece imposible pero es verdad,” they concluded, before adding that Primo “se enrojar[ía] de vergüenza y cólera al ver que en España, país europea, se cometen abusos y atropellos propios de *kábilas salvajes*,” one of the many comparisons between Spain and its Moroccan Protectorate to appear in the denunciations from this time. Note: See also the case of a group of farmworkers from Moreiros (Orense), who complained that the local *cacique*, Don Leonardo Villerino, “nos trata, señor, como si fuese esta desgraciada aldea un aduar marroquí o una cabila rifeña” (treats us, sir, as if this miserable hamlet were a Moroccan *aduar* or a Riffian *cabila*). AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 242, 10/10/1923.

<sup>124</sup> Original: In Castrillo de Cabrera (León), a man for whom writing was clearly not a common activity denounced the municipal Secretary, who had, he claimed, “*echado muchos ogares hala ruina todos los padres de familia tenemos que emigrar porque es imposible poder bibir.*” “*Desiaria que Vd lo tomara en cuenta*,” was his simple request to Primo. AHN, Primo, Bundle 55, File 1678, 02/11/1923.

<sup>125</sup> Original: Emile Juinin, a French farmer living in Arucas on Fuerteventura (Canarias), wrote in vivid terms to denounce “un *caciquismo* de los más típicos de la vieja escuela.” It was public and notorious, he stated, that the market in the town charged vendors excise duties (*arbitrios*) in an arbitrary manner, without ever passing the receipts on the tax authorities, all “en perjuicio del pueblo consumidor, que así ve aumentado el costo de la vida en los artículos de primera necesidad.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 60, File 4883, 08/04/1924.

lack of initiative, of adaptation to new orientations, and with the vices of the old regime, for lack of initiative and too much submission to the local *caciquismo* which throws its weight around. The new era inaugurated by the MILITARY DIRECTORATE, in this town, has stood out only due to a worsening in the conduct of the old politics.<sup>126</sup>

Juinin asked that the regime gather more testimony from local people, which he believed would show how certain individuals continued to use the local administration for their own advantage.

The cost of basic necessities was a concern for many across Spain in the early months of the dictatorship. In November 1923, for example, Vicente Baldó Franch, a shop worker living in Burriana (Castellón), complained that despite the many good measures already taken by the government “it could almost be maintained that there has been not any change to the old and bad habits in the sale of basic necessities.”<sup>127</sup> The price of bread, “principal alimento de la clase trabajadora,” (main sustenance of the working class) in particular, could cost up to 90 céntimos per kilo in the town and in many cases bakeries did not have the sanctioned weights and measures on show for customers to check the quality of the merchandise. Baldó asked that “for the good of the work of regeneration that [Your Excellency] very wisely undertook and so that the differences that every citizen finds in favour of justice and fair administration become greater each day,” the regime instruct the *Guardia Civil* to enforce these commercial laws.<sup>128</sup> The following month the regime issued a response to Baldó which noted that the Military-Civil Governor had fixed the price of bread at 60 céntimos per kilo and that establishments that broke the law would be closed by the authorities.<sup>129</sup> In the African enclave of Ceuta an anonymous letter-writer alleged that the former Mayor

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<sup>126</sup> Original: Juinin’s letter rapidly turned into criticism of the regime, however: “Esta situación, tiene, naturalmente, como causa, la actuación del caciquismo que aquí ha imperado durante tantisimos años, y que aun impera, con los mismos procedimientos, con toda la falta de iniciativa, de adaptación a las nuevas orientaciones, y con los resabios propios del antiguo régimen, por falta de iniciativas y sobra de sumisión a los eternos mandones del caciquismo local. La nueva era iniciada por el DIRECTORIO MILITAR, en este pueblo, se ha distinguido por un recrudescimiento de la actuación de la vieja política.”

<sup>127</sup> Original: In November 1923, for example, Vicente Baldó Franch, a shop worker living in Burriana (Castellón), complained that despite the many good measures already taken by the government “casi puede afirmarse que no se ha modificado ninguna de las antiguas y malas costumbres en la venta de los artículos de primera necesidad.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1096, 12/11/1923.

<sup>128</sup> Original: Baldó asked that “por el bien de la obra renovadora que VE ha tenido el gran acierto de emprender y, con el fin de que cada día sea mayor la diferencia que todo ciudadano encuentre en favor de la justicia y recta administración pública,” the regime instruct the *Guardia Civil* to enforce these commercial laws.

<sup>129</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1096, 31/12/1923.

had resigned deliberately so that his agent and fellow member of García Prieto's faction of the Liberal Party, Remigio González, could take his place.<sup>130</sup> This new mayor, the anonymous denouncer claimed, was refusing to intervene in a number of important local matters, including the cost of bread, as the head of his political faction, Francisco Ruiz Medina, was reportedly the owner of a bakery and therefore had an interest in inflating prices. "As you will see, all of this is the same kind of politics, which was once reformist and is now *prietista*," the supplicant wrote, as he/she echoed Primo's pronouncements on the arbitrary factionalism of politics.<sup>131</sup> In a letter dispatched to Martínez Anido by the Military—Civil Governor of Cádiz, the province to which Ceuta then belonged, the Governor informed the Subsecretary that he would ensure that "normality" was restored to the municipal administration.<sup>132</sup> While the denunciation was anonymous, it seems that the regime took the claims seriously nevertheless.

At the time of Baldó's and the other anonymous denouncer's writing, the matter of prices had already been the subject of a major government intervention. Initial instructions issued by Primo de Rivera to the *Delegados Gubernativos*, around October 1923, signalled his intention to monitor prices across the country.<sup>133</sup> Accordingly, the *Delegados* were ordered to prepare reports on the state of local markets, with the aim of stamping out speculation and hoarding by sellers. The following month, the government granted itself sweeping powers to intervene in the production and supply of basic necessities.<sup>134</sup> In the preamble to the law, Primo blamed a combinations of the stresses placed on the national economy by the First World War, the opportunism of the capitalist-productive class and the non-interventionist policies of the liberal state. The decree ordered the creation of Central and Provincial Commodity Committees (*Juntas de Abastos*), which would be empowered to regulate prices, restrict the supply of necessities and carry out

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<sup>130</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 411, c. October 1923.

<sup>131</sup> Original: "Como verá V todo esta es la misma política que antes eran reformistas y ahora son prietistas," the supplicant wrote, as he or she echoed Primo's pronouncements on the arbitrary factionalism of politics.

<sup>132</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 411, 15/11/1923.

<sup>133</sup> "Instrucciones a los Delegados gubernativos," AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17A, File 12, no date.

<sup>134</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 04/11/1923.

inspections for this purpose. For Primo it was not a question of preventing hunger, but rather a matter of macroeconomic policy, which he framed in nationalist terms. “Even in the most modest Spanish home,” he wrote, “a rise of two or three céntimos in the price of bread has little effect; but those two or three céntimos are the basis of the countryside’s continued purchasing power and of the general prosperity of all Spaniards.”<sup>135</sup> Price control ultimately proved difficult and the Commodity Committees were unpopular amongst merchants, chambers of commerce and producers throughout the dictatorship.<sup>136</sup>

Wealth also had the power to corrupt those who were once sincere public servants, as Antonio Fajardo López, a former army corporal who had served under Primo in Morocco, made clear in a letter which compared the situation in Villagarcía del Llano (Cuenca) to what he had seen in the African continent.<sup>137</sup> His denunciation, which was written with very little punctuation, expressed concern about “something more important than the administration of a village because it concerns more than the loss of a few million pesetas that have been swindled by *caciques* and political freeloaders: the education and instruction of [the village’s] children.” Matters were so bad in Villagarcía’s schools, he declared, that that education would soon be “more needed here than in Morocco the Protectorate.”<sup>138</sup> The local teacher, Don Matías Cuesta y Sanz, he wrote, had come to the village some twenty years before and carried out his work diligently at first. Soon, he married a rich woman from the village and

since then, protected by *caciquismo* and ruled by self-interest and money-lending, to which he has dedicated himself with enthusiasm, he has abandoned teaching completely, such that no one in the village, with a few rare exceptions, has known how to sign their name in the last twenty years or more, thus condemning this unlucky village to an eternal *caciquismo*... as everyone has to obey the three or four who know how to read and write.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Cited in Rial, *Revolution from Above*, 175.

<sup>136</sup> On agricultural policy more generally see *ibid.*, 175–83; González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 219–23.

<sup>137</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1344, 09/11/1923.

<sup>138</sup> Original: His denunciation, which was written with very little punctuation, expressed concern about “algo más importante que la administración de un pueblo porque interesa este más que la pérdida de unas cuantas miles de pesetas estafadas por los caciques y vividores de la política, la educación e instrucción de sus hijos.” Matters were so bad in Villagarcía’s schools, he declared, that that education would soon be “más necesaria aquí que en Marruecos el Protectorado.”

<sup>139</sup> Original: Soon, he married a rich woman from the village and “desde entonces, amparado por el caciquismo y dominado por el interés y la usura a lo que con entusiasmo se dedica, abandonó tan por

He asked Primo how, if any other civil servant could be dismissed for arriving late to work each morning, this could be allowed to continue for so long in his village. "What must a public servant who has ceased to carry out his duty day on day for twenty years or more deserve," he wondered, "for leaving so many people to live in darkness and preventing them from defending themselves for their whole life?" To Fajardo, the solution to this was clear: "I believe that now more than ever incarcerations, disqualifications and the loss of careers and jobs are justified." Moreover, he demanded that an investigation be carried out, "not by civilians but by members of the military," as the local school inspector was the friend of the teacher, Cuesta, and seemed disinclined to take any action against him.<sup>140</sup> The regime carried out a series of inspections, as Fajardo had requested, although the matter remained unresolved some eight months later as the accused had denied the allegations. Fajardo had ultimately provided no definitive proof and the decision clearly reflected the regime's change in policy towards denunciations in January 1924.<sup>141</sup>

Andres Segura, a man of quite precarious literacy from Guardiola de Berga (Barcelona), told a similar tale of his village.<sup>142</sup> "Dear Sir," he wrote, "I am the father of two children who go to school willing to learn because of their age and they do nothing because a bunch of *caciques* from the village have given the secretary's office to the teacher." "We poor people with children feel the consequences," he added, "because the rich already take them elsewhere to study." Segura asked that Primo send someone to teach the teacher a lesson about the need to give lessons, but requested that this be carried out discreetly: "The *caciques* of this village are bad men

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completo la enseñanza que no hay nadie en el pueblo, salvo raras excepciones que desde veintitantos años para abajo sepa poner su nombre, condenando por tanto a este pueblo desdichado... a un eterno caciquismo, pues todo el mundo ha de estar sometido a las tres o cuatro que sepan leer y escribir."

<sup>140</sup> Original: "¿Qué no merecerá el funcionario público que en veintitantos años ha dejado día por día de cumplir con su deber," he wondered, "dejando vivir en la obscuridad a tanta gente e imposibilitando para la defensa de toda su vida?" To Fajardo, the solution to this was clear: "Creo que nunca como ahora están justificados los presidios, inhabilitaciones y pérdida de carreras y empleos." Moreover, he demanded that an investigation be carried out, "no por hombre civiles, sino por militares," as the local school inspector was the friend of the teacher, Cuesta, and seemed disinclined to take any action against him.

<sup>141</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1344, 17/06/1924.

<sup>142</sup> He did not list a trade or profession. AHN, Primo, Bundle 55, File 1633, 21/11/1923.

and if they know that I am writing to Madrid they would [sic] start to annoy me.”<sup>143</sup> In Noblejos (Toledo) Lorenzo García alleged that the *Ayuntamiento* had sold off buildings belonging to local schools to a former member of the Senate, Adelaido Rodríguez y Fernández, leaving them ill-equipped for lessons, evidence, as García wrote, of a “damned *caciquismo* which has to disappear completely” from schools.<sup>144</sup> The regime also frequently received denunciations from Spaniards who had emigrated from the country. One such letter was sent to Primo by Alfredo Barros, now resident in Ciudad de México.<sup>145</sup> “According to the press in this, the capital of Mexico,” he wrote, “the directorate which you lead has authorised all Spanish citizens to denounce what they know about the municipalities.”<sup>146</sup> The construction of the schoolhouse in his hometown of Luarca (Oviedo), he reported, remained unfinished and there had been no teacher there for four years, even though there were 300 people living there. A response sent to Barros by the Ministry of the Interior indicated that the government would be able to provide credit so that construction could resume.<sup>147</sup>

The idea that education would play a key role in Spain’s national regeneration emerged in the nineteenth century and gained particular impetus after 1898. In this light, it is unsurprising that the education system became a key battle ground in the nationalisation process undertaken by the government. As Quiroga has shown, the regime established an elaborate system of surveillance aimed at keeping schoolteachers in check.<sup>148</sup> This was accompanied by frequent purges of those deemed ineffective or unreliable, particularly in Cataluña, and often on the basis of

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<sup>143</sup> Original: “Excelentísimo señor,” he wrote, “soy padre de dos hijos que ban a la escuela dispuestos aprender por la edad que tienen y no acen nada por que unos cuantos caciques del pueblo an dado la secreteria al maestro.” “Las consecuencias les tocamos los pobres que tenemos ijos,” he added, “porque los ricos ya los lleban a estudiar fuera.” Segura asked that Primo send someone to to teach the teacher a lesson about the need to give lessons, but requested that this be carried out discreetly: “Los casiques si de este pueblo son unos malos ombres y si saben que escribo a Madrid me marearían.”

<sup>144</sup> Original: In Noblejos (Toledo) Lorenzo García alleged that the *Ayuntamiento* had sold off buildings belonging to local schools to a former member of the Senate, Adelaido Rodríguez y Fernández, leaving them ill-equipped for lessons, evidence, as García wrote, of a “maldito caciquismo que debe desaparecer por completo” from schools. AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 2087, 10/12/1923.

<sup>145</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 1875, 15/11/1923.

<sup>146</sup> Original: “Según la prensa de esta capital de México,” he wrote, “el directorio que V preside autoriza a todo ciudadano español para que denuncie todo lo que sepa de los municipios.”

<sup>147</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 1875, 11/04/1924.

<sup>148</sup> Alejandro Quiroga, “Maestros, espías y lentejas. Educación y nacionalización de masas durante la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera,” in *Construir España. Nacionalismo español y procesos de nacionalización*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2007), 185–91.



denunciations made to inspectors or the *Delegados Gubernativos*. Military supervision of primary schools proved deeply unpopular with teachers, who felt that inspections should be based on educational standards, rather than the regime's repressive practices, while they were also alienated by freezes to their pay for the duration of the regime. The inspectors, for their part, also resented the interference of the *Delegados*.<sup>149</sup>

One other aspect of everyday life that was directly connected to the nationalisation process was military service. At the time of the dictatorship there was considerable public anxiety about the system used by the state to draft candidates for this, *las quintas* (fifths). While the Constitution of 1876 made no specific reference to the relationship between the nation and the Army, the Constitutive Law of the Army of 1878 (*Ley Constitutiva del Ejército*) defined the latter as a 'special institution' in which all male Spaniards were obliged to serve.<sup>150</sup> The nationalising potential of military service is well known but in the Spanish case it failed to operate as a social leveller.<sup>151</sup> The survival of cash payments which allowed wealthy draftees to avoid overseas service (*redención en metálico*) until 1911-1912 placed a heavy burden on the working class and rural poor, particularly during Spain's colonial campaigns.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, military service was deeply resented by poor families who could ill afford the economic disruption caused by the loss of their male members for a number of years. Because of this, desertion remained extremely high until the beginning of the dictatorship, despite efforts to reform the draft system in 1911 and 1912. Official records show that between 1914 and 1923 46% of potential recruits never joined the Army because they

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<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 188, 197.

<sup>150</sup> The law also explicitly assigned the Armed Forces the role of defending Spain against its *internal* enemies, as well as external. Joaquim Lleixà, *Cien años de militarismo en España: funciones estatales confiadas al ejército en la Restauración y el Franquismo* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1986), 60–61.

<sup>151</sup> On the military as an agent of nationalisation see Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 292–302. On the problems faced by the Spanish military in the twentieth century see Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 17–20, 77–80.

<sup>152</sup> This was formally abolished by the Liberal government of José Canalejas in 1912. However, institutionalised social privilege continued to exist in the form of the *soldado de cuota* (cuota soldier), a designation that allowed wealthy draftees to pay a significant fee in order to be placed on to the reserve list for most of their period of service. Manuel Espadas Burgos, "Orden social en la mentalidad militar española a comienzos del siglo XX," in *España, 1898-1936: Estructuras y cambio*, ed. José Luis García Delgado (Madrid: Editorial de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1984), 350–52. See also Cardona, *El poder militar en la España contemporánea hasta la Guerra Civil*, 7–10.

deserted or were declared unfit or exempt.<sup>153</sup> Much of this could be blamed on the draft authorities, the *Comisiones Mixtas de Reclutamiento* (Mixed Recruitment Commissions), which were notoriously corrupt. Since 1896, these had been formed by panels of military figures and provincial deputies, who worked with specially appointed military and civilian doctors to decide on exemptions. The *Diputaciones* of which the deputies were members, however, represented a key institution in each province's patronage network and the draft officials were frequently asked by rural *caciques* to review the cases of their clients to make sure that they could avoid being called up.<sup>154</sup>

The anxiety of the population is reflected in a denunciation sent to Primo by a group of fathers as "proof... of the support for *caciquismo*, which is evident in the hordes of *ciervistas* [the faction of Juan de la Cierva] in the province of Murcia" in October 1923.<sup>155</sup> The letter-writers explained that they had previously denounced a number of young men from their province for desertion from the Army, but had learned that all of these individuals had either been pardoned or declared exempt. They regarded this as unfair and blamed it on the patronage the men had received from de la Cierva. "While our sons spill their blood on African soil for the patria," they wrote, "these men boast about the support which they enjoy and walk freely about the streets of Murcia's capital, sure of their impunity and protected status." They asked Primo to order a rapid revision of the draft authorities' decision, something which they believe would verify their claims and send "the civilian members and employees of said commission to keep the former councillors of the *Ayuntamiento* of Fuente de Álamo company in the prison of Cartagena."<sup>156</sup> In a letter sent by the Military-Civil Governor of Murcia to Primo shortly after this, it was revealed that of

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<sup>153</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 78.

<sup>154</sup> Moreno Luzón, "El poder público hecho cisco," 174–75. On the composition of the *Comisiones Mixtas* see *Gaceta de Madrid*, 23/08/1896.

<sup>155</sup> Original; The anxiety of the population is reflected in a denunciation sent to Primo by a group of fathers as "prueba... del arraigo caciquil evidente en las huestes ciervistas en la provincia de Murcia" in October 1923. AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 164, undated.

<sup>156</sup> Original: "Mientras nuestros hijos derraman su sangre por la patria en el suelo africano," they wrote, "estos se jactan del apoyo de que gozan y pasean libres por las calles de la capital murciana seguros de la impunidad y del proteccionismo." They asked Primo to order a rapid revision of the draft authorities' decision, something which they believe would verify their claims and send "los vocales civiles y empleados de dicha comisión a hacer compañía a los exconcejales del Ayuntamiento de Fuente Álamo en la cárcel de Cartagena."

eight of the men denounced had been conscripted as a result of the fathers' complaint.

At a time when Spain's neo-colonial venture in Morocco was in a highly precarious state, the fathers cited the sacrifice made by young men like their sons in the interests of the nation as reason for their actions. But rather than demand the punishment of the notorious local *cacique* of Murcia, Juan de la Cierva, they asked only that the draft officials responsible for the decision be imprisoned. That they chose to focus their ire on these relatively minor figures in the state administration, and not one of the so-called *grandes caciques*, seems to indicate an acceptance by the fathers that the war against clientelism and corruption would be carried out only at a low level, despite Primo's rhetoric to the contrary. As González Calbet makes clear, by early 1924 the regime found it necessary to soften its position on corruption and seek to reach accommodations with the *caciques* that it did not regard as threatening.<sup>157</sup> This explains why, in the case of de la Cierva, a Conservative, in Murcia, much of his political network was allowed to remain intact, while, in contrast, in Valladolid that of Santiago Alba, the senior Liberal politician, was persecuted. As we will see in the next chapter, many of the *Delegados Gubernativos* would be forced to make compromises of this nature. The fathers who wrote to Primo in the example just examined were not alone in their denunciation of the draft authorities in Murcia and the surrounding region, however. On 22 March, 1924, Primo issued a decree in which he acknowledged the many letters which he had received on the matter and ordered the creation of a Royal Commission, which would review the substitution decisions in the provinces of Murcia and Almería for the preceding 10 years and take any necessary steps to correct them.<sup>158</sup> In this case the dictator clearly listened to the complaints of the population.

In a similar incident, Pablo Vidal, a 21 year-old from Villafranca del Penedés (Barcelona), denounced the provincial draft officials for unfairly declaring certain youths ineligible for military service, something which, it was rumoured, had been occurring for a number of years.<sup>159</sup> Although the men in question had been declared unfit, due, officially at least, to physical defects, they seemed to him to be able-bodied

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<sup>157</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 222.

<sup>158</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 60, File 4692, 22/03/1924.

<sup>159</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 2086, 07/11/1923.

enough to work in a variety of capacities - bakers, mechanics, labourers and *braceros* – in the area and were *known publicly* to be in good health. Of the 11 men Vidal listed, six had been given exemptions “without sufficient legal cause in the opinion of the undersigned.”<sup>160</sup> His reasoning, as we can see, was not based on any concrete evidence, but rather on rumour and his own rather rudimentary observations about them. This, of course, was rarely a barrier to denunciation.<sup>161</sup> Like most petitioners, Vidal also invoked justice and the public good as reasons for his decision to accuse the men. However, his letter came with a remarkable admission: that he had written “en defensa de su propio interés” (in defence of his personal interests) as well. By Vidal’s time of writing, it appeared likely that Spanish military action would be renewed in Morocco, either to pacify the region or facilitate a withdrawal. As such, for every one of Vidal’s peers that was declared unfit for service, another would have to take his place, thus increasing his chance of being called up. Vidal asked Primo to determine the truth, “para establecer el imperio de la ley en el supuesto de haber sido quebrantada” (establish the rule of law on the assumption that it has been violated). An official response that was attached to Vidal’s file made no mention of this admission, suggesting that the authorities were unperturbed by the apparent incongruity of his intentions. Instead, it noted only that the decisions of the draft authorities had to be appealed to the military’s medical tribunals, rather than to the Ministry of the Interior.

The draft authorities in the Galician province of Orense were also the subject of repeated denunciation in the early months of the regime. The residents of the town of Baños de Molgas, for example, complained that the politicians of old continued “to get their way” there, while “making fools of those citizens that see the new regime as the bulwark of honour and justice.”<sup>162</sup> They cited eight incidents since 1914 in which locals had been charged figures of up to 450 pesetas to have legitimate draft exemptions processed by the municipal administration. In Junquera de Ambía, a town near Baños

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<sup>160</sup> Original: Of the 11 men Vidal listed, six had been given exemptions “sin causa legal bastante a juicio del que subscribe.”

<sup>161</sup> For similar observations see Joshi, *Gender*, 118–19; Anderson, “Singling Out Victims,” 18.

<sup>162</sup> Original: The residents of the town of Baños de Molgas, for example, complained that the politicians of old continued [to] “hacer de las suyas” there, while “burlándose de los ciudadanos que ven en el nuevo régimen el baluarte de la honorabilidad y la justicia.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 1812, 03/12/1923.

de Molgas, Antonio Lapuerta, announced that he wished to denounce the mayor-for-life and *cacique*, José Maria Lamas, whom he compared to the old bandits of the Sierra Morena mountain range.<sup>163</sup> The administration of *quintas* was where Lamas “could be most accused of committing horrendous crimes.” Like many other *caciques*, Lamas would ensure that those who paid him were spared military service. The residents of Junquera felt powerless to resist and sometimes had to abandon the town to escape his influence. “The call of the citizen is punishable by death,” Lapuerta lamented. He asked that the government carry out an inspection, which, he insisted, “will result in the verification of the worst scandals that can be imagined.”<sup>164</sup> The regime granted his request sometime over the next two months and later sent Lamas into exile in the province of León for his crimes.<sup>165</sup>

Some others felt that the regime was failing to treat those who had carried out their national service with the esteem they deserved. Ramón Muñoz Ríos, a discharged Army sergeant from La Coruña, complained to Primo that there were ‘infinite’ numbers of posts in the public administration which were occupied by individuals who had never been in the Army.<sup>166</sup> Others, he claimed, had been given to “procesados y otros con ideas anarquistas” (people who were accused of crimes and others with anarchist ideas) ahead of former soldiers. Muñoz did not write about his own experience exclusively. Throughout his letter he spoke of the interests of all discharged draftees, as if they were a corporation or interest group. This contrasted starkly to Vidal’s barely veiled expression of self-interest on the previous page. Muñoz asked Primo to order a review of these appointments, as had already occurred in nearby Santiago de Compostela, so that he and his comrades could receive what they regarded as just reward for faithful national service. By way of conclusion he declared

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<sup>163</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 53, File 506, 24/10/1924. Lapuerta added that the Lamas had filled the *Ayuntamiento* with members of his family, many of whom had criminal convictions, including for murder.

<sup>164</sup> Original: The administration of *quintas* was “donde aparece más acusado la comisión de delitos horrendos.” Like many other *caciques*, Lamas would ensure that those who paid him were spared military service. The residents of Junquera felt powerless to resist and sometimes had to abandon the town to escape his influence. “El grito ciudadano se castiga a muerte,” Lapuerta lamented. He asked that the government carry out an inspection, which, he insisted, “dará por resultado la comprobación de los mayores escándalos que puedan imaginarse.”

<sup>165</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 53, File 506, 03/12/1923. Internal exile was a common punishment during the dictatorship. I have found no figures on the scale of the practice, however.

<sup>166</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 4076, 15/02/1924.

that he had considered denouncing this behaviour on many occasions before this but had always believed that his voice would go unheard. Now, instead, “we have a government that safeguards the rights of citizens and for this reason we are writing to the *Señor Presidente* in the hope that he will grant justice.”<sup>167</sup>

The regime responded to denunciations like these on 29 March, 1924 by issuing an important decree which reformed elements of the draft system.<sup>168</sup> This reduced the range of circumstances in which conscripts could receive exemptions for physical or psychological deficiencies, while also providing that those who could not serve in front-line duties would be required to serve elsewhere in auxiliary roles. The decree also made the penalties for desertion more severe. But this tough new stance was only partially successful. In 1923, 56.46% of draftees were joining the Army; by 1930, this had risen to 62.66%.<sup>169</sup> There are several reasons for this, but, most importantly, the presence of the *Delegados Gubernativos* in the provincial and municipal administrations made it more difficult for *caciques* to manipulate the recruitment process. Accordingly, one of the key objectives assigned to the *Delegados* was the reduction of “that great national shame brought by deserters.”<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, the population was encouraged with rewards to denounce deserters to the authorities, something which it engaged in zealously until the government was forced to issue a reminder that these could only be issued if the draftee denounced had not already been declared exempt.

Elsewhere, the regime stumbled. The reforms of 29 March allowed the continuation of partial monetary exemptions, while the period of obligatory military service was also reduced from three to two years. This disappointed many in the officer corps, who longed for a truly universal military service.<sup>171</sup> The increase in the number of recruits joining the Army was a double-edged sword also, as the Army was still chronically under-resourced. Training was limited and soldiers were often required

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<sup>167</sup> Original: Now, instead, “tenemos un gobierno que vela por los derechos de los ciudadanos y por eso nos dirigimos al Señor Presidente esperando haga justicia.”

<sup>168</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 30/03/1924.

<sup>169</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 84.

<sup>170</sup> ‘Previsiones que para el mejor desempeño de sus cargos deben tener presentes los Delegados gubernativos,’ AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17a, File 12, 07/12/1923.

<sup>171</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 84–86. On the denunciation of deserters see 84, f.n. 31. I have not encountered any of these denunciations during my own research.

to serve in dull roles as assistants or clerks, which bred apathy and disillusionment. The progressive reduction of the military budget from 1925 onward put additional pressure on the military education system, thus hampering its nationalising potential.<sup>172</sup>

### Professional anxieties

While the majority of the denunciations sent to the authorities identified cases of administrative corruption, they received many other categories of letter which made use of elements of denunciation to mask different intentions. One such category related to the world of work and typically narrated what I call professional anxieties. These relate to tensions in the workplace - one's job, employment status, and co-workers, amongst other things. By the 1920s, the wave of *empleomanía* (the craze for holding public office) which characterised the early decades of the Restoration had mostly subsided. Notwithstanding, jobs in the state administration remained highly desirable, even if many of them were low-paid positions.<sup>173</sup> This was especially true of the Post Office and the various branches of the police, both of which provided decent pensions for their workers and were the envy of others. In December 1923, for example, Pablo Charte, a resident of Monflorite (Huesca), denounced Julian Claber, a retired sergeant of the *Guardia Civil*, who, he alleged, was acting as Secretary in the local town hall, while still drawing upon a state pension of 75 pesetas that had been granted for his work in the gendarmerie.<sup>174</sup> This practice was prohibited by the reforms which Primo had introduced to the civil service in September of the same year.<sup>175</sup> Following an investigation, the Military-Civil Governor of Huesca concluded that Claber had been performing the role of Secretary impeccably for 20 years and that he saw no reason to remove him. In so doing, the Civil Governor demonstrated a certain degree of flexibility towards his fellow soldier. The denouncer's ability to cite the figure Claber was receiving indicates that he most likely knew the man well enough to know the

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 91–92.

<sup>173</sup> For more on the jobs created by state expansion, particularly during the Restoration period, see Mary Vincent, *Spain, 1833-2002: People and State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 52–54. See also Javier Moreno Luzón and Stephen Jacobson, "The Political System of the Restoration, 1875-1914: Political and Social Elites," in *Spanish History Since 1808*, ed. José Álvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert (London: Arnold, 2001), 93–109.

<sup>174</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 1940, 06/12/1923.

<sup>175</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 18/09/1923.

latter's work history, an element that suggests more petty motives than he was willing to admit.

A similar case from February 1924 invoked the *Ley de Incompatibilidades*.<sup>176</sup> Here two municipal veterinary surgeons working in the city of Huelva, José Espinosa de los Monteros and Ricardo Camaño Alfonso, denounced the local livestock inspector, Guillermo Moreno Amador, for moonlighting as a meat-inspection official at the local abattoir, where he was “earning the salary as a bonus in mockery of the Law of Conflicts of Interests.”<sup>177</sup> In addition to this, they alleged, Moreno owned a veterinary clinic where he provide farrier services to the *Guardia Civil* in violation of the terms of a state contract already awarded to Espinosa to carry out all work of this nature in the area. They described this situation, rather haughtily, as a “*promiscuidad de destino*” (promiscuity of jobs) and cited a variety of laws, which they believed would invalidate Moreno's contract. As they concluded their letter, they demanded “the wise and upright justice of the Directorate which [Your Lordship] presides over [and] that the clear illegality of this usurpation of position which takes away from his very well-educated professional colleagues be recognised.”<sup>178</sup>

In this example, the denouncers were both highly educated men and were well-informed of the legislation surrounding their case. Yet, instead of turning to the courts, surely the proper place for enforcing such contracts, they chose to denounce their rival. We may speculate as to the reasons for this. From a purely practical point of view, the act of denunciation is significantly less expensive than engaging a lawyer as a means of defending one's professional interests. It may also be that Espinosa and Camaño did not trust the legal system to rule objectively on their case. Even so, their denunciation invoked a particular concept of justice, which was not that of the courts. By asking for Primo's favour in order to avoid entering into the legal process, the letter-writers seemed to undermine the very laws which they cited as justification in

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<sup>176</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 4027, 16/02/1924.

<sup>177</sup> Original: Here two municipal veterinary surgeons working in the city of Huelva, José Espinosa de los Monteros and Ricardo Camaño Alfonso, denounced the local livestock inspector, Guillermo Moreno Amador, for moonlighting as a meat-inspection official at the local abattoir, where he was “cobrando para burlar la Ley de Incompatibilidades el sueldo como gratificación.”

<sup>178</sup> Original: As they concluded their letter, they demanded “la recta y sabia justicia de ese Directorio que VS tan dignamente preside, se reconozca la ilegalidad manifiesta de tal usurpación de cargo que le restan a muy cultos compañeros de profesión.”



their case. This appeal relied on a traditional construction of authority, which represented Primo in the mould of a benevolent leader who could dispense largesse to his subjects. Accordingly, it was Primo's duty to correct the disorder in justice, which the men had identified. In the modern state, however, such interventions steadily became less common as bureaucratic predictability ousted the prerogatives of sovereignty.<sup>179</sup> Thus appeals like this maintained traces of the forms of patronage which Primo's government proposed to eliminate from the state's interactions with the population.

In November 1923, a pharmacist in Laredo (Santander) was denounced for dispensing ergot to his patients and customers.<sup>180</sup> While the original letter is lost, the response by the figure who investigated the allegation reveals the attitude of Spain's highly bureaucratic professional classes towards those they regarded as corrupt or unqualified. Mariano Martínez, the government's Sub-delegate in Laredo, reported that he had carried out a surprise inspection of the pharmacy in question with the local chief of police and seized samples of the medicines on sale. Although it was later confirmed that the materials were, indeed, ergot-based, the provincial courts had dismissed the case against the quack. Martínez, who was also a pharmacist by profession, was outraged by this decision and recommended that he be punished to the full extent of the law, but this was for more for personal reasons than matters of public health. "If we do not pursue crimes of this type, and the intruders triumph," he wrote, "those of us who have spent our youth and our wealth on completing a degree, which is ultimately worthless, will be surplus. And given that it seems that the hour of JUSTICE has sounded in our beloved Spain this is [something] that we respectfully request."<sup>181</sup>

Here we see clearly how the professional interests of Martínez overlapped with his duties as a local official. His primary concern should have lain with the residents of

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<sup>179</sup> Nubola, "Supplications between Politics and Justice," 50–51.

<sup>180</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 953, 07/11/1923. Long-term ergot poisoning can cause the serious medical condition ergotism, which, the reader will recall, has been suggested as one of the causes for the Dancing Plague of 1518 in Strasbourg.

<sup>181</sup> Original: "Si no se persiguen los delitos de esta especie, y los intrusos triunfan," he wrote, "[y] sobramos los que nos hemos gastado nuestra juventud y nuestro patrimonio en hacer una carrera, que después, para nada nos sirve y puesto que en nuestra querida España parece que ha sonado la hora de la JUSTICIA, ésta es una que respetuosamente pedimos."

the district, but he was clearly preoccupied by the effect rogue pharmacists would have on the standing of the profession. Moreover, he rued that the value of his training might be undermined by this type of activity. In the mid- to late-nineteenth century professions had come to dominate Spanish universities as they did elsewhere in Europe. Despite this, Spain, like many of its neighbours, suffered from an excess of educated men, whom the market was often unable to absorb, especially in the absence of a colonial outlet.<sup>182</sup> In this example the official charged with investigating the claims made in the denunciation came to identify *himself* as a victim of the crime denounced and thus sought to induce state repression against the pharmacist.

It was also common for the regime to receive letters of complaint regarding employment matters in the public administration, particularly in cases where the petitioner had been sacked abruptly, either before the advent of the regime or during it. These very often used the language of denunciation, even when the letter-writers could not identify the party responsible for their fate. One such case passed through the office of Primo de Rivera in January 1924, when Gabriel León y Donaire, a former bookkeeper in the *Diputación* of Málaga, who described himself forlornly as “a poor youth who has been made victim by the resentment and uncontrolled envy of the old politics,” wrote to the dictator to protest against his removal by a *Delegado Gubernativo*.<sup>183</sup> During a particularly busy period in the provincial administration in 1922, he wrote, he had been hired in full accordance with the law and had carried out his duties in exemplary fashion thereafter. Despite this, “a few conspirators believed that they could satisfy their contemptible [desire for] revenge” by denouncing him to the authorities for obtaining the role improperly. This resulted in his dismissal, something that he claimed was “was doubtlessly concocted by the old politicians of the old regime,” who unfairly regarded his role as “cushy.” Making use of the dictatorship-era trope of apoliticism, León described why he, and not his accusers, should be believed: “I was never political, nor did I reveal my sympathy for any ideals:

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<sup>182</sup> Moreno Luzón and Jacobson, “The Political System of the Restoration,” 101.

<sup>183</sup> Original: One such case passed through the office of Primo de Rivera in January 1924, when Gabriel León y Donaire, a former bookkeeper in the *Diputación* of Málaga, who described himself forlornly as “un pobre joven a quien las venganzas de la vieja política acogieron como inocente víctima en quien vengar rencores y envidias desatadas,” wrote to the dictator to protest against his removal by a *Delegado Gubernativo*. AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3309, 17/01/1924.

my only ideals were my enthusiastic support for the Throne and the Crown, and to carry out my job with all of my knowledge and energy in order to avoid criticism by anyone and to be able to live happily in the good fortune that I used to enjoy.”<sup>184</sup>

León did not demand that he be reinstated to his role. Instead, he asked Primo to open a new employment competition so that he could rightfully win it again and preclude any future claims of impropriety. The authorities carried out an investigation into his claims over the next number of months and in a letter sent by the Military-Civil Governor of Málaga to Primo the former stated that he was in agreement with the dismissal, “given that the role was created by the previous president of the *Diputación* exclusively in the interests of the signee, who is his son.”<sup>185</sup> Thus, while León was clearly an illegal beneficiary of political patronage, it is remarkable he too chose to construct his letter around a narrative of political corruption. He clearly denounced his co-workers as jealous subscribers to the ‘old politics’ and described himself as an apolitical supporter of the Crown and sincere worker, rather than the *enchufado* (person with connections) that he really was, in the expectation that the regime would lend him a sympathetic ear. León’s pseudo-denunciation, therefore, shows the flexibility of the regime’s anti-*caciquil* discourse and blurs the lines between this and other forms of petition. Evidently he believed that by instrumentalising this discourse and constructing his claims according to this script he could achieve his goal of obscuring the corruption behind his own appointment and trick the regime into action against his former co-workers.

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<sup>184</sup> Original: Despite this, “algunos conspiradores creyeron satisfacer sus venganzas ruines” by denouncing him to the authorities for obtaining the role improperly. This resulted in his dismissal, something that he claimed was “sin duda amañada por los viejos políticos del antiguo regimen,” who unfairly regarded his role as “un momio.” Making use of the dictatorship-era trope of apoliticism, León described why he, and not his accusers, should be believed: “jamás fui político ni exteriorice mi simpatías por algún ideal: mis únicos ideales son mi entusiasta adhesión al Trono y a la Corona, y el rendir a mi trabajo todos mis conocimientos y energías para evitarme censuras de nadie y poder vivir feliz con la suerte de que antes disfrutara.”

<sup>185</sup> Original: The authorities carried out an investigation into León’s claims over the next number of months and in a letter sent by the Military-Civil Governor of Málaga to Primo the former stated that he was in agreement with the dismissal, “ya que [el cargo] fue creado únicamente por el anterior presidente de la *Diputación* para exclusivo interés del firmante que es hijo suyo.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3309, 10/03/1924.

A former postman from Neira de Jusá (Lugo), Domingo García Valcarce, made similar claims about his dismissal.<sup>186</sup> In a lengthy introduction he described how he carried out his work attentively, “without any of the biased complaints or ungratefulness that almost always exist in all walks of life.” This, he stated, had occurred because “there was still a grain of hope in this locality which *caciquismo* had not been able to destroy.”<sup>187</sup> The influence of *caciquismo* had steadily crept into the village in the years directly preceding the dictatorship such that its institutions, his job as postman included, were no longer respected by the people there. In a typical declaration of disinterest, García claimed that he had always sought to remove himself from politics, especially when the corruption of the *caciques* was impinging on his work. Even so, they had attempted to bring him into their shady dealings, much to his distaste, “because I did not want to involve myself... in games and political schemes.”<sup>188</sup>

García’s refusal to cooperate in any illegal activity, he claimed, had resulted in his denunciation by an unknown individual and, when the matter was brought before the *Ayuntamiento*, a minority of voices declared him guilty of misconduct, without even hearing evidence. He urged Primo to ensure that this be allowed to happen and denounced the local *cacique* José Vicente Pardo, the figure who acted as both mayor and judge in the village, for his role in this injustice. He also named Pardo as the brother-in-law and lieutenant of José Benito Pardo Rodríguez, the notorious provincial *cacique* of Lugo.<sup>189</sup> The allegations made by García were referred by Primo’s bureau to the *Dirección General de Correos y Telégrafos* (Directorate General of Posts and Telegraphs), which reported in January 1924 that the former postman had actually been sacked for legitimate reasons, including that of living outside the locality to which

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<sup>186</sup> García listed his current employment as *labrador* (labourer). AHN, Primo, Bundle 57, File 2562, 14/12/1923.

<sup>187</sup> Original: In a lengthy introduction he described how he carried out his work attentively, “sin denuncias tendenciosas y sin desagradecidos que casi siempre existen en todos los órdenes de la vida.” This, he stated, had occurred because “aún quedaba dentro de la localidad un germen de buena fe que no había podido destruir el caciquismo.”

<sup>188</sup> Original: Even so, they had attempted to bring him into their shady dealings, much to his distaste, “porque no quise prestarme... a juegos y manejos políticos.”

<sup>189</sup> On the Pardo family see José María Cardesín Díaz and Pedro Lago Peñas, “Repensando el caciquismo: espacio político y agencia social en la Galicia de la Restauración,” *Historia y Crítica* 2 (1992): 217.

he was assigned and had already been suspended from work for three months for misconduct.<sup>190</sup> His claims, therefore, were dismissed.

García's letters show clearly the flexibility with which the language of national regeneration could be used by petitioners and denouncers. The alleged corruption of local *caciques* provided a convenient script that could be followed when lodging complaints to the authorities.<sup>191</sup> This did not guarantee success, but could prove disruptive to the government, which often had to expend resources in verifying these claims. Evidently, *caciquismo* was a malleable concept which could be invoked by the population for all manner of reasons, something which demonstrated the impossibility of building a regime exclusively on the alternative values of efficiency and technical expertise, as Primo had suggested throughout his first 90 days in power. More extensive reform would clearly be required.

### **The space for dissent**

The format of denunciation also left considerable space for expressing criticism of the regime. The malleability of the language of regeneration allowed ordinary people to frame their objections as attacks on *caciquismo*, while implicitly condemning the failings of the government at the same time. Denunciations of this nature were highly ambiguous and typically could not be perceived as threatening to Primo de Rivera's administration. As such, they were not only tolerated by the regime, but often heeded directly. Indeed, the initiation of the second round of purges at the end of 1923 coincided directly with the arrival of letters of this nature. While these were not the only factor to contribute to Primo's decision to carry out the purges, they left little doubt that the *Ayuntamientos* that had been formed by the regime were no better than those that preceded them.

The ambiguity of these denunciations is captured in the letter sent by seven property-owning men from Leiro (Orense).<sup>192</sup> They began their message by acknowledging the spirit of justice which they believed had inspired the dissolution of

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<sup>190</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 57, File 2562, 31/01/1924.

<sup>191</sup> Unsurprisingly, there is ample evidence that this was the case in other countries and other contexts. See, for example, Gellately, "Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany," 948.

<sup>192</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 53, File 524, 22/10/1923.

the nation's *Ayuntamientos* but suggested that the changes this brought were superficial only. "Many *Ayuntamientos* – and Leiro was one of them – remained in the same condition as before," they wrote, "and the Municipal Councils formed by the [*Vocales*] *asociados* were also the handiwork of the *cacique*, just like the dismissed Councillors." This, as we shall see, was to be a frequent allegation, which the regime could not ignore. The new administration in Leiro, they insisted, "suffers from the same vices as the previous one and more so because the majority of those who formed the Municipal Council of *Asociados*, which took over the *Ayuntamiento*, are the innocent and blind instruments of the Lord who rules over the fate of the municipality at his whim."<sup>193</sup> The letter-writers regarded the new Secretary, José Ramon Arango, as a tool of the *cacique*, one of between 20 and 25 *paniguados* (protégés) in the district. While the letter-writers explicitly called for the *cacique* and his followers to be purged from the municipal regime, it was not clear by the end of their letter as to exactly whom they were criticising. Clearly, the alleged corruption lay with Arango and his followers in the *Ayuntamiento*, but this also implied a failure by Primo's government to eliminate such behaviour. In a similar letter from Allariz (Orense), a resident of the town denounced the members of the old *Ayuntamiento* for installing their family members in their previous positions.<sup>194</sup> The new Mayor, they reported, was the son-in-law of the local *cacique*, while the syndic was the brother of the deposed Secretary, "all of which are roles that have led to the hated *caciquismo* solidifying again."<sup>195</sup> The measures taken by the regime had clearly failed in their most fundamental task.

Although the denunciation presented by the residents of Pereiro de Aguiar (Orense) was based largely on hearsay, they also used it as a channel to level criticism

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<sup>193</sup> Original: "Muchos Ayuntamientos – Leiro fue uno de ellos – quedaron en las mismas condiciones anteriores," they wrote, "y que las Juntas municipales de asociados eran también hechura del cacique, igual que los Concejales destituidos." This, as we shall see, was to be a frequent allegation, which the regime could not ignore. The new administration in Leiro, they insisted, "tiene los mismos vicios que el anterior y más aún por cuanto la mayoría de los que formaban la Junta municipal de asociados, que se hizo cargo del Ayuntamiento, son inocentes y ciegos instrumentos del Señor que a su antojo rige los destinos del municipio."

<sup>194</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 381, 15/10/1923.

<sup>195</sup> Original: The new Mayor, they reported, was the son-in-law of the local *cacique*, while the syndic was the brother of the deposed Secretary, "cargos todos ellos que contribuyen una vez más a solidificar el tan odiado caciquismo."

at the regime for the composition of the town's new municipal administration.<sup>196</sup> Pereiro, they explained, had been a Liberal stronghold since at least 1903. When the regime sent a delegation to inspect the *Ayuntamiento*, though, the Liberal faction coordinated its followers "with the shrewdness typical of well-trained *caciques*" to make complaints to the inspectors so that their own crimes were entirely ignored. The inspectors, for their part, "limited themselves to checking what was denounced to them, without, as is being said, extending their investigation beyond this, such that the real *caciques*, who have always been liberals here, remained so calm and free from responsibility."<sup>197</sup> Moreover, the residents identified significant deficiencies in the inspectors' approach. The Liberal *cacique*, Emilio Álvarez Capeleiro, they claimed, had presented himself as the most interested party in stamping out corruption and offered to accommodate the inspectors in his house, where he brought them the documents which they wished to examine. The residents had also heard that Álvarez had been the one to originally name the *Junta de Vocales Asociados* and that everything about the new *Ayuntamiento* chosen by the *Vocales*, therefore, "reflects the will of said *cacique* instead of that of the Providential Directorate." "The liberals," they added, "have been shouting out the good news; they say that they know how to do things well and to justify the accounts."<sup>198</sup> The conclusion of their letter also revealed their expectations for the period of dictatorship which lay ahead, ill-defined as this was. In a typical appropriation of the language of regeneration, they wrote:

The Providential Directorate is not affiliated with any party, it came to power to defend the *Patria* and the King, so we trust that there is justice for all and we want it to be demanded rigorously that the municipal domains be returned the sums that were stolen from them and represent the sweat and blood of the poor, who go to an early grave because of what those birds of prey do to them, and that those bandits that fill

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<sup>196</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 1816, 28/11/1923.

<sup>197</sup> Original: Pereiro, they explained, had been a Liberal stronghold since at least 1903. When the regime sent a delegation to inspect the *Ayuntamiento*, though, the Liberal faction coordinated its followers "con la sagacidad propia de caciques amaestrados" to make complaints to the inspectors so that their own crimes were entirely ignored. The inspectors, for their part, "se limitaron a comprobar lo que se les denunciaba, sin extender, según dicen, más allá su investigación, con lo cual los verdaderos caciques, que aquí han sido siempre los liberales, se quedaron tan tranquilos y libres de toda responsabilidad."

<sup>198</sup> Original: The residents had also heard that Álvarez had been the one to originally name the *Junta de Vocales Asociados* and that the new *Ayuntamiento* chosen by the *Vocales*, therefore, "refleja en todo la voluntad de dicho cacique en vez de responder a lo que ese Providencial Directorio." "Los liberales," they added, "echan las campanas a vuelo; dicen que saben hacer bien y justifican las cuentas."

the houses of these honest peasants with mourning be exterminated once and for all and forever more.<sup>199</sup>

As the end of 1923 approached it became clear that elements of the population were deeply dissatisfied with the reform that Primo de Rivera had carried out in the municipal administration. Complaints about these ranged from straightforward cases of conflicts of interest to more serious allegations of impropriety.<sup>200</sup> Pedro Mané of Guadamar (Valencia), for example, spoke positively of the need to help the new regime in its efforts to overcome “despicable political passions” which had previously characterised life in the town. Despite the decree to dissolve the nation’s *Ayuntamientos*, relatively little seemed to have changed in the municipal administration, “given the coincidence that the committee of *vocales* was made up of citizens picked by the dismissed *Ayuntamiento*, who are incapable and mostly illiterate.”<sup>201</sup> In Burriana (Castellón) a local resident told a similar story as he accused the town’s *caciques* of forging the list of *Vocales Asociados*.<sup>202</sup> The previous mayor of the town, he added, had been illiterate but “the current one is another peasant who signs where they tell him and nothing else.” The old secretary had also been suspended, though his interim replacement “barely knows how to write his name” and was the puppet of the local *cacique*, Manuel Martínez. “In this way, here there isn’t really any Mayor or Secretary or *Ayuntamiento* [sic] we only know that there is one Manuel Martínez who fixes and does everything,” the letter-writer declared rather forlornly at the end of the message.<sup>203</sup> In another case, a resident of Agudo (Ciudad

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<sup>199</sup> Original: In a typical appropriation of the language of regeneration, they wrote: “El Providencial Directorio no es afiliado a partido alguno, vino al poder para defender a la Patria y al Rey, por eso confiamos en que hay justicia para todos y queremos que se exija rigurosa, que se restituyan a las áreas municipales la cantidades robadas, que son el sudor de tanto pobre, que baja prematuramente al sepulcro por el nombre que esas aves de rapiña le hacen pasar y exterminar de una vez y para siempre esos bandidos que llenan de luto estos hogares de honrados campesinos.”

<sup>200</sup> Cases of incompatibility in AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, Files 381 and 432.

<sup>201</sup> Original: Pedro Mané of Guadamar (Valencia), for example, spoke positively of the need to help the new regime in its efforts to overcome “las pasiones rastreras políticas” which had previously characterised life in the town. Despite the decree to dissolve the nation’s *Ayuntamientos*, relatively little seemed to have changed in the municipal administration, “dada la casualidad que la junta de vocales estaba formada por ciudadanos escogidos por el Ayuntamiento destituido, incapacitados y la mayor parte de ellos analfabetos.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 389, 19/10/1923.

<sup>202</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 262, 10/10/1923.

<sup>203</sup> Original: The previous mayor of the town, he added, had been illiterate but “el actual es otro paisano, que firma donde le mandan y nada más.” The old secretary had also been suspended, though his interim replacement “apenas sabe firmar” and was the puppet of the *cacique*, Manuel Martínez. “En esa forma aquí no existe en verdad, ni Alcalde ni Secretario ni Ayuntamiento solo sabemos que hay un



Real) even suggested that 18 of the electors who had supposedly selected the new *Ayuntamiento* were dead, although the regime would strenuously deny his allegations.<sup>204</sup> In any case, he added, the process was already dubious as only 200 of the 800 people eligible to vote had actually participated. “The current president and members of the corporation,” he explained, “are enthusiastic *caciques* and illiterates for the most part, who punish the unlucky people who do not wish to follow them in their aims and favour those who back them.”<sup>205</sup>

In the first of the final two examples in this chapter, Antanasis García, a resident of Hontalbilla (Segovia), who declared that he was a “lover and great enthusiast of our native traditions,” complained in February 1924 that the village was still “[groaning] under the yoke of the most deeply rooted *caciquismo*.” García wondered what, if anything, the regime was going to do to correct this, as, he observed, “There *are* people in this village that are capable of encouraging [the regime’s reforms], but since they have never been involved in politics they have been passed over and are left wondering what use their qualifications and knowledge are.”<sup>206</sup> The final letter expressed the same concern for the village of Sejalbo (Orense).<sup>207</sup> Pablo de Llanes told Primo that a number of *caciques* who had been imprisoned for corruption had already been released and were up to their usual tricks again. He claimed to know of at least two Secretaries in *Ayuntamientos* in the province who had other jobs in the state administration, while there were countless others who did not possess the titles required in order to carry out the role. “Why are they not looking for people with qualifications!” he exclaimed. “Because these people are of recognised integrity and will not sign whatever is put in front of them as a result?!”

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Manuel Martínez que lo hace y arregla todo,” the letter-writer declared rather forlornly at the end of the message.

<sup>204</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 403, 20/10/1923 & 28/11/1923.

<sup>205</sup> Original: “El presidente actual y demás corporación,” he explained, “son unos apasionados *caciques* y analfabetos en su mayor parte castigando a los desdichados que no quieren seguir sus propósitos y favoreciendo a los que los segundan.”

<sup>206</sup> Original: In the first of the final two examples in this chapter, Antanasis García, a resident of Hontalbilla (Segovia), who declared that he was an “amante y gran entusiasta de nuestras tradiciones patrias,” complained in February 1924 that the village still “gime bajo el yugo del más arraigado *caciquismo*.” García wondered what, if anything, the regime was going to do to correct this, as, he observed, “Personas hay en este pueblo capaces de hacerla fomentar, pero como no han intervenido nunca en la política se encuentran postergados pensando para qué les vale un título y por lo tanto sus conocimientos.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 59, File 4346, 29/02/1924.

<sup>207</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 2188, 13/12/1923.

“The editor of a newspaper in this city, who published an article a few days ago, is right,” he added, “that in Castro de Caldelas it is the same old song and dance and that anyone who carries out a role without possessing qualifications should be put out on to the street given that there are people who do have them.”<sup>208</sup>

García’s and de Llanes’ letters revealed the highly technocratic mentality of Spain’s professional classes at this time. Why, in their view, if politicians had previously failed, should the experts and the technically proficient members of society not be given responsibility for its administration? Such thinking, however, had already served as a guide for the construction of the new *Ayuntamientos* created after the mass dissolution of 30 September and was clearly simplistic due to the many deficiencies in these.<sup>209</sup> As it stood, much more rigorous reform to the system of municipal government in Spain would be required. This would take the form of the *Estatuto Municipal* (Municipal Statute), which was introduced by Primo’s Director General of Administration, José Calvo Sotelo, in March 1924.

## Conclusion

It is very difficult to estimate the scale of the repression carried out against *caciques* in the early months of the dictatorship due to the lack of any official figures beyond those publicised by Primo de Rivera in his *nota oficiosa* in December 1923 or, indeed, any systematic studies of the topic.<sup>210</sup> This is compounded by the fact that the purges mixed formal prosecutions in the courts with sanctions that were limited to the public service. These fell into different jurisdictions (criminal and administrative). In a petition sent to Primo in May 1927, Manuel Cerezo Garrido and Gerardo Tabanera Abad, President and Secretary respectively of the *Federación Nacional de Obreros y Empleados Municipales* (National Federation of Municipal Workers and Employees), highlighted this distinction. They estimated that of the 600,000 to 700,000 people that

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<sup>208</sup> Original: “Porque razón no se buscan los que tienen títulos!” he exclaimed. “¿Por qué estos son personas de reconocida honradez? ¡y por consiguiente no firmarán lo que se les ponga por delante!” “Razon tiene el Director de un Periódico de esta ciudad,” he added, “que hace pocos días inserto un artículo que decía así, en Castro de Caldelas hubo cambio de collares pero los perros son los mismos, por lo tanto, deben ser puestos en la calle todo hombre que desempeñe cargo sin título en vista de que los hay con él.”

<sup>209</sup> See *Gaceta de Madrid*, 01/10/1923.

<sup>210</sup> For the figures see Soldevilla, *El año político (1923)*, 453–54.

were employed by municipal governments in all capacities before the establishment of the dictatorship only 200 or so had faced criminal charges during the purges, a figure that included mayors, secretaries and councillors, in addition to general employees who were not involved decision-making.<sup>211</sup> The former President of the Council of Ministers the Count of Romanones also expressed doubt about the worth of the purges. Writing in 1924, he estimated that of the 150,000 to 200,000 people directly involved in the administration of local government only 2% had been formally investigated by the regime and, of these, only half (1% of the total) had been prosecuted. Romanones lacked the final figures at his time of writing, but believed that just half again of those prosecuted had been convicted (0.5% of the total).<sup>212</sup> Clearly, these were not the figures Primo had expected when he promised to “relentlessly punish those who have committed crimes against the *Patria* by corrupting it.”<sup>213</sup>

There are certain points of comparison between the denunciation that occurred under Primo and that which followed the Nationalist victory in 1939 which warrant further discussion. First, there is the ease with which a discourse of anti-*caciquismo* could be translated into widespread collaboration in repression. In the case of the Civil War period, the image of the atheist ‘red,’ which the Nationalists constructed, had deep, historic roots in Spain.<sup>214</sup> Yet so too did the figure of the *cacique*, who was denounced by successive generations of regenerationist thinkers and politicians in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Indeed, as Álvarez Junco has commented, it is quite remarkable that an entire political system could be so thoroughly discredited in a single word.<sup>215</sup> The denunciation that occurred in 1923 and 1924, however, is much closer to the tradition of bureaucratic denunciation that appeared in many other countries as they underwent modernisation than it is to the more ideologically-charged denunciation of the Civil War.<sup>216</sup> Three years of bloodshed certainly led to a brutalisation of Spanish society, as is reflected in the repressive

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<sup>211</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 74, File 12179, 03/05/1927. An account of the organisation’s foundation can be found in ABC, 04/11/1919.

<sup>212</sup> Álvaro de Figueroa y Torres Romanones, *Las responsabilidades políticas del Antiguo Régimen: de 1875 a 1923* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1924), 255.

<sup>213</sup> Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 22.

<sup>214</sup> Hugo García, “Historia de un mito político: el peligro comunista en el discurso de las derechas españolas (1918-1936),” *Historia Social*, no. 51 (2005): 3–20.

<sup>215</sup> Álvarez Junco, “Redes locales,” 74.

<sup>216</sup> On this tradition see Kozlov, “Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance,” 868.

techniques used by Franco and his supporters. In one crucial respect they were similar: both were solicited from above by those in power using a combination of direct and indirect means.

As we saw in the Introduction, recent scholarship has shown that *caciques* were not necessarily oppressors or solely the corrupt peddlers of influence, but rather very often gatekeepers who served as intermediaries in the interactions between the state and its subjects.<sup>217</sup> In this way, they carried out important functions in the Restoration political system, even if cracks began to show in this structure as new sectors of society demanded a greater degree of political representation in the twentieth century. In the denunciations which we have examined, however, *caciques* were represented almost exclusively as belonging to the first two of these categories, corrupt oppressors. To a certain degree, this forgot the fact that most of the population had integrated itself into the ‘system of corruption’ represented by *caciquismo* – it had been a simple fact of life up until that point.<sup>218</sup> It was, therefore, very difficult to identify a point at which the practice could be definitively marked as anomalous, even criminal. As such, any definition of the term *caciquismo* always risked being arbitrary, something that is clearly reflected in the rather imprecise descriptions of *caciques* given in the letters examined in this chapter. If one of the chief characteristics of political systems based on networks of patronage and clientelism is the very flexibility of the law, then punishment for such behaviour could only be imposed *ex post facto*. This may explain why the regime faced such difficulty in bringing about the prosecutions it promised in 1923 and 1924.

Despite the regime’s inability to prosecute for *caciquismo*, mass denunciation ultimately served to normalise the state of exception imposed by Primo in September 1923 as people began to accept it as part of the structure of everyday life.<sup>219</sup> Denunciation, naturally, drew from the same realm. The Primo de Rivera regime was a paternalistic government, which signalled its intention to intervene in society from its outset and, accordingly, showed itself to be very responsive to the practice. This left it vulnerable to potential manipulation by those with personal agendas. There is

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<sup>217</sup> Álvarez Junco, “Redes locales,” 75–78.

<sup>218</sup> Robles Egea, “Sistemas políticos, mutaciones y modelos,” 232.

<sup>219</sup> Gellately, “Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany,” 949–50.

evidence that ordinary people attempted to instrumentalise the repressive apparatus of the state in order to settle scores, although this seems to be implicit in any accusation that is so rooted in daily life. It was perfectly understood by all involved that punishment was the aim of denunciation. Nevertheless, the language of anti-*caciquismo* proved flexible enough to allow the accused to make counter-accusations, either of corruption or self-interest in the denunciations which identified them. The regime, for its part, was forced to expend considerable resources in investigating the claims made to it. That so many of the cases led back to Primo's bureau in Madrid reveals how primitive this process was. There was no secret police or any other body that was dedicated to investigating denunciations, nor was there a special court system to try the accused. Under Primo there was never any attempt to make denunciation obligatory as there was in Nazi Germany and, to a certain extent, the Francoist 'New State.'<sup>220</sup> Under Primo there was a close proximity between petition and denunciation, which was not the case under Franco, even if those who denounced during and after the Civil War often felt that they had legitimate grievances with their targets.<sup>221</sup> Denunciation in the period examined in this chapter remained a largely spontaneous affair which did not always lead to criminal proceedings. It was much more common for *ad hoc* punishments to be imposed by the provincial Military-Civil Governors and *Delegados Gubernativos*, even if this would be curtailed by Madrid after the initial free-for-all in late 1923 and early 1924.

From the point of view of the ordinary people who engaged in denunciation, the practice represented one of the few available paths of civic action during the dictatorship. The freedoms of expression, gathering and association were banned by a regime that governed through a permanent state of exception. Primo also went to considerable lengths to discredit the liberal state: the bureaucracy was plagued by inefficiencies; the law, particularly in municipal courts, was a hotbed for corruption; and the governments of the Restoration had failed to represent the

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<sup>220</sup> In Germany this was the case only when the accused were suspected of having committed the highest level of crimes, like treason. Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Main Security Office, was unable to garner enough support from high-ranking Nazi officials to impose a general requirement to denounce in 1939. *Ibid.*, 959. In the case of Spain, there is evidence that people were coerced into denouncing others during the post-war repression carried out by the Nationalist side, but this was not the product of any government legislation. Anderson, "Singling Out Victims," 21.

<sup>221</sup> Anderson and del Arco Blanco, "Construyendo la dictadura y castigando a sus enemigos."

citizens of the nation. Yet, as the letters examined in this chapter show, ordinary people claimed that these were also their experiences of life after the *golpe de estado*. The fact that accusation was mixed with the language of petition meant that denunciations often had the characteristics of more general claims to the government. If *caciques* had served as a mediating institution in individuals' interactions with government, then denunciation offered a means of self-representation, an expression of personal agency. In reality, then, the practice of denunciation was much more complex than Francisco Villanueva had perceived in his criticisms in 1930.

Finally, the practice of denunciation by no means simply ceased upon the implementation of the *Estatuto Municipal* in April 1924; it continued until the end of the dictatorship, albeit in lesser quantity. The regime, however, became much less responsive to accusations of *caciquismo* after this point, something which reflected the change in its priorities as Primo sought to extend the dictatorship into the medium term. The general petitions sent to the authorities nonetheless would continue to incorporate elements of the denunciatory genre after this point. As we will see in the next chapter, the same critical, anti-*caciquil* language was used by ordinary people in their letters about the work of the *Delegados Gubernativos* sent by Primo to reform municipal life. It is to this topic that we will turn in the coming pages.

## Chapter Four | The work of the military *Delegados Gubernativos*, 1923-1925

### Introduction

The question over the place that the Army should occupy in Spanish society had been one of the defining political issues of the Restoration era before Primo's seizure of power. The nation's capitulation in the Spanish-American War of 1898 laid bare the military's deficiencies in planning and recruitment, to say nothing of training and materiel. The many attempts at reform that followed over the next 25 years, however, were inadequate. In particular, the continuation of partial monetary exemptions to conscription, the use of the army in repression and policing matters domestically, and the seemingly endless colonial war in Morocco from 1909 onwards served to alienate the popular classes from this key national institution.<sup>1</sup> Yet at the same time, there was a growing belief within the Spanish officer corps that national regeneration could be led by the military. This, in turn, led to the emergence of a distinct military-regenerationist discourse in the decades preceding the dictatorship.<sup>2</sup> This was characterised both by an awareness of the army's shortcomings as an agent of mass nationalisation up to that point and by a simultaneous insistence that it could serve as the chief educator of citizens in the ideal of the *Patria* if properly resourced.<sup>3</sup>

General Primo de Rivera was steeped in this culture as a junior and middle-ranking officer, and shared many of its sentiments, as he explained in the prologue of 1916 textbook on military education.<sup>4</sup> Any attempt to achieve national regeneration through the army would require it to go beyond the barracks and out into the towns

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<sup>1</sup> I have explored the development of these problems around the time of the First World War in Richard Gow, "Civil and Military Relations in Spain in the Context of World War 1," in *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries in World War 1*, ed. Gearóid Barry, Enrico Dal Lago, and Róisín Healy (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 107–24.

<sup>2</sup> This has been discussed in Espadas Burgos, "Orden social en la mentalidad militar española a comienzos del siglo XX"; Manuel Espadas Burgos, "Ejército y 'cuestión social' en la España de fin de siglo," *Torre de los Lujanes: Boletín de la Real Sociedad Económica Matritense de Amigos del País*, no. 31 (1996): 57–64. Jensen has studied some of the key thinkers behind this in Geoffrey Jensen, *Irrational Triumph: Cultural Despair, Military Nationalism and the Ideological Origins of Franco's Spain* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, chap. 4, particularly 78–79.

<sup>4</sup> Miguel Primo de Rivera, "Prólogo," in *Elementos de educación moral del soldado*, by Tomás García Figueras and José de la Matta (Sevilla: F. Díaz, 1916), xi–xv.

and villages in Spain to carry out the indoctrination of the masses in national ideas, however. Amid the largely untargeted purges that he was carrying out to the political system in the autumn of 1923, the subject of Chapter Three, Primo sought to put this idea into practice by sending out hundreds of army officers into the *Ayuntamientos* (local governments) of the nation to support the reforms already being carried out by the military. These new figures, the *Delegados Gubernativos* (Government Delegates), came to serve as the chief public faces of the Military Directorate during the first two years of the dictatorship. As such, they attracted considerable public interest and feature in numerous letters sent to the authorities by ordinary people at this time.

As Beyen and Van Ginderachter have argued, inquiry into the role played by low- and middle-ranking state functionaries, like the *Delegados*, in the nationalising policies devised by political elites is an essential, but thus far largely unexplored, element of the history of nationalism.<sup>5</sup> The responsibilities of the *Delegados* in this regard were diverse, but tended to focus around two main tasks: the elimination of local *caciques* and their networks, and the formation of a ‘new type of citizen’ that reflected the hyper-nationalist ideals of the *primorriverista* state. Since the second of these functions has already been the subject of a major study, this chapter focuses primarily on the work of these military officers in their role as inspectors of local and provincial government from their creation in late 1923 to the end of 1925.<sup>6</sup> The aim of this process, as we saw in Chapter One, was the centralisation of state power at the expense of intermediaries and other informal, local power arrangements. Because of this, the *Delegados* became a vital channel through which the Spanish state sought to penetrate the boundaries of the *patria chica* - that is, the immediate community in which people lived; what we might think of as a Spanish approximation to *Gemeinschaft* - and project itself into the towns and villages of the nation during the Military Directorate period.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Beyen and Van Ginderachter, “Writing,” 9–10.

<sup>6</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 93–109. See also Quiroga, “«Los apóstoles de la patria».”

<sup>7</sup> Tim Kirk and Anthony McElligott, “Introduction: Community, Authority and Resistance to Fascism,” in *Opposing Fascism: Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe*, ed. Tim Kirk, Anthony McElligott, and Mike Cronin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 4.



### The creation of the *Delegados Gubernativos*

While there was a strong ideological basis behind the creation of the *Delegados Gubernativos*, as we have just seen, there were also practical reasons for this. As the previous chapter detailed, on 9 October, the newly-appointed Military-Civil Governors received orders to begin a general inspection of the *Ayuntamientos* in each province, with the expressed aim of purging and prosecuting those suspected of corruption.<sup>8</sup> Over the next two months the Governors were permitted to carry this out with a free hand. Relatively little data exists about the scale of the repression that took place, as we saw at the end of Chapter Three, but it is clear that this was more limited than Primo had anticipated in September 1923.<sup>9</sup> Despite some modest progress in rooting out intermediate *caciques* from local government, the limitations of the new municipal administrations formed by the regime were considerable. This soon became apparent to Primo, who began to hint in public at a greater role for the military in local government in order to ensure that the *Ayuntamientos* conformed to the standards which the *Directorio Militar* had set in September 1923.<sup>10</sup> As a new wave of letters written to denounce the corruption rife in the temporary town councils formed by the regime began to arrive in Madrid, Primo accepted that it would be necessary to curtail the influence of the *Vocales Asociados* (associate council-members), who seemed no less vulnerable to *caciquil* manipulation than their predecessors, the elected councillors. As Primo conceded in the decree that created the *Delegados*, these new councils were not

better than those they replaced in general, because, as some of them are made up of elements that are accustomed to the old form of politics or by people who are not particularly competent, they have attempted to continue what was instilled in them by the habits formed over many years.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 221.

<sup>9</sup> By the end of 1923, the provincial Governors had overseen the inspection of 815 *Ayuntamientos* across Spain, during which 379 irregularities were detected and 109 court convictions made against public administrators. A further 152 town secretaries and 121 municipal functionaries of other types were also dismissed from their posts. The figures are drawn from a *nota oficiosa* written by Primo in December 1923 and reproduced in Fernando Soldevilla, *El año político (1923)* (Madrid, 1923), 453–54. The few cases of imprisonment that occurred were usually of short duration; instead, the regime tended to favour dismissals, banishments and fines. See *Ibid.*, 221–22.

<sup>10</sup> Reference is made to this in a *nota oficiosa* in *La Libertad*, 13/10/1923. The same document discusses some of the key functions that would later be assigned to the *Delegados*.

<sup>11</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21/10/1923.

In the absence of a popular movement or political party to support the government in these, the earliest months of the dictatorship, the regime had few viable options from which to draw the loyal cadres that could replace the *caciques* and oversee the process of reform at local level. Primo therefore turned to the military to provide a temporary solution to this, creating the post of *Delegado Gubernativo* on 20 October, 1923, and began to implement a military-regenerationist vision of an army-led intervention in municipal politics.<sup>12</sup>

The dictator envisaged the *Delegados'* work both as a continuation of the inspections that were already being carried out in the nation's *Ayuntamientos* by the Military-Civil Governors and as a means of laying the social and political foundations upon which the future local administration would be built. In the preamble to the decree which created the role, Primo stated that these figures were "to make all Spaniards aware of their new life, to inspire them and help them to set forth on it."<sup>13</sup> As the immediate subordinates of the Madrid-controlled Military-Civil Governors in each province, the *Delegados* were each assigned to a provincial district and charged with the oversight and reorganisation of its *Ayuntamientos*. In the first four months of this mission their powers to intervene in municipal politics were essentially limitless, making them the final piece in the full, but temporary, militarisation of the Spanish government structure. In the aftermath of the implementation of the Municipal Statute in April 1924, however, their powers to intervene in local politics were reduced. Despite the confidence that Primo publicly placed in these officers to achieve the regeneration of Spain, he maintained a tight grip over them and controlled them in a short and vertical chain of command that led from the *Delegados* to the provincial Governors and on to Lieutenant General Martínez Anido, the Subsecretary of the Ministry of the Interior in Madrid. Each was to serve in the role for a full year in the

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<sup>12</sup> In his decision to create the *Delegados* Primo de Rivera may also have drawn inspiration from the regenerationist writer Ricardo Macías Picavea, who, in 1899, proposed the creation of a *Cuerpo civil de Inspección nacional* (Civil Corps of National Inspection) to assist the reforming work of an authoritarian *Gobierno nacional* (National Government) headed by a so-called 'director.' This inspectorate would be formed from two organisations, the *Guardia Civil* and a new corps of administrative experts (*péritos*), designated the *Cuerpo de Inspección Civil* (Civil Inspection Corps). The latter of these organisations would be modelled on the *Guardia Civil* and borrow its paramilitary structure. In Primo's vision, however, these duties would be assigned exclusively to the military. Macías Picavea, *El problema nacional*, 486–87 & 497–98.

<sup>13</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21/10/1923.

first instance and, in a measure designed to minimise potential manipulation of the position by state administrators, they could only be removed from their posts with the expressed permission of Primo himself.<sup>14</sup>

After a series of delays which led to the original decree being referred to mockingly as '*el decreto fantasma*' (the ghost decree) in the press, not least of which was the sheer volume of applicants, 523 *Delegados* were appointed in early December 1923, of whom 434 served in judicial districts (provincial subdivisions) and 89 in provincial capitals.<sup>15</sup> Those selected ranged in rank from Captain to Lieutenant-Colonel and were drawn primarily from the bloated reserve lists of the army. From a financial perspective, the burden on the national exchequer was relatively small. Upon their activation they were placed on 75% pay by the Ministry of War, with the remaining 25% (in addition to provisions for lodging, expenses etc.) to be made up by the *Ayuntamientos* under their supervision.<sup>16</sup> The measure also temporarily solved the long-standing problem of what to do with the occasionally unruly body of underemployed and underpaid reserve officers. At a time that was characterised by Primo's tendency to improvise, he regarded their military training and discipline as sufficient guarantee of their loyalty and preparedness. In reality, many struggled with the ill-defined nature of their assignment once in place.

On 7 December 1923, the day after the *Delegados'* formal appointment, General Martínez Anido issued instructions to them.<sup>17</sup> Upon their arrival in each village, they were to seize and audit each village's account books. Then they were to publish an edict to invite the local population to make administrative denunciations like those described in Chapter Three. Following this, they were to investigate the manner in which taxes had been divided amongst local residents. The minutes for the meetings of the local council and its subcommittees were also to be scrutinised and legal proceedings initiated against town Secretaries if it was discovered that these had

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<sup>14</sup> In general this could not occur without initiating disciplinary proceedings against the Delegado. Failure by any Delegado to complete the assignment in full would result in an unfavourable note in his service record.

<sup>15</sup> A list of the Delegados, their rank, corps of origin and assignment can be found in AGA, Interior, Bundle 149/44, File 15.

<sup>16</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 94.

<sup>17</sup> "Previsiones que para el mejor desempeño de sus cargos deben tener presentes los Delegados Gubernativos," AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17A, File 12, 07/12/1923.

not taken place. When these preliminary tasks were completed the *Delegados* were then to focus their attention on the local population. They were to inspect the quality of the local amenities that represented “la vida del vecindario” (the life of the neighbourhood), like the market, abattoir and hospital. Special attention was to be paid to schools, where they would report on the work of the teachers. While there, they were also to talk to the children about the importance of the Army, the flag, the King and the *Patria*, and oversee the introduction of gymnastics classes in the school to improve the children’s physical wellbeing. Adults, meanwhile, were to be instructed about the importance of military service and of reducing the number of *prófugos* (deserters). Gambling and drinking were also to be discouraged and village-dwellers were to be told of the value of saving their money instead, both key elements in the regime’s campaign to encourage public morality. All of this, Martínez Anido wrote, would help to stimulate “the civic virtue of not permitting *caciques*.”<sup>18</sup>

The *Delegados*, for their part, were expected to take an interest in the local surroundings and to familiarise themselves with the region’s traditions and festivals as a mark of respect for the population. They were to do so in an austere manner and to avoid compromising themselves by becoming friendly with civilians, however. As Martínez Anido noted in quasi-religious terms, the *Delegados* “must keep in mind that those with an interest in the failure of the Delegations will leave no stone unturned to bring them into disrepute, that they will try everything and that perhaps even the fruit of Paradise will be offered” to achieve this. Summarising the regime’s aims, Martínez Anido wrote that the *Delegados* would be expected to achieve:

- a) The administrative moralisation of municipalities and, consequently, the material wellbeing of villages.
- b) The achievement of bodily health through the practice of hygienic habits...
- c) The awakening of the spirit of the race, generating its interest in problems other than [acts of] *caciquil* revenge and the mess of low politics which has corrupted men and robbed them of their pride as Spaniards.
- d) An increase in the level of culture, even if this is rudimentary, and the hope that the children [of Spain] are of more use than their forebears and that the blot of illiteracy disappears from our maps.
- e) The reduction of that great national shame represented by deserters... and an increase in love and respect for the Army.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The Sub-secretary's rather pragmatic writing style did not reflect the scale of the task, which was colossal, especially given that the regime was still describing itself as temporary at this point. Nevertheless, he concluded that if all of this could be achieved "we will be able to say that the Army has saved the *Patria*."<sup>20</sup>

A second set of instructions issued by Martínez Anido on 1 January, 1924 committed the *Delegados* to a new round of purges at municipal level, this time against the temporary town councils that had been formed with limited regime supervision after the mass dissolution described in the last chapter.<sup>21</sup> They were ordered to dismiss the new councils and select others in their place in cases where their members did not seem to possess the required social prestige or intellectual capacity for the role, or when there were suspicions of vote-rigging and interference in the elections. In the absence of candidates that fulfilled any of these criteria, adult ratepayers would suffice.<sup>22</sup> Those that were regarded as having been too close to the previous regime, or had been councillors before, were also to be excluded from the new proceedings, although in reality none of this proved to be a major obstacle to the *caciques* of old, who continued to meddle in municipal politics across Spain. That such seemingly arbitrary criteria were still used to determine a candidate's suitability for the role of councillor or mayor is a clear indication of the regime's ideological poverty at this time. In reality, Primo struggled to match his early political iconoclasm with viable new ideas, a difficulty that would continue throughout the dictatorship. Moreover, it highlights the difficulty in truly eradicating *caciquismo*, which, by its very nature, was a shifting, ill-defined concept.

### Public perception

In the weeks preceding the creation of the *Delegados* in October 1923, Primo outlined his vision of the role in a series of *notas oficiosas*. In one of these, he stated that did

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. The *Delegados*, it should be noted, were not initially assigned any specific duties in relation to public order; these were reserved for the *Guardia Civil*, which had been assisting the Military-Civil Governors in the inspections until the appointment of the *Delegados*.

<sup>21</sup> "Instrucciones reservadas que los Sres. Gobernadores civiles y Delegados gubernativos deberán tener presentes en sus misiones inspectoras de los Ayuntamientos," AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17A, File 12, 01/01/1924.

<sup>22</sup> This was essentially a repeat of the criteria set out during the first round of municipal reform. See Chapter Three.

not foresee a permanent, constitutionally mandated role for the military in local government; the *Delegados'* assignment was merely a means of carrying out inspections and of gathering information, in addition to that of building up the *Somatén Nacional* and other key regime institutions. He also made clear that he did not regard the military as "a privileged class, or better or more capable than the [others] that make up the country." Instead, he wrote, the Army aspired to something more heroic and was "obliged [to intervene] by discipline and the spirit of sacrifice... and a conviction that one must make a superhuman effort to save the *Patria*." These "heroic measures," he added rather ominously, meant that there would be little room for talk of "legality" or "the democratic spirit" during the dictatorship.<sup>23</sup>

The decision to create the *Delegados* received significant coverage in the press. Newspapers like *El Debate* and *El Sol*, the latter of which dedicated several editorials to the virtues of the *Delegados* in October 1923, were conspicuous in their approval of the measure.<sup>24</sup> There is also significant evidence from the letters sent to the government by ordinary people that the arrival of the *Delegados* was widely anticipated in the towns and villages across Spain. Amid the delays preceding the *Delegados'* appointment in December 1923, the regime received many letters of complaint which lamented its failure to carry out the administrative inspections it promised; these were to continue in largely the same volume as the *Delegados* slowly began their work towards the New Year.

In November 1923, a resident of Málaga complained about the nature of the changes he had observed in the *Ayuntamiento* of the provincial capital.<sup>25</sup> In his view, representatives of the old politics were still in control and, in a statement that rejected the spirit of heroism that Primo had spoken of, he placed the blame for this on the provincial Governor, whom he accused of carrying out only superficial reform in the naïve belief that "the people who surround him are as noble as he is." The letter-writer, though, warned Primo that "you could say that nobility does not exist in

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<sup>23</sup> *El Sol*, 14/10/1923.

<sup>24</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 153.

<sup>25</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 54, File 1207, 10/11/1923.

politics.”<sup>26</sup> Administrative irregularities, he claimed, were still occurring because they were innate in the political class and the only way to solve this would be to send a *Delegado* to carry out a more extensive inspection of the *Ayuntamiento* and, if necessary, for the regime to show its teeth [“hay que enseñar los dientes”] to the *caciques* of old.

The residents of the village of Gata (Cáceres) wrote another such letter in December 1923. Complaining that they had observed how inspections had already taken place in other parts of Spain, but not yet in their village, they wrote:

In this village of Gata (Cáceres) [we] are convinced that our hour of justice has not arrived, and for [us] see the contrary it is essential that [Your Excellency] send a resolute *Delegado*, of firm character, who will not let himself be dominated by the arguments that the man who is currently secretary of the *Ayuntamiento* puts up in his defence.<sup>27</sup>

Fear of being forgotten by the regime was a theme that recurred in many letters sent to the government, especially those regarding the *Delegados*. A resident of the village of Potes (Santander) penned a similar note in the same month, as the *Delegados* began their work. “Here in this part we have barely felt the beneficial influence of the Directorate,” he wrote. “There have been no inspections in any of the *Ayuntamientos*, even though some of them really need it.” He wondered what the effect of this would be on the morale of the population and concluded rather forlornly that “there is a little bit of suspicion that everything here will stay the same.”<sup>28</sup>

Despite the sense of expectation that surrounded the *Delegados'* arrival, the nature of their work meant that there was also significant potential for them to

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<sup>26</sup> Original: In his view, representatives of the old politics were still in control and, in a statement that rejected entirely the spirit of heroism that Primo had spoken of before, he placed the blame for this on the provincial Governor, whom he accused of carrying out only superficial reform in the naïve belief that “todos los que rodean son tan nobles como él.” The letter-writer, though, warned Primo that “en política la nobleza se puede decir que no existe.”

<sup>27</sup> Original: Complaining that they had observed how inspections had already taken place in other parts of Spain, but not yet in their village, they wrote: “En este pueblo de Gata (Cáceres) están creídos que no alcanza la hora de nuestra justicia, y para hacerlos ver lo contrario es preciso que VE envíe un Delegado de carácter firme y decidido y que no se deje dominar por los argumentos que en su defensa ponga el que es hoy secretario del Ayuntamiento.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 57, File 2435, 16/12/1923.

<sup>28</sup> Original: “Aquí en este rincón apenas hemos sentido la influencia benéfica del Directorio,” he wrote. “No ha habido inspección en ningún Ayuntamiento, aunque algunos bien lo necesitan.” He wondered what the effect of this would be on the morale of the population and concluded rather forlornly that, “[h]ay un poquito de desconfianza, de que aquí todo quedara igual.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 2071, 11/12/1923.

become unpopular figures. Although this task was dominated by the administrative inspections that were discussed in the previous section, the *Delegados* nevertheless found themselves thrust into the everyday life of the towns and villages under their supervision. The denunciations, petitions and complaints which they received from the population, meant that they were frequently sucked into disputes amongst local residents, many of whom sought to instrumentalise state repression to settle old scores, rather than help in the struggle against *caciquismo*, as the regime had hoped. At times, the *Delegados* themselves became the very focus of these disputes also and, for some, this led to unwanted associations with the very *caciques* they were meant to eliminate.

### **The perils of the *patria chica***

For *caciques* and their associates the arrival of the *Delegados* was unwelcome. Indeed, some would go to great lengths to discredit them. As a result, the *Delegados* became the target of the denunciations and complaints which they and the provincial Governors received from the population. The regime had sought to pre-empt this by ordering the *Delegados* to act with “determination and serenity” and show great austerity in their public lives. This meant keeping a respectable distance from the residents of each town and village, and politely refusing their offers of help, comfort and accommodation. Primo reminded them that if they failed to do so these would be “acceptances which may have no importance in normal social relations but in yours could serve as pretext to diminish the prestige which you require [in order to carry out your work].”<sup>29</sup> In reality, though, it was very difficult for the *Delegados* to achieve this total independence, especially when their work required close contact with the local population and extended periods away from their habitual places of residence.

A letter written by José María Carlos, a resident of Granada, to Primo at the end of January 1924 documents one case in which a *Delegado* was denounced vividly.<sup>30</sup> Identifying himself ostensibly as a journalist who had vehemently defended the new order in the press, the letter-writer accused an unnamed *Delegado* of incompetence and demanded that he be dismissed in order to ensure the continued

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<sup>29</sup> “Instrucciones a los *Delegados gubernativos*,” AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17A, File 12, c. October 1923.

<sup>30</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3419, 23/01/1923.



stability of the regime. Primo's bureau referred the complaint to the provincial government of Almería, where the *Delegado* in question was based, but the Governor expressed doubts about the denouncer's identity. He linked the letter to another which had made similar complaints about that *Delegado's* work in the villages of Beninar and Darrical.<sup>31</sup> That letter had not been signed by its author and had therefore been disregarded as anonymous by the provincial bureaucracy. While the extent of anonymous letter-writing like this has been exaggerated in the literature on the dictatorship, it was still taken very seriously by the regime at this time.<sup>32</sup> The Military-Civil Governor of Almería decided to investigate the origin of the letters, first by interviewing his *Delegados* and then by dispatching a colonel from the local garrison to the office which the supposed journalist had listed as his place of work. When consulted on the matter, one of the *Delegados*, Rafael Santapau, voiced his belief that the two complaints had been made by the former Secretary of Beninar, after it became apparent to him "that the work carried out by this Delegation will be the death of those politicians."<sup>33</sup> The colonel who went to investigate the matter at the offices of the newspaper in question, *La Gaceta del Sur*, meanwhile, presented Carlos' signature to the editor there but was told that no such person existed, thus confirming Santapau's suspicions. In a report detailing the outcome of his investigation, the colonel told the Governor, "[i]t would be a shame not to be able to put a wretch like that who goes around trying to discredit the present situation in prison," before adding that he had managed to have a former councillor from the area jailed for 15 days elsewhere for speaking ill of the Military Directorate.<sup>34</sup> While there is no documentation regarding the subsequent fate of the letter-writer, it is clear that the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 13/02/1924.

<sup>32</sup> As we saw in Chapter Three, the provision of a signature and a return address by the letter-writer, often in addition to other means of identification, was regarded by the authorities as an essential part of this process.

<sup>33</sup> Original: When consulted on the matter, one of the *Delegados*, Rafael Santapau, voiced his belief that the two complaints had been made by the former Secretary of Beninar after it became apparent to him "que la labor que realiza esta Delegación es de muerte para esos políticos." AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3419, 28/01/1924.

<sup>34</sup> Original: In a report detailing the outcome of his investigation, the colonel told the Governor, "[s]ería una lástima no poder meter en la cárcel a tanto sin vergüenza que anda por ahí tratando de desprestigiar la actual situación," before adding that he had managed to have a former councillor from the area jailed for 15 days elsewhere for speaking ill of the Military Directorate. Ibid., 03/02/1924.

hoax consumed considerable time and public resources, and added to a growing sense of hostility between the military and the civilian population.

In a similar incident, a resident of the town of Puente Genil (Córdoba) wrote to the authorities in April 1924 to complain about the role of the local *Delegado* in perpetuating “the regime of *caciquismo* which we suffer from and which makes our lives impossible.” The *Delegado*, he reported, was deeply involved in the “excesses of [the] old *caciques*” and in the exploitation of the “the oppressed working and poor class which lives from work.”<sup>35</sup> As such, he called for his prompt removal, albeit without providing any further detail or evidence. A letter sent by Primo’s bureau in response to this a month later revealed that an extensive investigation had taken place into the *Delegado*’s conduct but that this had been determined to be exemplary, leading to the suspicion that this was another false accusation. Further inquiry into the matter revealed that the letter-writer’s father had recently been charged by the accused *Delegado* for attempting to bring livestock slaughtered in other villages into Puente Genil in order to avoid paying certain taxes to the local *Ayuntamiento*. This, it was concluded, was likely the reason for the false complaint.<sup>36</sup> In this case, like the one detailed before, the investigation was a considerable bureaucratic undertaking, which ate up resources and soured the relationship between the *Delegado* and the people. As in the cases described at the end of the previous chapter, the language of regeneration proved flexible enough to be used to level criticism at the regime itself, which felt obliged to investigate the matter on that basis.

In the town of Cebreros (Ávila) the *Delegado* found himself the target of a coordinated campaign of false denunciation by two local residents.<sup>37</sup> The authorities, however, were quick to dismiss the accusations. The letters focused on the councillors of the local *Ayuntamiento* formed by the *Delegado*, whom they accused of corruption and incompetence. The first of the letter-writers was quickly identified by the regime as a José Marian E., a notorious former provincial deputy who had been dismissed

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<sup>35</sup> Original: In a similar incident, a resident of the town of Puente Genil (Córdoba) wrote to the authorities in April 1924 to complain about the role of the local *Delegado* in perpetuating “el régimen de caciquismo que padecemos que hace imposible nuestra vida.” The *Delegado*, he reported, was deeply involved in the “desmanes de [los] viejos caciques” and in the exploitation of the “la oprimida clase obrera y pobre que vive del trabajo.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 60, File 5102, 09/04/1924.

<sup>36</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 60, File 5102, 30/05/1924.

<sup>37</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 62, File 6226, 25/06/1924.

from his position in the first round of purges. While he fit the common profile of the disgruntled former politician, turned enemy of the regime, he was also considered unreliable due to a criminal conviction for illegal gambling. The second letter-writer, Francisco G., likewise had been convicted before, but his crimes were not listed. With their credibility undermined, both were then identified by the provincial authorities as pawns of the local *cacique*, Julio Martín Juárez, who, the Governor of Ávila claimed, wished to see the *Delegado* recalled by Madrid. The men, he wrote, “dedicate themselves to insulting, discrediting and impeding the laudable work of the *Delegado*” in pursuit of this aim.<sup>38</sup>

What is clear from these examples is that not only were certain opponents of the regime willing to hinder the activities of the *Delegados*, they were also prepared to exploit the very means which the regime had established for the purpose of eradicating *caciquismo* to this end. This was a problem of Primo’s own creation, however. As we observed in the previous chapter, while the use of denunciation was intended to bring some precision to the purges the regime was carrying out, the channels for this were quite unsophisticated and suffered due the lack of dedicated apparatus that could verify the accusations made by the public, or, indeed, punish those who abused the system. The process, like most government measures during the dictatorship, was highly centralised and, given these deficiencies, decidedly unwieldy. This left the authorities vulnerable to manipulation, especially considering the time it took to coordinate an investigation from Madrid.

The regime’s efforts to eradicate *caciquismo* was spoken of in its official discourse as a task on a historic scale. Yet as the *Delegados* set about their work in exalting the Spanish *Patria* and the national community, their attention was focused primarily on the *patria chica* and the sphere of the local. Their actions in wresting control of towns and villages from the grip of the *caciques* required detailed knowledge of these surroundings. The gathering and assessment of this often mundane information about local goings-on through the short channels that led from the provinces to Primo in Madrid was an enormous bureaucratic undertaking that was made possible only by the work of the *Delegados*, who acted as the link between the

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<sup>38</sup> Original: The men, he wrote, “se dedican a injuriar, desacreditar y entorpecer la laudable labor del digno Delegado Gubernativo,” in pursuit of this aim.

state administration and life in the towns and villages of Spain. This dictated that the *Delegados'* mission was as much about fact-finding as anything else. The regime, it was clear, knew little about the very nation which it was trying to exalt.

This need for information meant that the *Delegados* were deeply involved in collecting the administrative denunciations which Primo elicited from government at the beginning of the regime. Despite growing misgivings within the administration about the viability of verifying the credibility of these denunciations as 1923 drew to a close, Primo ordered the *Delegados* to publish edicts in the villages under their inspection to announce their arrival and invite local residents to make denunciations about the administration.<sup>39</sup> While this was to prove useful to the *Delegados* in the first instance, the population's enthusiasm for the practice soon created problems. Enrique Tomás y Luque (E.T.L.), a *Delegado* who wrote a memoir of his experience in the role, described this in vivid terms. When it came to denunciation, the local residents varied wildly in their interpretations of what constituted legitimate cause for grievance:

There are complaints which seem to have some basis, especially those that refer to debts owed by the *Ayuntamientos*; for those of a personal nature, one can immediately observe the envy or the hate that encourages them by the manner in which they are expressed, a reflection of the wretched moral and intellectual context of the complainants.<sup>40</sup>

This was echoed by Rodrigo de la Yglena, a *Delegado* in the province of Huelva, who reported that his progress in carrying out reform had been hindered because "the cultural level [in the villages] is highly deficient and equally so in the moral sense."<sup>41</sup> While there may have been some element of truth to this, these comments also revealed a certain metropolitan bias on the part the *Delegados*, who seemed to regard their countrymen as little more than backward peasants. This highlighted their underlying ignorance about the rural population.

Although the *Delegados* were forced to spend vast amounts of time assessing the validity of denunciations, most nevertheless approached the task with considerable zeal. In December 1923, the month they began their work, they

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<sup>39</sup> "Previsiones...", AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17A, File 12, 07/12/1923.

<sup>40</sup> E.T.L., *Por pueblos y aldeas*, 47–48.

<sup>41</sup> Original: This was echoed by Rodrigo de la Yglena, a *Delegado* in the province of Huelva, who reported that his progress in carrying out reform had been hindered because "el nivel cultural es deficientísimo y el sentido moral le hace pareja." AHN, Primo, Bundle 77, File 13586, c. May 1928.

summarily arrested and jailed dozens of public administrators and supposed *caciques*, often on a dubious legal footing.<sup>42</sup> These arrests were carried out using the policing powers that were traditionally delegated by the central government to the provincial governorships, rather than at the behest of the judiciary. This prompted Martínez Anido to issue new instructions on 1 January, 1924, in which he emphasized the need for moderation in issuing punishments and the obligation to pass the details of the most serious cases on to the courts for formal prosecution. This was a matter of public image for both the *Delegados* and the regime, he reminded them, as any unnecessary or unjustified detentions would surely damage their prestige.<sup>43</sup> The numerous communications sent by Anido in the following months, however, reveal that his orders were not followed.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the problems created for the regime by the *Delegados'* heavy-handed approach, there are numerous reports of cases in which *Delegados* were accused of collaboration with *caciques* and other representatives of the so-called old politics. As González Calbet has argued, the period in which the *Delegados* carried out their inspections was marked by many contradictions. While the regime's purges against public administrators continued until at least April 1924, the anti-*caciquil* repression that came after the appointment of the *Delegados* in December 1923 was less intense than in the preceding three months. Those that suffered most from these measures were typically low-level *caciques* and their representatives, rather than the so-called *grandes caciques* (albeit with the exception of some of the well-known politicians like Santiago Alba).<sup>45</sup> As new town councils were constructed by the *Delegados* in this interim period preceding the introduction of the Municipal Statute in March-April 1924, the regime also showed itself to be willing to reach accommodations with *caciques* who were willing to collaborate with the government, even if only temporarily. As such, the *Delegados* were frequently called upon to select one political faction over its rival or rivals in order to form workable councils.<sup>46</sup> This created significant public resentment.

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<sup>42</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 94.

<sup>43</sup> "Instrucciones reservadas...", AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17A, File 12, 01/01/1924.

<sup>44</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 94.

<sup>45</sup> This is discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>46</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 225–26.

Alonso Jarbera, a resident of Ayora (Valencia), directed one of these letters to Primo in January 1924.<sup>47</sup> While expressing support for the Directorate, which, he observed approvingly, was seeking to stamp out “the disgusting, feudal and caesarist *caciquismo*, which our unfortunate nation has been suffering from since long ago,” the letter-writer protested that the transitional town council formed by the *vocales asociados* had not yet been replaced by the *Delegado*, as had been ordered by Martínez Anido earlier in the month. Ayora, as a result, was now subject to the whims of a mayor that was “extremely political” and was suffering under “the weight of an administration that is quite worse than the one before the current regime existed.” He blamed the *Delegado*, Antonio Sintes Palliser, who, though of good character, suffered from “very excessive goodness” and “a high degree of rashness due to a lack of judgement or perhaps world experience.” This lack of perspective and knowledge of local politics led him to enter into close association with certain unreliable members of the local population, who induced him into “lack of urgency that is damaging to everyone and to everything.”<sup>48</sup> The letter-writer was keen to stress that he was not guided by any bad feelings toward the *Delegado* but that the latter’s tendency to associate with the wrong people had caused great consternation amongst the local population. In a remarkably frank conclusion, which hinted that his and his neighbour’s support for the regime hinged on the response they received, he asked Primo to intervene and hear the “just desires of the Sovereign people, which has for some time lacked faith that the intentions promised in the sovereign statements of the new regime will be fulfilled.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3469, 24/01/1924.

<sup>48</sup> Original: While expressing support for the Directorate, which, he observed approvingly, was seeking to stamp out “el caciquismo asqueroso, feudal y cesarista que desde hace mucho tiempo esta nuestra desgraciada nación viene padeciendo,” the letter-writer protested that the transitional town council formed by the *vocales asociados* had not yet been replaced by the *Delegado*, as had been ordered by Martínez Anido earlier in the month. Ayora, as a result, was now subject to the whims of a mayor that was “extremely political” and was suffering under “el peso de una administración bastante peor de la de antes de existir el actual régimen.” He blamed the *Delegado*, Antonio Sintes Palliser, who, though of good character, suffered from “vondad muy escesiva” and “una muy grande irreflección por falta de tino o quizá de mundología.” This lack of perspective and knowledge of local politics led him to enter into close association with certain unreliable members of the local population, who induced him into “una parsimonia nociva para todos, y para todo.”

<sup>49</sup> Original: In a remarkably frank conclusion, which hinted that his and his neighbour’s support for the regime hinged on the response they received, he asked Primo to intervene and hear the “justos deseos del pueblo Soberano, que desde hace algún tiempo desconfía de la realización de los deseos que las disposiciones soberanas del nuevo régimen prometieron.”

The residents of La Codosera (Extremadura) expressed similar reservations in a collective letter in 1924.<sup>50</sup> Like so many of those who wrote to the government during the dictatorship, they began their letter with a disavowal of politics. Many of them, they outlined, had once belonged to the *Maurista* wing of the Conservative party but had abandoned this affiliation altogether in the aftermath of Primo's coup. In reality, however, their lingering rivalries and resentments spilled over into their complaint, which was framed in overtly political terms. The *Delegado* assigned to the district of Albuquerque had, in their eyes, been favouring former supporters of the Liberal Party in the municipal administration. The proof of this, they claimed, lay in the fact that at least two village mayors in the district were once members of the party, while the local *Unión Patriótica* branch was also dominated by its supporters. The *Delegado*, they added, frequently went on long walks and even for dancing sessions with his local favourites, who all happened to be Liberals, and tended to be pleasant to that group while being "haughty and scornful to others who have professed other ideas." The letter-writers were complaining not because they longed for power themselves, they said, but because "we are Spaniards and we wish to enjoy the same benefits as the immense majority of Spain, or rather a little peace and quiet and the wellbeing that the Directorate has delivered." Despite these protestations, there was a contradiction at the heart of this. While they invoked national identity and the rights which they, as citizens, should be afforded, they also challenged the values of this citizenship when they simultaneously asked Primo to send them "a *señor Delegado* who is completely neutral and will crush all politics, principally that of the odious liberal coalition."<sup>51</sup> Clearly, this was an attempt to settle old scores, more than anything else.

In June 1924, the local doctor in Cebreros (Ávila), José María Prerías, complained that the *Delegado* assigned to the district "does not support the aims of

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<sup>50</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 61, File 5746, 24/05/1924.

<sup>51</sup> Original: The *Delegado*, they added, frequently went on long walks and even for dancing sessions with his local favourites, who all happened to be Liberals, and tended to be pleasant to that group while being "altanero y despectivo con los demás que han profesado otras ideas." They were complaining not because they longed for power themselves, they said, but because "somos españoles y queremos gozar del mismo beneficio que la inmensa mayoría del resto de España, o sea de un poco de paz y tranquilidad y del bienestar que el Directorio ha repartido." Despite these protestations, there was a contradiction at the heart of this. While they invoked national identity and the rights which they, as its citizens, should be afforded, they also challenged the values of this citizenship when they simultaneously asked Primo to send them "un señor Delegado que sea completamente neutral y aplaste toda política, principalmente la odiosa concentración liberal."

the Government and is still following the pattern drawn by the old regime.”<sup>52</sup> “It would be difficult for there to be another *Ayuntamiento* in all of Spain where more irregularities have occurred,” he declared.<sup>53</sup> Like many of his countrymen, he seemed to take pleasure in imagining that his locality was the worst in the country. His tale was a familiar one: there were still at least seven representatives of the old *caciques* in the *Ayuntamiento*. While these accusations may not have been sufficient to earn Cebreros the title of worst-administered municipality in Spain, the author pointed to another problem, which damaged the reputation of the *Delegados*: their failure to act on the requests made to them by the population. Such accusations were commonly made against the *caciques* of the so-called old politics, as we saw in Chapter Three; yet they were also made against the representatives of the *primorriverista* state. Despite the discovery of even more of what the author called “grandes transgresiones” (large transgressions) in the municipal accounts of 1923-24, he state that “nada ha hecho el Sr. Delegado” (the *Delegado* has done nothing). More alarmingly, however, the *Delegado* had also failed to act on another complaint made against the local *caciques* for literally *moving the earth* by diverting the flow of a nearby spring, thus robbing the village’s public fountain of its source of water. As in the examples which we have seen already, the doctor suspected that the real reason for the *Delegado*’s inaction was his closeness to the local notables: “In his social life he only has contact with the old *caciques*, whose banquets he accepts, and he and his family frequently go on outings organised by the families of said *caciques*.”<sup>54</sup> Under the suspicious gaze of the local population such gestures could be, and very often were, interpreted as signs of favouritism regardless of whether this was truly the case or not.

The dangers of such free association with the population are illustrated in the case of Captain Angel Monterde, a *Delegado* in the province of Cuenca who was dismissed after two just months in the role. In a letter sent to Martínez Anido shortly

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<sup>52</sup> Original: In June 1924, the local doctor in Cebreros (Ávila), José María Prerías, complained that the *Delegado* assigned to the district “no secunda los propósitos del Gobierno y sigue la pauta trazada por el antiguo régimen.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 63, File 6487, 25/06/1924.

<sup>53</sup> Original: “Es difícil que haya en España Ayuntamiento donde se hayan cometido más irregularidades,” he declared.

<sup>54</sup> Original: As in the examples which we have seen already, the doctor suspected that the real reason for the *Delegado*’s inaction was his corruption: “En su vida social solo tiene tratos con los antiguos caciques, cuyos convites acepta y frecuentemente asiste con su familia a excursiones que organizan las familias de los expresados caciques.”



after Monterde's appointment, the provincial Governor of Cuenca complained that "he is far from possessing the general culture necessary for such a delicate role. He lacks tact and social graces." Moreover, "in the month and few days that he has been carrying out the role he has lost all moral authority; he lacks any influence at all."<sup>55</sup> Monterde, the Governor wrote, had begun his inspection work in the town of San Clemente, where he fabricated a new *Ayuntamiento* in a matter of hours and without any regard for its composition, leaving it dominated by the local *cacique* and his followers. Concerned by this conduct, the Governor dispatched another *Delegado* to investigate Monterde's work. The *Delegado* later reported:

Upon the arrival of said Captain in the mentioned village, his expansive personality induced him to strike up friendships with various individuals with whom he spent the nights gambling and drinking. And even when the games were not illicit, nor the drinking excessive, or the people with whom he gathered of ill repute, their reputation for being lively jokers, and the confidence which these people necessarily enjoyed with him due to their constant presence together, meant that the village residents did not get a good impression of him, as they saw that his conduct did not meet the seriousness which is presumed to be essential in a person that is carrying out such a delicate mission, thus diminishing his prestige.<sup>56</sup>

While the second *Delegado* felt that Monterde had acted in good faith when naming the new *Ayuntamiento*, he agreed that this had favoured one local group in particular and that its members had proceeded to dismiss their enemies from their jobs in the administration illegally. More alarmingly, however, he also attached several pages of crude verse which Monterde had read at the wedding of one of his drinking partners in the village. The Governor forwarded these to Primo in Madrid and noted rather drably that they were "de muy dudoso gusto, por su doble sentido" (of very dubious taste

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<sup>55</sup> Original: In a letter sent to Martínez Anido shortly after Monterde's appointment, the provincial Governor of Cuenca complained that "no posee ni mucho menos la cultura general necesaria para cargo tan delicado. Carece de tacto y de trato social." Moreover, "en el mes y días que lleva ejerciendo el cargo ha perdido por completo la fuerza moral, carece en absoluto de ascendiente." AHN, Primo, Bundle 59, File 4293, c. February 1924.

<sup>56</sup> Original: The *Delegado* later reported: "A la llegada a la localidad mentada de dicho Capitán, su carácter expansivo le hizo frecuentar la amistad de varios individuos con los que se pasaba las noches jugando y bebiendo; y aun cuando ni los juegos eran ilícitos, ni en la bebida se excediese, ni las personas con quienes se reunía fuesen de mala notas, la fama de alegres y bromistas de estos y la confianza que necesariamente con el tenían que tomar dado su constante convivencia, sirvió para que en el pueblo no se formase buen concepto de él, por ver no respondía su conducto a la seriedad que suponían indispensables en persona que misión tan delicada llevaba, restándole prestigios." Ibid., 05/02/1924.

due to their double meaning). Faced with this evidence, Primo rubber-stamped Monterde's dismissal the following month.<sup>57</sup>

Soldiers the *Delegados* were, but they struggled to maintain the strict discipline expected of them by the regime, as well as the standards of citizenship which it sought to impose on the population. Not only were many stationed to parts of the country that were unfamiliar to them, their assignment was also highly unusual. The Spanish Army's role outside the barracks during the Restoration era was largely limited to matters of public order and repression. The mission given to them by Primo required constant interaction with the civilian population, which made it difficult for them to maintain a suitable level of distance from it. Clear distinctions between the civilian and military spheres, as various scholars tell us, are essential to the maintenance of discipline.<sup>58</sup> As we will see, the work of the *Delegados* also created significant administrative problems for the regime.

### **The administrative challenge**

On 29 May 1924 Martínez Anido was prompted to issue a circular to the provincial Governors regarding the seemingly mundane issue of where – and in what order of esteem – the *Delegados* were to sit at formal events that were attended by their military and administrative superiors.<sup>59</sup> His need to do so neatly demonstrates the challenges presented by the work of the *Delegados* to the bureaucratic hierarchy of the state. It was often unclear how an officer's status as a *Delegado* affected his relationship with his superiors in the military, for example. Although the *Delegados* were formally subordinate to the Military-Civil Governors both in military rank and administrative responsibility, the inspection work that they carried out was focused entirely on the civilian bureaucracy, from which they were separate by virtue of their status as members of the military. In practical terms this guaranteed Primo a certain

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 01/03/1924.

<sup>58</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957); Finer, *The Man on Horseback*.

<sup>59</sup> AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17B, File 20, 29/05/1924.

level of loyalty and discipline from the *Delegados*. However, it also obscured the boundaries between military and civilian authority.<sup>60</sup>

In his seminal study of the history of civil and military relations, Samuel Finer has convincingly described the difficulties that such crossovers between the separate military and civilian administrations tend to present. While the military may successfully achieve the legitimacy it requires in order to intervene directly in the civilian sphere of politics, it is nevertheless hindered by what he calls a “technical inability to administer any but the most primitive community.” The threat (and use) of force alone, he argues, is not sophisticated enough a tool for long-term government, nor can the military expect civilians to meet the same disciplinary standards as its own members. Some form of normalisation to the administration must invariably occur to expand its base beyond these rather limited violent and disciplining functions, therefore. Such concessions, though, consequently dilute the purely military character of any such regime.<sup>61</sup>

There is ample evidence from the letters and reports written about the *Delegados* that this crossover between the military and the civilian spheres became problematic for the regime. The *Delegados'* work in the civil administration served to undermine the hierarchies associated with this. This became particularly pronounced upon the implementation of the Municipal Statute in April 1924, as the regime began to reintroduce civilians to the provincial Civil Governorships, thus ending the monopolisation of the position by military figures, as was outlined in Chapter Three. Although the *Delegados* would see their functions and numbers radically reduced after this, there were frequent conflicts between the purely civilian Civil Governors and the *Delegados* that stayed on until the end of the regime.

From a military perspective, the challenges presented by the sheer levels of power and autonomy that were offered to the *Delegados* are recorded clearly in a letter sent by the Military-Civil Governor of Granada to Martínez Anido in February

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<sup>60</sup> The dictatorship in general had a disintegrative effect on the military hierarchy due to Primo's artificial elevation to the status of *primus entre pares*. Gómez-Navarro, “El rey ante la dictadura,” 365–70.

<sup>61</sup> Finer suggests that we need only look to the fleeting nature of purely military dictatorships, like the *Directorio Militar*, for proof of this. While the military may remain in control of the governments, be this in the background or with the support of conventional politicians, etc., very few military dictatorships can resist the need to return some civilians to the administration. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, 14–23.

1924.<sup>62</sup> In it, the Governor complained that the *Delegado* assigned to the town of Baza, Major Fernando Claudín suffered from an intemperate character and had caused upset during his visit to two local villages. Subsequently, when the Governor asked him to report on the political situation in the region, Claudín had moved well beyond his terms of reference by presenting the Governors with a number of accusations “en forma sumamente incorrecta” (in a highly incorrect manner) against fellow officers in his own garrison, including the provincial Chief of Staff, members of the *Guardia Civil*, the Secretary of the provincial government and the Governor himself. Although the Governor had appointed a military judge to investigate the matters outlined by Claudín as a matter of formality, he felt that he had no choice but to request his dismissal for insubordination. Primo agreed and authorised the Governor’s request shortly thereafter. The regime was quite unwilling to accept that the *Delegados* would investigate figures in its own administration without being explicitly ordered to do so.

Another *Delegado*, Captain Joaquín Sáiz, who was based in Palencia, fell foul of his Governor in March 1924 when he published an unauthorised edict there just before the beginning of Lent.<sup>63</sup> The Governor complained that although the *Delegado* had lacked initiative at first, such that “his hand had to be held in even the most insignificant of matters,” he was now deliberately overstepping his authority. This, the Governor stated candidly, “has put me in a position from which I do not know how to escape.” The *Delegado’s* edict warned the residents of the village of Barruelo de Santullán not to engage in “celebrations at odds with religion” during the Easter procession season and stated that they must “[commemorate] the Bloody Drama of the Calvary with the deepest of respect.”<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, it forbade any transport by wheeled vehicles, except those used by the postal service, between the hours of 10am on the traditional religious feast of Holy Thursday and the same time on Holy Saturday. This, Sáiz felt, would allow the youth of the town to grow accustomed to showing

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<sup>62</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 59, File 4409, 26/02/1924.

<sup>63</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 60, File 4772, 15/03/1924.

<sup>64</sup> Original: The Governor complained that although the *Delegado* had lacked initiative at first, such that “[había] que llevarlo de la mano hasta en los asuntos más insignificantes,” he was now deliberately overstepping his authority. This, the Governor stated candidly, “me ha colocado en una situación de la que no sé cómo salir.” The *Delegado’s* edict warned the residents of the village of Barruelo de Santullán not to engage in “fiestas reñidas con la Religión” during the Easter procession season and stated that they must “[conmemorar] con el más profundo respeto el Drama sangriento del Calvario.”

respect for tradition and would be well received by “the many devout people who abound in this Castilian region.” The Governor, however, saw matters differently. While his natural inclination was to dismiss the *Delegado* for insubordination, like his counterpart in the previous example, any such response would surely lead to “rather impious remarks” in the population. On the other hand, the Governor conceded, he feared that to do nothing would serve to encourage the belief “that this is a Government of sacristans.”<sup>65</sup> Primo de Rivera was more decisive about the matter, siding with the military hierarchy, and on 24 March relieved Sáiz of his duties.<sup>66</sup> Here Sáiz believed that what he was ordering corresponded with the regime’s vision of citizenship. Indeed, there is also evidence that certain celebrations were repressed during Carnival celebrations at the start of Lent in other parts of Spain due to concerns over their morality and good taste. However, while Catholicism played an important role in the symbolic, civic-nationalist politics of the dictatorship, it was subordinate to the state on most issues.<sup>67</sup>

The Governor of Guipúzcoa, likewise, wrote to Primo de Rivera in September 1924 to complain about the conduct of the *Delegado* assigned to district of Azpeitia.<sup>68</sup> The town in question, he noted, was well-known for its support of the political right and, as such, on the advent of the regime, “showed itself to be passionate and resolute in its support of [the new government’s] inclination towards purges.” The *Delegado*, though, had altered this favourable situation so profoundly that “today, as a group, the district is hostile to our representatives and regards anything to do with the Directorate with mistrust and suspicion.” The Governor reported that the *Delegado* had repeatedly flouted his instructions in order to wage a personal war against the *integrista* (integrist traditionalist) party, which was then the main political group there and had deep roots in the local community. The *Delegado’s* decision to do so revealed

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<sup>65</sup> Original: This, Sáiz felt, would allow the youth of the town to grow accustomed to showing respect for tradition and would be well-received by “las muchas personas piadosas que abundan en esta comarca castellana.” The Governor, however, saw matters differently. While his natural inclination was to dismiss the *Delegado* for insubordination, like his counterpart in the previous example, any such response would surely lead to “comentarios poco piadosos” in the population. On the other hand, the Governor conceded, he feared that to do nothing would serve to encourage the belief “de que éste es un Gobierno de sacristanes.”

<sup>66</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 60, File 4772, 24/04/1924.

<sup>67</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 94–99.

<sup>68</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 64, File 7330, 09/09/1924

a clear lack of understanding of the politics of the region. This dispute started in the first of the inspections which he made to the surrounding *azpeitiarra* villages, during which he began “sowing terror and directing threats” at the local population, much to the detriment of the regime. The Governor thought it unsurprising, therefore, that “the hostility, which was, at first, fixed on his person, has spread to the Directorate.”<sup>69</sup> This public animosity toward the government was encouraged by the *Delegado*’s bizarre and often violent behaviour, like one incident in which he gathered together the mayor of Azpeitia and various other local dignitaries in the town hall to burn a Basque flag in front of them, the remains of which he ordered be torn into rags to be used to clean the building.<sup>70</sup> The *Delegado*, like those discussed above, was dismissed for these excesses.

The overzealousness of this *Delegado*, and of those who continued to imprison public administrators with impunity, highlighted the unwieldy aspects of the arrangement. While the archives contain many glowing reports written by happy mayors and town councillors about the services provided to their municipalities by the *Delegados*, many other letters showed their work to be seriously damaging to the regime.<sup>71</sup> For all the talk of serenity and austerity by Primo, many *Delegados* seemed unable to meet the exalted character of the new national citizenry which they were to inspire, while others lacked even the most basic understanding of the political situations in the localities they visited.

The military nationalism that became so influential in the Restoration period typically painted the Spanish state as the defender of the nation. The military, as the armed wing of the state, therefore, was central to this vision. It is unsurprising then

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<sup>69</sup> Original: The town in question, he noted, was well-known for its support of the political right and, as such, on the advent of the regime, “se mostró ardiente y decidido partidario de su tendencia depuradora.” The *Delegado*, though, had altered this favourable situation so profoundly that “hoy el distrito en masa es hostil a nuestra representación y mira con recelo y desconfianza cuanto al Directorio se refiere.” The Governor reported that the *Delegado* had repeatedly flouted his instructions in order to wage a personal war against the *integrista* (integrist traditionalist) party, which was then the main political group there and had deep roots in the local community. The *Delegado*’s decision to do so revealed a clear lack of understanding of the politics of the region. This dispute started in the first of the inspections which he made to the surrounding *azpeitiarra* villages, during which he began “sembrando el terror y dirigiendo amenazas” at the local population, much to the determinant of the regime. The Governor thought it unsurprising, therefore, that “la animosidad, que en un principio se concretaba en su persona, se haya extendido al Directorio.”

<sup>70</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 64, File 7330, 20/09/1924.

<sup>71</sup> Hundreds of these can be read in AHN, Primo, Bundle 331 1 & 2.

that by the time of the *golpe de estado* in September 1923, Primo, like a number of other prominent generals, was a well-known public figure in Spain, having served notably as Captain General of Valencia and Catalonia from 1920 to 1922 and 1922 to 1923 respectively. The regime's efforts to legitimise the continuation of the dictatorship into the medium-to-long term saw it attempt to build upon this through the charismatic construction of the dictator and his persona in propaganda. As other studies have shown, this process was characterised by heavy doses of paternalism and reference to Providence.<sup>72</sup> The letters sent to Primo during this time reflected this carefully cultivated image and frequently represented him as a benevolent father to the nation, something that contrasted starkly with the absence of all but the most indirect references to the King. In the case of letters that referred directly to the *Delegados*, the authors often made use of the traditional peasant letter-writing schema which pitted the good leader against ruthless bureaucrats, who abused their power.<sup>73</sup> This was a tension that ultimately served to challenge the seamless integration of Nation-State-Army, which the regime promoted in official discourse.

The residents of Cúllar-Baza (Granada) wrote an exemplary letter of this type in April 1924 to denounce the actions of their interim *Delegado*, Major Juan Luque Fuentes. Shortly after his arrival in the district, Luque, a replacement for the popular *Delegado* Fernando Claudín (who had been dismissed for investigating his colleagues), had summarily dismissed several members of the town council, which had been elected unanimously earlier in the month. In solidarity with their dismissed colleagues, however, the remaining councillors resigned in protest shortly afterwards. The writers of the letter wondered if Claudín, the original *Delegado*, knew about this, for they feared that "an element of Baza's old regime of *caciques* is meddling in the matter." In a typical concluding appeal for such letters, they asked Primo to intervene against Luque, who, they claimed, was surely acting without the general's knowledge, and to restore the previous council, stating that "it is a pity that this is happening behind the back of [Your Excellency], who is the guarantor of the Law, and more than anything the

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<sup>72</sup> Quiroga, "Cirujano de Hierro."

<sup>73</sup> Kozlov writes of similar tendencies in the Soviet administration in the late-Stalinist period. Kozlov, "Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance," 869.

guarantor of the peace in Spain.”<sup>74</sup> This manner of representing Primo as the ultimate arbiter of justice harked back to more traditional representations of power.

Joaquín Marín Bueno and his olive-farmer neighbours from the town Villanueva del Arzo (Jaén), wrote a similar letter to Primo de Rivera in June February 1925 to denounce the actions of their local *Delegado*, Manuel Barcina, who, they claimed, was not “worthy of being a *Delegado Gubernativo* due to the vehemence which he works with.”<sup>75</sup> They complained that although the provincial government had decided against the compulsory purchase of their olive crops - a key element in the work of the Commodities Committees, which facilitated the production of cheap oil - Barcina had ordered them to prepare the harvest for this purpose anyway. For the farmers, this meant that they would receive a much lower price for the olives than they would on the open market. Suspecting foul play on the part of Barcina, who could easily profit from secretly selling on the cheap olives, they confronted him publicly in the town hall. The result was an altercation in which the *Delegado* and his brother, a captain in the *Guardia Civil* who Barcina had summoned to the village to support him, insulted the farmers and threatened to destroy their crops. Outraged by these events, the farmers wrote to Martínez Anido in petition of a solution. His response instructed them to make an official appeal against the *Delegado's* decision to the *Junta Central de Abastos* (Central Commodities Committee), but before they could do so, they stated, Barcina had falsely denounced them to the provincial government for illegally concealing 70,000kg of oil. Protesting that the case was testing their patience with the regime (“hay un límite” was their candid admission), they declared that they trusted in Primo to take action in their defence against the *Delegado's* corruption. This would surely restore their faith in the regime and “lift the atmosphere that has been forming here

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<sup>74</sup> Original: The writers of the letter wondered if Claudín, the original *Delegado*, knew about this, for they feared that “en este asunto mangonea un elemento del antiguo régimen caciquil de Baza.” In a typical concluding appeal for such letters, they asked Primo to intervene against the new *Delegado*, Luque, who was surely acting without his knowledge, and to restore the previous council, stating that “es lástima que ocurra esto a espaldas de VE [Vuestra Excelencia] que es la garantía de la Ley, y más que todo es VE la garantía de la tranquilidad de España.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 61, File 5609, 26/04/1924.

<sup>75</sup> Original: Joaquín Marín Bueno and his olive-farmer neighbours from the town Villanueva del Arzo (Jaén), wrote a similar letter to Primo de Rivera in June February 1925 to denounce the actions of their local *Delegado*, Manuel Barcina, who, they claimed, was not “digno de ser *Delegado Gubernativo* por el apasionamiento con que obra.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8595, 20/02/1925.



that we are not in a regime of justice, but rather of military terrorism.”<sup>76</sup> It is unclear what the fate of the olive farmers would be.

Many other letters sent to Primo de Rivera at this time framed their contents as acts of informing the dictator in the most literal, factual sense, without necessarily making any explicit requests, in the hope that his natural benevolence toward the population would motivate him to take action in their defence. When one group of neighbours from Canejan in the Valle de Arán (Lérida) created a local commission in order to formulate a complaint about the conduct of the *Delegado* there, they sent representatives to Barcelona to seek Primo out in the crowd when he visited the city in April 1925 and hand him their letter in person.<sup>77</sup> Although the work of the dictatorship had been received by the local population with applause in the aftermath of the coup, the letter-writers were now convinced that the *Delegado* was working “out of systematic malice and only considering his [own] interests.”<sup>78</sup> Of the programme of regeneration promised by the regime, most remained incomplete, even in the spring of 1925. “The only thing that has changed,” they wrote, “is *caciquismo*, which was more or less divided before but is now the exclusive monopoly and patrimony of the people put in charge of it by the [*Señor*] *Delegado*.” If these figures were to continue to dominate the politics of the area with the support of the *Delegado*, who propped them up, “he will eat the people alive and Canejan will preserve a sad memory of the government of the Directorate.”<sup>79</sup> The residents also suggested that the *Delegado* and his followers had coordinated a campaign of counter-denunciation against them to the provincial authorities in order to discredit their complaints. These, they alleged, had been gathered from the population under the threat of exile for those that did not cooperate: “Es decir, que vivimos de falsedades” (That is to say that we live by deceit). It was this atmosphere, they concluded, that prevented them from signing their names

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<sup>76</sup> Original: This would surely restore their faith in the regime and “disipar la atmósfera que se va formando aquí de que no estamos en un régimen de justicia, sino de terrorismo militar.”

<sup>77</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 66, File 9134, 30/04/1925.

<sup>78</sup> Original: Although the work of the dictatorship had been received by the local population with applause in the aftermath of the coup, the letter-writers were now convinced that the *Delegado* was working “por sistemática malicia y en vista únicamente a sus intereses.”

<sup>79</sup> Original: “Lo único que ha cambiado,” they wrote, “es el caciquismo, que antes estaba más o menos dividido y hoy es monopolio y patrimonio exclusivo de dos sujetos encargados de ello por el Sr Delegado.” If these figures were to continue to dominate the politics of the area with the support of the *Delegado*, who propped them up, “va a comerse vivo a su pueblo y Canejan conservará un triste recuerdo del gobierno del Directorio.”

as individuals, rather than collectively as the members of the *Comisión de Vecinos del Valle de Arán* (Commission of Residents of the Valley of Arán). “We would all very much like to be able to sign this note,” they lamented, “but [Your Excellency] will understand that the state of war to which we are subject in this valley does not allow us this [option].”<sup>80</sup> That the letter-writers should phrase their complaint in such a way was significant. At this point in 1925, Spain was still subject to a formal *estado de guerra*. However, it also highlighted the confusion and unease at the military’s continued involvement in municipal affairs. This was still very much regarded as exceptional by the population.

In light of cases like these we can see that, while the *Delegados* were styled as the servants and saviours of the nation by the regime, in the eyes of many ordinary people at this time Primo remained its ultimate guarantor, often in the face of the *Delegados’* alleged wickedness. Within the military hierarchy there was also growing disquiet about the long-term viability of the *Delegados* as an institution. In the first instance, the weight placed by the regime on repressive measures against *caciques* left little opportunity for the *Delegados* to carry out their role in tutoring the population in citizenship. Those civic-minded events and patriotic ceremonies that did occur during this time were irregular and lacked central coordination. In due course, as the number of *Delegados* was progressively reduced across Spain, they became even more difficult to organise. This meant that they were incapable of completing their second task of tutoring the population in citizenship.<sup>81</sup> Reflecting on the period of the dictatorship, the future organiser of the July 1936 coup d’état, General Emilio Mola, stated his belief that the management of the *Delegados*, which was “not infrequently misguided and even immoral... and always unpleasant for the civilian elements,” had served only to create public animosity towards the Armed Forces in Spain; similar criticisms were also made by the senior generals Pardo González and García Benítez.<sup>82</sup> This resentment would eventually bubble over into a number of disputes between the regime and

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<sup>80</sup> Original: “Mucho desearíamos poder firmar todos este escrito,” they lamented, “pero ya comprende VE que el estado de guerra a que estamos sometidos en este valle no nos lo permite.”

<sup>81</sup> Quiroga, “«Los apóstoles de la patria»,” 259.

<sup>82</sup> Emilio Mola, *Obras Completas* (Valladolid: Librería Santaren, 1940), 1028. Cited in Quiroga, “«Los apóstoles de la patria»,” 259. The cases of Pardo González and García Benítez in Carlos Navajas Zubeldía, *Ejército, estado y sociedad en España (1923-1930)* (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1992), 99–100.

elements of the army, which would prove seriously damaging to the government's longevity.

### **The view of the *Delegados***

All was not well with the *Delegados* either. As their interactions with the public became more antagonistic and as the military command became more hostile to the very idea of their involvement in municipal reform, the *Delegados* struggled with the magnitude of their task, which they carried out with limited institutional support. To them, this did not seem to align with the expectation placed on their shoulders by Primo and Martínez Anido. When Primo seized power in September 1923, he publicly claimed to represent the Army. Some *Delegados*, however, came to distrust this message of unity and suspect that they would be the chief victims of the regime's policy of direct intervention in local politics should it fail.

In a remarkable expression of these fears, Captains José Fernández Navarro and Luis Alonso, *Delegados* in Cuenca, jointly submitted their resignations to the provincial Governor on 31 December 1923, less than one month after their appointment. Both officers wrote of their worries about being seriously unprepared for the mission which they had undertaken, something that they feared might negatively affect their careers in the long term.<sup>83</sup> Fernández, for his part, was more willing to assign blame for the deficiencies which he had observed; this seemed to hinge on a feeling that the *Delegados* were not given sufficient resources by the government and were to be sacrificial lambs for the regime in its efforts at reform. In offering their resignations, the captains flouted the strict terms of their mission, which could not be ended prematurely without Primo's permission. When informed of the matter Primo instructed Martínez Anido to commission a report into the conduct of the two *Delegados* and ordered that they be reminded that their task was "a duty of patriotism, which is demanded in greater degree from those who belong to the Army than from any other citizen."<sup>84</sup> The report which Primo requested was sent by the

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<sup>83</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3519, 31/12/1923 & 31/12/1923

<sup>84</sup> Original: When informed of the matter Primo instructed Martínez Anido to commission a report into the conduct of the two *Delegados* and ordered that they be reminded that their task was "es un deber

Military-Civil Governor of Cuenca to Martínez Anido one week later and made clear that both *Delegados* were perfectly competent.<sup>85</sup> This left Fernández and Alonso vulnerable to official censure for abandonment of duty, a situation prompted them to write to Primo again, this time to explain their actions. Fernández, whose letter arrived first, suggested that his resignation had been misinterpreted:

I was only guided to resign by the belief that my sacrifice was not appreciated appropriately and to its true value. One who has given his blood on behalf of the *Patria* should not turn away from other sacrifices which, and I do not need to hide this from [Your Honour], are much smaller, and I only hope that to make up for this I be trusted and lent the support which I think I deserve.<sup>86</sup>

After highlighting his past successes in similar “politico-military” roles, he asked that he be forewarned of any attempt to discipline him so that he could resign his commission with a clean service record. Alonso, for his part, complained that he had been appointed “without the required training to carry out the [role] and was driven [to resign] by the responsibility which weighs upon him.”<sup>87</sup> He reminded the Governor that this appointment had been on a voluntary basis and insisted that he had always been guided by the desire to be of service to the nation during his career, although he did not repeat Fernández’s threat to resign from the army. Writing to Primo at the end of the same month, Martínez Anido rejected Fernández’s explanation and recommended that he be censured for the insubordinate tone of his letters.<sup>88</sup> The case of Alonso, whom Martínez Anido did not mention in his final letter to Primo on the matter, however, is more remarkable. After receiving what appears to have been a reprieve from Primo and Martínez Anido, he telegraphed the former on 15 March to inform him that he had taken up his post again and wished to offer his “deepest thanks and to let you know that I felt such immense emotion when remembering the

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de patriotismo, exigible en mayor grado que a cualquier otro ciudadano a quienes pertenecen al Ejército.” *Ibid.*, 30/01/1923.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 06/02/1924.

<sup>86</sup> Original: Fernández, whose letter arrived first, suggested that his resignation had been misinterpreted: “Solo me guió a ella el creer que mi sacrificio no era debidamente apreciado en su justo valor. Quien dio su sangre por la Patria, no ha de retroceder ante otros sacrificios que no han de ocultarse a VS son mucho menores, y solo espero en compensación a ellos se deposite en mi la confianza y se me preste el apoyo, que creo merecer.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 58, File 3519, *Ibid.*, 08/02/1924.

<sup>87</sup> Original: Alonso, for his part, complained that he had been appointed “sin la preparación correspondiente para el desempeño del [cargo] y acuciado por las responsabilidades que pesan sobre él.” *Ibid.*, 09/02/1924.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 22/02/1924

swearing-in that tears fell from my eyes.”<sup>89</sup> Both *Delegados* had evidently felt duped by the regime and, even considering Alonso’s eventual pardon, the government showed itself to be inflexible towards them once they had volunteered for the role. Theirs was a military assignment above all else and it was to be treated in this way.

Other letters suggest that some *Delegados* remained anxious about their preparation for the extensive range of duties assigned to them as their inspections wound down. In one such case in the district of Estella (Navarra), the seat of the Primo de Rivera family marquisate, the *Delegado* there, Major Rafael Esparza Arteche, wrote a sarcastic letter to Martínez Anido in September 1925 to request his replacement in the role. Like Fernández and Alonso in the winter of 1923, Esparza suggested that he was not sufficiently qualified to carry out his task, despite it being greatly reduced in scope due to the implementation of the Municipal Statute the year before. He placed blame for his failure on the impossibility of adequately attending to

the ninety two *Ayuntamientos* with one hundred and sixty five villages that make up this area in the various aspects of good governance, health service, culture, *Unión Patriótica*, the purging of *Ayuntamientos* and continuous denunciations whose use is ill-defined due to the limited validity of the Statute in this province.<sup>90</sup>

While there is no indication as to the *Delegado*’s fate after this outburst, it seems likely that he was censured by the regime in light of the precedent set in the previous case.

The implementation of the Municipal Statute in April 1924 and the subsequent transition by the *Delegados* from their inspectorial role to their propagandistic and tutelary duties brought anxiety to some amongst their ranks. In one case, Major Juan Giménez, a *Delegado* assigned to the province of Toledo, concluded that his efforts in the new role had been largely ineffective and drew up a dossier in order to justify his desire to resign from the post. Giménez’s description of his efforts to organise the local

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<sup>89</sup> Original: After receiving what appears to have been a reprieve from Primo and Martínez Anido, he telegraphed the former on 15 March to inform him that he had taken up his post again and wished to offer his “más profundo agradecimiento, manifestándole sentí tan inmensa emoción que me hizo saltar lágrimas recordando acto juramento.” *Ibid.*, 15/02/1924.

<sup>90</sup> Original: He placed blame for his failure on the impossibility of adequately attending to “los noventa y dos *Ayuntamientos* con ciento sesenta y cinco pueblos que integran esta zona en los varios aspectos de buen gobierno, Sanidad, Cultura, Unión Patriótica, Depuración de *Ayuntamientos* y continuas denuncias de poco definida competencia por la condicionada vigencia del Estatuto de esta provincia.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 68, File 9741, 16/09/1925.

chapters of *Unión Patriótica* is particularly striking.<sup>91</sup> Although he had had significant success in mobilising residents in all but one of the 12 villages in the district, he admitted that he had struggled to convert this initial enthusiasm into sustained support. “Despite the frequent edicts, invitations, calls and other resources which I have employed,” he wrote, “few [people] have attended, leaving those who are already members discouraged when they see this lack of enthusiasm and unable to reach an agreement about how to swell the Party.”<sup>92</sup> His efforts to organise patriotic events, likewise, had fallen flat, as they had in many other parts of Spain, often due to the machinations of embittered *caciques*.<sup>93</sup> When he commissioned a retired major to give a public lecture on the *Patria*, for example, the speaker failed to convince the crowd: “This gentleman will be able to tell of the unpleasant impression which he took from the event, despite his efforts to convince the masses.” Regarding certain accusations that he was ill-regarded by the population in the district, the *Delegado* explained the difficulties that he had faced in the role. The villages of Spain, he wrote as he echoed the cosmopolitan bias of the *Delegados* discussed earlier in the chapter, were filled with “arguments and case of personal hatred between the residents, which are inherited by [their] families.” Those who did not possess “the civic value to directly [solve]” the disputes arising from these would typically turn to the *Delegado*, seeking to make use of him as an “instrument of combat mediation,” which, in turn, meant that “if he does not possess enough of the tact which life experience gives, he is exposed to unfortunate oversights which lessen his authority.”<sup>94</sup> The Civil Governor of Toledo, for his part, was distinctly unimpressed by the *Delegado*, whom he accused of

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<sup>91</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 64, File 7378, 17/09/1924.

<sup>92</sup> Original: “A pesar de los frecuentes bandos, invitaciones, llamadas y demás recursos a que he empleado,” he wrote, “han sido escasos los que han acudido, desanimándose los adheridos ya, al ver el poco entusiasmo y no pudiendo llegar a un acuerdo para ir engrosando el Partido.”

<sup>93</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 98–99.

<sup>94</sup> Original: When he commissioned a retired major to give a public lecture on the *Patria*, for example, the speaker failed to convince the crowd: “Este Sr podrá manifestar la impresión tan desagradable que sacó del acto, a pesar de sus esfuerzos por convencer a la masa,” he lamented. Regarding certain accusations that he was ill-regarded by the population in the district, the *Delegado* explained the difficulties that he had faced in the role. The villages of Spain, he wrote as he echoed the cosmopolitan bias of the *Delegados* discussed earlier in the chapter, were filled with “rencillas y odios personales entre los vecinos, que hereden las familias.” Those who did not possess “el valor cívico para directamente [solucionar]” the disputes arising from these would typically turn to the *Delegado*, seeking to make use of him as an “instrumento mediador de combate,” which, in turn, meant that “si éste no tiene el tacto suficiente que da la experiencia de la vida, está expuesto a equivocaciones lamentables que merman autoridad.” *Ibid.*, 16/09/1924.

having “a mistaken impression of what his mission should be and a lack of character which translated into an absolute lack of authority to carry out the role.”<sup>95</sup> The following month, Martínez Anido recommended his dismissal to Primo de Rivera.<sup>96</sup>

Major Francisco Vázquez Marquiera, the *Delegado* assigned to the district of Morón de la Frontera (Sevilla), told a similar story in a letter written in November 1924 to the Marquis of Magaz, who was then acting as Interim President of the Military Directorate while Primo in Morocco.<sup>97</sup> Vázquez had recently been relieved of his duties by Madrid and was concerned that this could be regarded as a negative mark in his service record. To protect himself, he wrote a short report documenting the difficulties which he had faced in the role and, in so doing, denounced figures in the highest echelons of the regime. Since the introduction of the Municipal Statute, the *Delegado* noted, he had successfully established *Unión Patriótica* chapters in seven of Morón’s villages, though he had met with unexpected resistance in the town of La Puebla de Cazalla, the home of Luis Benjumea, Secretary of both the *Gran Junta Directiva Nacional* (Great National Executive Council) and the *Comité Ejecutivo Central* (Central Executive Committee) of *Unión Patriótica*, two of the organisation’s most senior posts. Expecting to find a well of support for the regime in Benjumea’s family, he offered its members prominent positions in the local *Somatén* and *Unión Patriótica* formations, only for them to refuse. His attempts to improve local services and organise cultural events subsequently were also met with resistance by the family, who, Vázquez wrote, actively sought to disrupt his efforts. Vázquez believed that the reason for this was simple: “The presence of the *Delegado* was not to their liking due to the independence with which they had always lived.”<sup>98</sup> The Benjumea family continued to use its influence to this end when it effectively vetoed the appointment to the local *Unión Patriótica* committee of a well-regarded local resident, Ramón Moreno de los Ríos,

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<sup>95</sup> Original: The Civil Governor of Toledo, for his part, was distinctly unimpressed by the conduct of the *Delegado*, whom he accused of having “un equivocado concepto de lo que debe ser su misión y a una falta de carácter que se traduce en carencias absoluta de autoridad para desempeñar el cargo.” *Ibid.*, 14/10/1924.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 17/10/1924.

<sup>97</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 64, File 7756, 30/11/1924.

<sup>98</sup> Original: Vázquez believed that the reason for this was simple: “No era de su agrado, por la independencia en que siempre vivieron, la presencia del *Delegado*.”

who had reportedly been recommended for the role by Primo de Rivera himself. Here there was a strong precedent, the *Delegado* remarked:

The above-mentioned family is the one that has managed politics in that village since time immemorial, equally for liberal governments as for conservative ones... there were never any agreements in the *Ayuntamiento* that went without their consent.<sup>99</sup>

It is clear from these observations that one of the families that had benefited most from the advent of the regime were not averse to engaging in the very politicking which the government was seeking to banish from national life. However, it is also a clear indication that these were old *caciques* who had adapted to new circumstances. The situation in the town deteriorated further when Eugenio Benjumea accepted the position as head of *Unión Patriótica* at the request of the Civil Governor of Sevilla and immediately dismissed the local council. His actions enraged the mayor of La Puebla, Francisco Bohórquez, a reserve Lieutenant-Colonel in the Artillery, who had only reluctantly accepted the position. The fallout from the confrontation required delicate negotiation by the *Delegado* in order to prove to Bohórquez that the Benjumea family was not officially favoured by the regime and he a stooge for them. The matter did not stop there. The family's "intransigence" continued during the selection process for the *Unión Patriótica* branch's leadership positions, when they attempted to ensure that only candidates of their choosing appeared on the list. When a vote on the committee members was finally organised, Eugenio Benjumea failed to attend the meeting. In his absence the *Delegado* proceeded with the election, which saw over 300 members participate to select the new panel. The following day, Major Vázquez was summoned to the office of the Civil Governor, where the latter expressed his displeasure at the *Delegado's* actions because he would not be able to satisfy Luis Benjumea and his family's desire to install their favourites in the La Puebla de Cazalla branch of the organisation. Six days later, the *Delegado* read of his dismissal in the newspaper. Despite Vázquez's complaints of foul play, his allegations were rejected by Primo's bureau, which told him that the government reserved the right to replace *Delegados* due to the political nature of their work.

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<sup>99</sup> Original: Here there was a strong precedent, the *Delegado* remarked: "La familia de referencia es la que desde tiempo inmemorial, lo mismo con los gobiernos liberales, que con los conservadores dirige la política en aquel pueblo... no había acuerdo del Ayuntamiento que no contara antes con su beneplácito."



Though a small selection of cases, we see from these examples that a number of *Delegados* rapidly became disillusioned with their work. Though many were incompetent and others certainly acted like *caciques* in uniform, as the cases discussed earlier in this chapter illustrate, those who ostensibly acted in good faith were equally hampered by organisational deficiencies and institutional patronage that was similar to the type they were supposed to be *eliminating* from local government. Some were also bemused at the nature of their ill-defined duties, which “merged the role of political commissariat with that of ‘apostle of the fatherland’.”<sup>100</sup> As Francisco Hernández Mir, a critic of the regime wrote in 1930, the creation of the *Delegado Gubernativos* ultimately became one of the decisions that created most hostility towards the government in the Army as it placed the officers involved in a position in which they were almost certain to fail.<sup>101</sup>

## Conclusion

The *Delegados'* role in the reform of municipal politics was fleeting. In March and April 1924, three months after their appointment, the dictatorship entered a transitional period between what could be regarded as its destructive and constructive phases. With the first 90 days of dictatorship, the period initially handed to Primo de Rivera by King Alfonso XIII in September 1923, long since passed, the regime began to take steps to stabilise and perpetuate itself in the medium term beyond the “surgical” and “parenthetical” intervention that Primo had first proposed. These two months were marked by the introduction of the dictatorship’s definitive reform to local government, the Municipal Statute, the adoption of a single party, *Unión Patriótica*, and the progressive substitution of half of the Military-Civil Governors for new, purely Civil Governors.<sup>102</sup> The Municipal Statute, developed largely by José Calvo Sotelo, Primo’s Director General of Administration, and later finance minister, firmly established the

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<sup>100</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 107.

<sup>101</sup> Hernández Mir, *La dictadura ante la Historia*, 157.

<sup>102</sup> For the Municipal Statute (*Estatuto Municipal*) see *Gaceta de Madrid*, 09/03/1924. Its main provisions were implemented in the first week of April 1924. For the instructions issued to the Governors and Delegados on the formation of *Unión Patriótica* see Juan Noguera y Yanguas and Alfonso Campos y Arjona, *Dos años de directorio militar: manifiestos, disposiciones oficiales, cartas, discursos, órdenes generales al ejército...* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1926), 546–49. The decree regarding the return of the Civil Governors can be read in *Ibid.*, 531.

*Ayuntamiento* as the basis of the Spanish state and limited the scope for direct government intervention in their affairs.<sup>103</sup> New instructions issued to the *Delegados* to this effect at the end of March 1924 bound them to respect municipal autonomy, as defined in the Municipal Statute, and signalled a transition towards their tutelary role in educating the population in national values. Although the *Delegados* retained some of their inspectorial powers in reduced form, they lost their freedom to intervene in municipal affairs without the prior authorisation of their provincial Governor.<sup>104</sup>

In theory, these measures greatly reduced the *Delegados'* capacity to act arbitrarily in the management and supervision of the nation's *Ayuntamientos*. Yet in the months following the introduction of the Municipal Statute Martínez Anido was moved to write to the Civil Governors to complain that some *Delegados* were still involved in the smallest details of municipal life, contrary to their new instructions. Calvo Sotelo, for his part, worried that they were undermining the restored Civil Governors and contributing to a state of "uncertainty, rifts and a sense of unease." In his view, the institution "was neither good nor bad; it was useful when it arose," but became largely obsolete after the promulgation of the Municipal Statute. He would write to Primo in October 1924 to suggest that it would be prudent to abolish the role altogether.<sup>105</sup> This was, ultimately, a struggle for power between the civilian and military elements of the regime. Although Primo hesitated at doing so entirely, between late 1924 and the end of 1927 he would reduce the number of *Delegados* progressively from 523 to just 79, all of whom served in provincial capitals, rather than in towns and villages.<sup>106</sup> 1924, therefore, was very much the peak for these "missionaries of the *Patria*," as Anido had called them.

At the root of the mission assigned to the *Delegados* was the rather messianic belief by Primo that civil society could be awoken and developed by the state alone. The incorporation of the masses into national life would be a multi-layered process,

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<sup>103</sup> In this he was assisted by a young José María Gil-Robles and the Count of Valledano, Fernando Suárez de Tangil.

<sup>104</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 30/03/1924.

<sup>105</sup> Calvo Sotelo, *Mis servicios al Estado*, 27–29.

<sup>106</sup> For the laws ordering the reduction of the *Delegados* see: Noguera y Yanguas and Campos y Arjona, *Dos Años de Directorio Militar*, 692 and *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21/03/1926 & 29/12/1927. One of the first decisions taken by the administration formed by General Dámaso Berenguer in 1930 upon Primo de Rivera's resignation was to abolish the *Delegados Gubernativos* altogether. See *Gaceta de Madrid*, 22/11/1930.

however, in which the eradication of *caciquismo* was merely the first step. As Enrique Tomás y Luque concluded insightfully in his own assessment of their work, the process was far more complex than Primo could have foreseen in September 1923, for, “turning the men of today into citizens, when they were so far from it, is slow work, over various generations, even when following the regenerative work that has already been started with such intensity and energy.”<sup>107</sup>

As Primo de Rivera sought to perpetuate his rule beyond the spring of 1924, he looked to other means of stabilising and legitimising the regime, most notably the creation of *Unión Patriótica* as the *primorriverista* single party in April 1924. While the topic of *Unión Patriótica* is largely beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth underlining that in 1924 and 1925 it was plagued by problems brought on by the infiltration of *caciquil* elements into its ranks and by its close association with the *Delegados*, who were charged with coordinating its development in the first instance.<sup>108</sup> Despite this, after the transition to the Civil Directorate in December 1925, Primo would be able to draw upon *Unión Patriótica* ideologues and cadres to facilitate the staging of the National Plebiscite in favour of the regime and the creation of the national Consultative Assembly in 1926 and 1927 respectively, two of the regime’s highpoints. In this new phase which saw the elaboration of a more coherent ideology by the administration, however, the inconsistent and ill-defined task of eradicating *caciquismo* became a concern of only secondary importance in the grander task of rebuilding the nation and its citizenry according to Primo’s authoritarian principles.

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<sup>107</sup> E.T.L., *Por pueblos y aldeas*, 246.

<sup>108</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 168–69.

## Chapter Five | Petitions for justice, 1925-1930

### Introduction

In the preceding chapters we examined first how the regime elicited the help of the population in its efforts to repress the activities of corrupt public officials and those it identified as *caciques*, and then how the population interacted with the figures charged with carrying out much of this corresponding repression, the *Delegados Gubernativos* (Government Delegates). Given that the most intense activity relating to these topics occurred during the *Directorio Militar* (Military Directorate) period of September 1923 to December 1925, this chapter will focus on the *Directorio Civil* (Civil Directorate) period, which began in December 1925 and lasted until the collapse of the regime in January 1930.<sup>1</sup> This will examine the manner in which ordinary people narrated matters relating to public order and the administration of justice during the second half of the dictatorship, as the regime sought to bring about a so-called ‘return to normality’ after the upheaval of the coup d’état and anti-*caciquil* repression that followed. This topic is particularly pertinent to the question of public opinion during the dictatorship, for as González Calbet has rightly remarked in this regard, “[r]epression did not merely affect the sectors of the population that ‘had provoked’ the Army’s *golpe de Estado* through their action. Dictatorial measures – a consequence of the state of exception and, therefore, arbitrariness – would extend to people and individuals that the regime would later turn into enemies.”<sup>2</sup>

There will be some limited overlap between the two Directorates in chronological terms. The source material upon which this chapter draws will also diverge from those preceding it by supplementing material from the *Ministerio de la Gobernación* (Ministry of the Interior) section of the *Primo de Rivera Presidencia del Gobierno* (Prime Minister’s Office) archive with documentation from the *Ministerio de Justicia y Culto* (Justice and Worship) segment of the same. The decision to do so has

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<sup>1</sup> This comes with the caveat that the practice of denunciation continued in lesser degree until the end of the regime. Similarly, the *Delegados Gubernativos* also remained in place until then, although their numbers and duties were significantly reduced.

<sup>2</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 204.

facilitated the collection of a diverse selection of cases which are discussed in the sections below.

Before we examine the petitions sent by ordinary people to the authorities on matters relating to public order and justice, we must first explore the repressive measures introduced by the government over the course of the dictatorship. In Chapter Three we considered, in some detail, how Primo de Rivera employed a combination of legislation and public denunciation in his attempts to sweep away the previous political class and the influence of *caciquismo*, often with unintended consequences. This process was also accompanied by a range of decrees which sought to guarantee public security against the revolutionary threat, protect national unity and suppress opposition. This was achieved in the first instance through the suppression of certain parts of the constitution and the declaration of a nationwide *estado de guerra* (state of war). The power to declare such emergencies, as Schmitt argues, lies with the sovereign. However, as we saw in Chapter One, Agamben suggests that the routinisation of recourse to these powers leads to the emergence of a more general ‘state of exception’ in which the law is emptied of meaning (a ‘kenomatic state’).<sup>3</sup> As such, analysing the measures which contribute to this situation, as well as how these measures were understood by ordinary people, becomes essential to our understanding of the workings of the state at this time.

### **The mechanics of the state of exception**

On 15 September, Primo formally declared an *estado de guerra* across the entire national territory in the same decree which dismissed the provincial Civil Governors and replaced them with their counterparts in the military-administrative hierarchy. Article 1 of this decree also suspended the guarantees expressed in Articles 4, 5, 6, 9 of the Constitution, while partly suspending Article 13.<sup>4</sup> Although the declaration of the *estado de guerra* and the suspension of constitutional guarantees were carried out in the same decree, it is important to make clear again that these were not one and the same thing. The former referred primarily to a particular administrative footing, in

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<sup>3</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 17/09/1923. For the Constitution in full see *Gaceta de Madrid*, 02/07/1876.

which the military assumed certain functions previously carried out by civilians in the government, while the latter was a much more fundamental alteration to the foundational laws of the Spanish state.<sup>5</sup> The suspension of freedom of expression (Article 13, Paragraph 1) facilitated the immediate introduction of prior-censorship (*censura previa*) by the regime.<sup>6</sup> Primo de Rivera took particular interest in regulating the press, which he blamed for many of the ills of the old regime.<sup>7</sup> Printed publications were monitored, first, through the provincial Civil Governments (in their militarised form, with the assistance of the *Delegados Gubernativos*), which were authorised to fine offenders and suspend their publications, and then, from 1924, centrally through the Office of Information and Censorship (*Oficina de Información y Censura*).<sup>8</sup> In January 1924, censorship of telegrams was also introduced.<sup>9</sup> As González Calbet has observed, “censorship, a generalised lack of information, was one of the aspects that had the greatest impact on the general atmosphere in the nation, an atmosphere that was not only repressive, but also ‘disciplinarian,’ rigid, government-oriented.” This, she concludes, ultimately inhibited civic participation in political life during the dictatorship.<sup>10</sup> The impossibility of independent political mobilisation was deepened by a decree on 17 June, 1928 which made it a condition that clubs and associations seek

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<sup>5</sup> The *estado de guerra* was lifted on 17 May, 1925, while constitutional guarantees remained suspended until their partial reinstatement by the Berenguer administration on 7 February, 1931. Eduardo González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza. Orden público, subversión y violencia política en la España de la Restauración (1875-1917)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1998), 72.

<sup>6</sup> According to González Calleja, this effectively prohibited any criticism of the government or its members; allusion to the repression carried out by the regime; declarations of support for regionalism; mention of strikes, public-order disputes, robberies, crimes, scandals, pornography or blackmail; mention of problems relating to subsistence, fuel or travel; the circulation of information relating to military tribunals or the military campaigns in Morocco and North Africa; unflattering discussion of foreign governments or leaders; articles relating to Russia; or commentary on events at the League of Nations which were unfavourable to Spanish interests. González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 54–55.

<sup>7</sup> See his comments in Primo de Rivera, *La Dictadura a través de sus notas oficiosas*, 71.

<sup>8</sup> The *Oficina de Información y Censura* was placed under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Rico Parada until his promotion to the position of editor of the regime’s official mouthpiece, *La Nación*, in 1925. He was succeeded in this role by Lieutenant Colonel Eduardo Hernández Vidal, who, in 1930, authored an account of his experience. The work of the *Oficina* was plagued by inconsistency. Its failure to establish clear criteria for censorship meant that the provincial authorities (Governors, *Delegados*, mayors etc.) continued to involve themselves in the practice beyond 1924, despite it no longer being their specific responsibility. As censorship by the provincial authorities was often accompanied by other forms of punishment, Hernández Vidal notes, newspaper editors much preferred to interact with the *Oficina*, which was typically more lenient. See Hernández Vidal (alias Celedonia de la Iglesia), *La censura*, 159–60. The instructions issued to the Civil Governors on censorship can be found in AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 37a.

<sup>9</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 121.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

the formal approval of both their membership and the authorities before organising public events of a political nature.<sup>11</sup> All spontaneity was deliberately buried in rules and regulations.

Much of the repression carried out immediately after the *golpe de estado* focused on sweeping away the legacy of the previous regime. As we saw in Chapter Three, the regime precipitated a wave of popular denunciation that was directed at *caciques* and corrupt officials. While the scale of the population's response to this was both tremendous and, it seems, unexpected, few of the denunciations actually resulted in prosecution due to their being based on unverifiable rumours or personal rivalries. Because of this, the government became deeply apprehensive about the largely indiscriminate nature of the repression. This led it to formalise its response to denunciations and to instruct the provincial authorities to limit the unjustified detention of public administrators.<sup>12</sup> In a *nota oficiosa*, dated 21 January, 1924, Primo de Rivera also implicitly acknowledged the difficulties which this had caused and highlighted the need to avoid causing unnecessary disruption (*trastornos*) to the population in future.<sup>13</sup> The regime, therefore, showed some concern about the validity of denunciations. When it came to public order or the administration of justice, however, it was at least as arbitrary and vengeful as its critics suggested.

At a juridical level, one of the main features of the dictatorship was the steady intrusion of military jurisdiction into the domains of civilian courts. A Royal Decree issued on 18 September, 1923 to repress all "separatist feeling, propaganda and activity" gave the military courts authority to rule on crimes against the security and unity of the *Patria*.<sup>14</sup> On 22 September, 1923 the regime suppressed trial by jury in

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<sup>11</sup> Permission could be granted only by an absolute majority in an extraordinary general meeting. Evidence of this would be required by the authorities. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 18/06/1928.

<sup>12</sup> For the regime's attempts to regulate denunciation see *Gaceta de Madrid*, 14/12/1923 and 29/01/1924. For the instructions to the provincial authorities see "*Instrucciones reservadas que los Sres. Gobernadores civiles y Delegados gubernativos deberán tener presentes en sus misiones inspectoras de los Ayuntamientos*," AHN, Gob. (A), Bundle 17A, File 12, 01/01/1924. Martínez Anido was forced to repeat these instructions on multiple occasions. See Chapter Two.

<sup>13</sup> Reproduced in Villanueva, *La dictadura militar*, 114.

<sup>14</sup> These crimes could be committed verbally or in written form, in the press or through any other form of mechanical reproduction, or through one's actions or "manifestaciones." The decree also banned the display of any flags other than that of the Spanish state on public buildings and prohibited the use of languages other than Castilian at national or international events. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 19/09/1923. In this way it was essentially an expansion of the polemical *Ley de Jurisdicciones*, which had been introduced at

civilian courts altogether, accusing the institution of being unreliable and economically unjustifiable.<sup>15</sup> Another decree of 17 March, 1926, specifically targeting Catalan separatists, gave the Civil Governors extended powers to root out any threat they may pose to the state.<sup>16</sup> On 13 April, 1924, armed robbery was also transferred to military jurisdiction, with those accused becoming subject to summary courts martial which could issue sentences up to and including the death penalty.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, on 25 December, 1925, crimes involving explosives became subject to summary military judgement with punishments of a similar severity. The same law also passed the crimes of *lèse-majesté* and of aiding an enemy power to the military courts.<sup>18</sup> As González Calleja notes, special courts with prominent military involvement were also established to deal with the supposed Bolshevik threat in April 1928 and with the aftermath of the Sánchez Guerra coup attempt of February 1929.<sup>19</sup>

These developments were accompanied by a far-reaching militarisation of the state administration, which occurred alongside the dissolution of Spain's representative institutions. On 15 September, 1923 the provincial Civil Governors were dismissed *en masse* and replaced by their military equivalents. These new Governors saw their repressive powers greatly expanded from 28 May, 1924 onwards, when they were granted authority to impose fines for public inebriation and scandal, enforce press censorship and carry out the repression of "riots, sedition or rebellion," or any other matter that threatened to disturb public order.<sup>20</sup> On 20 October, 1923 the regime also created the *Delegados Gubernativos*.<sup>21</sup> Policing in general was placed in the hands of "the two highest authorities for public order in Barcelona during the darkest years of *pistolero*," Generals Severiano Martínez Anido and Miguel Arlegui

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the demand of the military in 1906. On the *Ley de Jurisdicciones* see Lleixà, *Cien años de militarismo en España*, 74. González Calleja states that this law was introduced primarily at the behest of the *Junta de Defensa de Infantería*, led by Colonel Nouvilas.

<sup>15</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 22/09/1923.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 18/03/1923.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 14/04/1923. This change was precipitated by the killing of a *Somatenista* during the robbery of the *Caja de Ahorros de Tarrasa* (Tarrasa Savings Bank) by syndicalist gunmen on 11 April, 1924. González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 282.

<sup>18</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 27/12/1925. A series of restrictions were also placed on the use of firearms from 12 December, 1923 onwards. For a list of these measures see Pemartín, *Valores históricos*, 77–78, fn 1.

<sup>19</sup> The first of these was called the *Juzgado de Instrucción Especial Anticomunista* (The Anti-communist Special Court of Instruction). González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 282.

<sup>20</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 28/05/1924.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 21/10/1923. This is the subject of Chapter Four.



Bayonés, who were made *Subsecretario de Gobernación* (Subsecretary of the Ministry of the Interior) and *Director General de Orden Público* (Director General of Public Order) respectively.<sup>22</sup> On 7 November, 1923 Primo de Rivera ordered the reorganisation of the security services, leading to the re-establishment of the *Dirección General de Seguridad* (Directorate General of Security), under General Arlegui, in place of the *Dirección General de Orden Público* (Public Order). This brought both branches of the civilian police, the *Cuerpos de Seguridad* and *Vigilancia* (Security and Surveillance Corps), under the central control of the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>23</sup> Civil Governors were also precluded from issuing orders to the *Guardia Civil's* provincial commanders, thus restoring some of the autonomy which the corps had lost in reforms carried out in 1921.<sup>24</sup> This ensured that the central government in Madrid retained exclusive authority over all arms of the police. During this time, the policing budget was significantly increased, rising from 24 million pesetas in 1921 to 39 million in 1930.<sup>25</sup>

The *estado de guerra*, which Primo imposed on 15 September, 1923 remained in place across Spain until 16 May, 1925, when, in anticipation of the transition from Military to Civil Directorates, Primo declared his intention to “go about progressively restoring constitutional normality and public freedoms.”<sup>26</sup> Constitutional guarantees, however, remained suspended for the entire duration of the dictatorship. This allowed the government to continue to introduce exceptional and indiscriminate measures to strengthen its grip over the population, particularly as support for the regime began to fade from 1927 onwards.<sup>27</sup> This rendered the proposed ‘return to legal normality’ meaningless.

The reformed *Código Penal* (Penal Code), introduced by the Minister for Justice, Galo Ponte Escartín, on the fifth anniversary of the regime in September 1928

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<sup>22</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 58. The decrees appointing them in *Gaceta de Madrid*, 23/09/1923 and 28/09/1923. Arlegui, however, would die 29 January, 1924 and be replaced by General Pedro Bazán on 10 April, 1925. See *Gaceta de Madrid*, 12/04/1925.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 07/11/1923.

<sup>24</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 58.

<sup>25</sup> González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 285.

<sup>26</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 17/05/1925.

<sup>27</sup> See the timeline for the suspension of constitutional guarantees and declaration of *estados de guerra* during the Restoration period in González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, 65–74.

introduced *medidas de seguridad* (security measures) to Spanish law for the first time. These allowed the government to impose extended sanctions on prisoners once their custodial sentence had been served, including restrictions on an individual's civil rights (Article 90-5), suspensions from employment (90-6), and the closure, both temporary and permanent, of establishments "which may serve as means for the execution of crimes" (90-10).<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, as González Calleja highlights, the scope of the crime of rebellion was also extended to include all strikes and work stoppages, while the definition of serious assault (*atentado*) was broadened to include any aggression committed against a person acting for the state in an official capacity, even while not on duty.<sup>29</sup>

In April 1929 the regime's efforts to regulate public order reached a peak when the *Asamblea Nacional* (National Assembly) debated a draft *Ley de Orden Público* (Public Order Law), which was intended to replace that of 1870. This would have allowed the government to suspend or restrict the rights established in Articles 23 and 29 of the *Anteproyecto de Constitución de la Monarquía Española* (Draft Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy) upon carrying out a non-binding consultation with the *Consejo de Estado* (Council of State), which the new Constitution proposed to create, rather than the *Cortes*, which would be "informed" (*informadas*) of the government's decision only if the state of exception remained in place for more than three months. The government authorities would also be permitted to carry out, amongst other things, arbitrary arrests, banishments, searches and seizures without judicial orders, and the expulsion of any foreign citizens it considered dangerous. None of these proposed constitutional reforms were ever implemented, however, due to the opposition of the King, a factor which contributed significantly to Primo's resignation in 1930.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 13/09/1928. This came into force from 1 January, 1929.

<sup>29</sup> Crucially, the latter of these measures also applied to attacks on members of the Somatén. González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 283.

<sup>30</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 59.

### The emergency deepens

In keeping with his desire to buttress the regime through controlled civic mobilisation, Primo de Rivera created the *Somatén Nacional*, a civilian militia based on the Catalan institution of the same name which had supported his seizure of power. Established by Royal Decree on 17 September, 1923, the *Somatén* was intended to defend the existing social order and guarantee the internal security of the nation, thus freeing the Army from some of its unpopular repressive functions.<sup>31</sup> It was envisaged that during *estados de guerra* the *Somatén* would act as an armed auxiliary to the military, while in periods of judicial normality its members would engage in activities closer to the functions of the civilian police. In the immediate aftermath of its creation Primo was still openly flirting with Italian-style fascism. In Mussolini's movement he saw a successful and appealing 'regenerative' project and, as such, he sought to link the *Somatén* to the Fascist Blackshirts.<sup>32</sup> Despite this, the organisation's revolutionary potential was dissipated by its largely middle-class character.<sup>33</sup> In reality, the *Somatén* also remained subordinated to the military for most of its existence. From 1924 onward it came to be included amongst the institutions protected from public insult by the *Ley de Jurisdicciones* (Law of Jurisdictions) of 1906.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, all talk of the social order aside, the militia's close links to the regime allowed it to cultivate certain freedoms and soon it began to attract hangers-on who looked to take advantage of their membership for material gain and self-advancement, becoming unruly in its own right. This led to numerous cases of criminality within its ranks, though the regime did

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<sup>31</sup> In the preamble to the decree Primo wrote that the *Somatén* was an "organisation that does not limited itself to giving strength and vigour to the civic spirit, but also mobilises them [citizens] by distancing them from the moods of passivity and indifference, in keeping with the meaning of the irreplaceable word *som-atent*: we are ready." Membership was open to males over the age of 23 and who were employed in their place of residence. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 18/09/1923.

<sup>32</sup> In his most public pronouncement on this, spoken before Mussolini in the Palazzo Venezia on 21 November, 1923, Primo stated that "[w]e too, Your Excellency, had secular institution of civilisation and order in a rich region of our *Patria*, which has now expanded across the whole country. As I send a warm greeting to you and Italy as President of the Directorate that I preside, and in the name of the Spanish people, allow me me to exalt Fascism as well as the head of the *Somátenes* in whose name I speak." Mussolini treated this comparison with polite disdain. Cited in Gabriel Maura Gamazo, *Al servicio de la historia. Bosquejo histórico de la dictadura*, vol. II, 1926-1930 (Madrid: Javier Morta, 1930), 91. As late as 1929, however, regime ideologues were still comparing the two formations. See Pemartín, *Valores históricos*, 85–86, fn 8.

<sup>33</sup> González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 294.

<sup>34</sup> Noguera y Yanguas and Campos y Arjona, *Dos años de directorio militar*, 669. See also *Gaceta de Madrid*, 09/09/1924.

little to stop this.<sup>35</sup> In May 1927, the regime took the extraordinary measure of pardoning all *somatenistas* who had been convicted of minor crimes, with the exception of those committed against private property, so beloved of the bourgeoisie, putting their excesses down to “exceso de celo” (excessive zeal) and a lack of experience.<sup>36</sup>

The increase in opposition to the regime after the transition to the *Directorio Civil* in late 1925 induced Primo de Rivera to reconsider the already dubious apoliticism of the *Somatén* and the regime’s second source of civic backing, the *Unión Patriótica*. Ultimately, this brought profound changes to the workings of both organisations, particularly as Primo’s administration attempted to respond to the numerous plots formulated against it during its decline.<sup>37</sup> New regulations prepared for the *Somatén* in May 1928 militarised its structure further.<sup>38</sup> In February 1929, in the immediate aftermath of the Sánchez Guerra-led coup d’état against Primo, the government issued a Royal Decree which allowed it to suspend or dismiss public officials who expressed any opposition to the regime and to shut down any societies or associations it saw fit. The same law also ordered the creation by the *Unión Patriótica* of euphemistically-named “centres of investigation and civic information,” which were to assist the authorities in the maintenance of public order. The activities carried out in these would effectively amount to detective work.<sup>39</sup> Another Royal Decree issued shortly after this on 8 February showed the regime to be in crisis. It gave sweeping powers to all *Agentes de la Autoridad*, including members of the *Somatén*, to detain any person who “augurs ill of the country or of censorship, with the intention of defaming, or eroding the authority and prestige of, Ministers of the Crown or the Authorities” (Article 1). It also ordered each government ministry to create a registry of all of its employees (in the central, provincial and municipal administrations alike) that would detail their “ability, laboriousness, physical aptitude and political discretion.” This

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<sup>35</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 160.

<sup>36</sup> See the preamble to the Royal Decree, written by Galo Ponte Escartín, *Gaceta de Madrid*, 17/05/1927. An example of a *Somatenista* whose crime was so serious that it was not covered in the amnesty in AHN, Primo, Bundle 21, File 7299, 25/05/1927.

<sup>37</sup> For a list of many of these plots see Pemartín, *Valores históricos*, 83–84, fn 6.

<sup>38</sup> The reforms were provoked in part by the *Somatén*’s inaction during *Sanjuanada* coup attempt and the radical Catalanist invasion from the French border town of Prats de Molló in June and November 1926 respectively. They became law only in February 1930. Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 161.

<sup>39</sup> See also *Gaceta de Madrid*, 04/02/1929.

would serve as a means of identifying “those who, through publicity and scandal, show themselves to be the enemies of the Regime and bring about its debilitations and loss of prestige” (Article 4). In addition to this, the *Somatén* and *Unión Patriótica* were instructed to create lists of “individuals who are favourable towards defamation, political agitation and the demoralisation of the public mood,” which were then to be passed on to the government to aid in political repression (Article 5).<sup>40</sup> An additional disposition, issued on 16 April, 1929, authorised members of the *Somatén* to carry out searches in the homes of those suspected of opposing the regime.<sup>41</sup> Although the formal *estado de guerra* had been lifted some four years before this, it is quite clear from these measures that the regime was acting in total disregard of the law. It had reached a coercive peak, and effectively ceased to offer any protection to the private citizen.

The deepening involvement of the *Somatén* and *Unión Patriótica* in this radicalised state repression had a disastrous effect on their public image and ability to mobilise the population. By 1929, the symbolic Barcelona chapter of the *Somatén*, which had allied itself to military elite in the years of *pistolismo* immediately before the dictatorship, was able to assemble only a little more than half the members that had participated in parades in the city in December 1923 for a march in support of the beleaguered regime. This was accompanied by a small though steady decline in its membership nationwide.<sup>42</sup> The *Unión Patriótica* had suffered a similar fate by this time also, with its membership declining to what Primo claimed in defiant *nota oficiosa* from December 1929 was a figure of between 600,000 and 700,000.<sup>43</sup> Even if this was the case, however, the statement implied a significant drop from the *Unión Patriótica’s* peak of 1.3 million in 1927.<sup>44</sup> Despite Primo’s public expressions of hope that the *Somatén* and *Unión Patriótica* would act as bulwarks to guarantee a smooth transition to the government that would follow the dictatorship, now in its death throes, both organisations had been compromised by their involvement in repressive activities and were at the point of decomposition. As complaints arrived to the Ministry of the

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<sup>40</sup> González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 300. See also *Gaceta de Madrid*, 09/02/1929.

<sup>41</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 162.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 162–63. The 1929 street march was attended by only 22,000 *somatenistas*.

<sup>43</sup> Primo de Rivera, *La Dictadura a través de sus notas oficiales*, 297.

<sup>44</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 180.

Interior about abuses of authority and arbitrary imprisonments by the *Somatén's* member, the militia became the target of sustained criticism both in the press and amongst the legal profession.<sup>45</sup> Its response to an abortive general strike in December 1929 was essentially nil and, when the regime was at the point of collapse the following month, it was quite clear to Primo that it could not be relied upon for support, thus confirming the abject failure of dictator and *Somatén* alike. Amongst the first acts of the Provisional Government of the Republic in April 1931 was to formally dissolve the organisation in all regions except Cataluña, citing its excesses and lack of popular support.<sup>46</sup> It is hardly surprising that the *Unión Patriótica* effectively ceased to exist upon Primo's resignation in January 1930 and was disbanded that summer.

### Judicial reform and the space for claims

During the Restoration era, the administration of justice represented one of the chief pillars of *caciquismo*. As such, corruption, clientelistic relations and government interference were key features of the court system at this time.<sup>47</sup> Primo de Rivera identified reform to this area as one of the priorities of the new regime in his manifesto to the Spanish people on 13 September, 1923.<sup>48</sup> He repeated this position several days later in an interview with the *ABC* newspaper, in which he demanded "a large-scale revision of the nation's high courts of Justice, from which the majority of [judges and legal officials] will be removed for incompetence and contamination by the political environment in which they operated."<sup>49</sup> This began days after the coup d'état, when the government suspended trial by jury, claiming that the practice had become

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<sup>45</sup> On the excesses of the *Somatén* see *ibid.*, 162–63. Regarding the press see González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 302. The renowned criminologist Quintiliano Saldaña referred to the amnesty issued by the regime to the members of *Somatén* in 1927 as a "legal monster, fecund in serious moral harm." Quintiliano Saldaña, *Al servicio de la justicia: la orgía áurea de la Dictadura* (Madrid: Javier Morata, 1930), 39.

<sup>46</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 162. The preamble to this law referred to the *Somatenes* as an "irregular mass that has been inappropriately armed in a biased manner, which is completely unnecessary for the maintenance of order, and can even cause disturbances to this due to their lack of understanding or abuse." See *Gaceta de Madrid*, 16/04/1931.

<sup>47</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 228; Moreno Luzón, "El poder público hecho cisco," 186–88; De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del Poder Judicial (1923-1926)," 347. A contemporary account is given in Romanones, *Las responsabilidades*, 145–46. Romanones blamed the corruption of the judiciary on "a lack of civic virtues, political passions, the placing of individual selfishness ahead of the general interest, the lack of morals in citizens."

<sup>48</sup> Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 19–24.

<sup>49</sup> *ABC*, 18/09/1923.

inefficient and unreliable. The regime then began a purge of the judicial administration by creating the *Junta Inspectoral del Personal Judicial* (Inspection Board of Judicial Staff), a body tasked with re-examining all of the criminal and civil complaints brought against judges and magistrates in the preceding five years and, if necessary, overruling the original findings in these cases.<sup>50</sup> The *Junta Inspectoral* worked under the veil of secrecy until 31 December, 1923, by which time it had determined to issue serious sanctions against 47 of Spain's 1,055 judges and magistrates, or just 4.45% of the total. These figures were far from the levels of corruption predicted by Primo de Rivera.<sup>51</sup>

The appointment of new municipal judges was suspended on 6 October, 1923.<sup>52</sup> In an effort to free the judiciary from the direct interference of the executive, Primo de Rivera then established the *Junta Organizadora del Poder Judicial* (Organising Board of the Judicial Power) on 20 October.<sup>53</sup> This new body was charged with overseeing the appointment, promotion and transfer of judges at all levels of the court system, as well as the inspection of the same. Although in reality the *Junta Organizadora* never operated with full independence, its creation was nevertheless a significant milestone in Spanish jurisprudential history, even if only on a symbolic level, because of the degree of independence which it afforded the judiciary.<sup>54</sup>

The considerable optimism that accompanied these early reforms was short-lived. On 31 January, 1924, the regime defined a wide range of *incompatibilidades* (conflicts of interest) that would exclude judges and prosecutors (*fiscales*) from office, as it had for politicians.<sup>55</sup> While this was intended to limit the potential for *caciquil* influence over judges, the same law also extended the government's powers to re-

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<sup>50</sup> This was to be formed by three magistrates from the Supreme Court and a non-voting secretary drawn from the general magistracy. The cases which it examined were limited to those which were already open at the time the decree was issued. It could not investigate new cases therefore. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 03/10/1923.

<sup>51</sup> Only 15 of these were outright dismissals. De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del Poder Judicial (1923-1926)," 349. A breakdown of these figures can be found in *ibid.*, 367–69.

<sup>52</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 07/10/1923.

<sup>53</sup> Its members were to be formed by two judges from the *Tribunal Supremo* and one each from the levels of the *Audiencia Territorial*, *Audiencia Provincial* and magistrate courts. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21/10/1923.

<sup>54</sup> De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del Poder Judicial (1923-1926)," 352.

<sup>55</sup> The measures prohibited judges from owning companies based in the area under their jurisdiction. They were also forbidden from undertaking all other forms of paid work. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 03/02/1924.

assign and relocate judges, something which not only undermined the work of the *Junta Organizadora*, but also clearly represented the very form of political interference which the law was meant to limit in the first place.<sup>56</sup> The supposed independence of the judiciary would be further truncated by the introduction of a series of decrees in 1924 and 1925 that delegated several more of the *Junta Organizadora's* key functions to the government.<sup>57</sup> Upon the formation of the *Directorio Civil* in December 1925, the newly-appointed Minister of Justice, Galo Ponte Escartín, followed this trend by immediately bringing forward new legislation to limit the *Junta's* independence from the executive.<sup>58</sup>

The creation of the *Directorio Civil* and the installation of Ponte Escartín in December 1925 marked a departure in the regime's policies towards justice and ultimately led to increased government interference in the judiciary. With the suppression of ministerial portfolios by Primo de Rivera upon the establishment of the dictatorship in 1923, the justice brief had fallen into the hands of one of the *Directorio Militar's Vocales* (members), Adolfo Vallespinosa, a Brigadier General plucked by Primo from obscurity. Despite his character as a military man and supporter of the government, Vallespinosa showed himself to be both largely respectful of the prevailing legislation and disinclined to make arbitrary interventions in the judicial administration.<sup>59</sup> It may, as a result, seem ironic that during the tenure of Ponte Escartín, a lawyer by profession and former prosecutor for the Supreme Court, the independence of the judiciary was profoundly weakened. The new Minister, however, owed his rapid rise to prominence entirely to Primo and was, therefore, one of the staunchest supporters of the general's efforts to bend the judiciary to his will.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 232–33.

<sup>57</sup> These included the Royal Decrees of 14 May, 1924 (*Gaceta de Madrid*, 16/05/1924), which established the conditions for the appointment of judges to the nation's highest courts, and of 17 July, 1924 (*Gaceta de Madrid*, 18/07/1924), which allowed the government to directly name inspectors of the court system. De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del Poder Judicial (1923-1926)," 357–58.

<sup>58</sup> This demanded, amongst other things, that the selection of nation's highest judges be made from shortlists of three candidates (*ternas*) proposed by the government. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 05/01/1926.

<sup>59</sup> De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del Poder Judicial (1923-1926)," 364.

<sup>60</sup> Ponte Escartín reportedly owed his initial appointment as prosecutor for the Supreme Court to a telegram of support which he sent to Primo during the coup d'état of September 1923. González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 230, fn 35.



On 21 June, 1926, Ponte Escartín dissolved the *Junta Organizadora del Poder Judicial* and replaced it with the *Consejo Judicial* (Judicial Council).<sup>61</sup> In this reform Ponte Escartín stripped the new *Consejo Judicial* of the former *Junta Organizadora's* powers to oversee the appointment of judges and transferred them to the government directly.<sup>62</sup> This was followed on 14 October, 1926 by a decree which allowed the government to overrule the decisions of both the Supreme Court and the provincial courts on matters relating to state administration (*lo contencioso-administrativo*).<sup>63</sup> The remaining vestiges of judicial independence were eliminated by a further law, of 22 December, 1928, which created a *Comisión reorganizadora de la Administración de Justicia* (Reorganising Committee for the Administration of Justice), presided by Ponte Escartín and charged with restructuring the civil court system. This also deprived judges of their *inamovilidad* (fixed employment) for a period of six months.<sup>64</sup> The second of these developments meant that the government could transfer, suspend or dismiss any magistrate, judge or judicial functionary it saw fit, without the need to initiate formal proceedings against them or the possibility of appeal in the courts.<sup>65</sup> The measures, which allowed the regime to radically alter the composition of the judiciary as it introduced increasingly severe (and legally dubious) public-order laws, were strongly criticised by prominent members of the legal profession including Quintiliano Saldaña, Víctor Pradera and Rafael Salazar Alonso.<sup>66</sup> The effect of these resolutions was to firmly subordinate the administration of justice to the executive power. By the time of Primo's resignation in January 1930, therefore, the promising reforms carried out during the *Directorio Militar* had been eroded by Ponte Escartín, whose attitude towards the judiciary became more and more despotic as his tenure progressed. On this De Benito Fraile has rightly concluded that Primo de Rivera's initially messianic attitude towards the law rapidly gave way to measures which

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<sup>61</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 22/06/1926.

<sup>62</sup> The government would also play a prominent role in deciding its membership. De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del poder judicial (1926-1930)," 76–77.

<sup>63</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 15/10/1926.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 25/12/1928.

<sup>65</sup> Appeals could be made directly to the *Consejo de Ministros* (Council of Ministers).

<sup>66</sup> Saldaña, *Al servicio de la justicia*, 29; Salazar Alonso, *La justicia bajo la Dictadura*, 162. See Pradera's comments in the Asamblea Nacional in De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del poder judicial (1926-1930)," 84–85. See also his later criticisms of this measure in Víctor Pradera, *Al servicio de la patria: las ocasiones perdidas por la Dictadura* (Madrid: Ediciones Morata, 1930), 393–97.

ensured greater control over all aspects of the state administration - the courts especially - and, therefore, the regime's survival.<sup>67</sup>

Even as the judiciary was progressively subordinated to the executive, the decrees which carried out these reforms consistently reiterated the need to restore public confidence in the justice system by ensuring its independence.<sup>68</sup> These and Primo de Rivera's repeated pronouncements on the need to modify the administration of justice opened a space in which people could make written claims against the conduct of the regime.<sup>69</sup> While claims such as these could, if uttered in public, imply dangerous criticism of the government, written petitions were generally tolerated by the authorities, who often investigated the circumstances described, even if these were not resolved to the letter-writers' satisfaction. The language of petition was infused with the language of justice, something which could be invoked in many circumstances. "Now that there is justice upon high and we are heading... towards a new and decorous Spain..." wrote one resident of Orense as he introduced his denunciation to the authorities shortly after the coup.<sup>70</sup> Another letter-writer, from Tenerife, demanded "justice, but real justice" for his friend, who had been dismissed from his position as village mayor in the purges of 1923 and 1924.<sup>71</sup> Later, in 1927, Domingo Bazarello, the parish priest in Travejo (Cáceres), invoked the words of Primo de Rivera when he called upon the regime to build a school in the village. "The illustrious General Primo de Rivera has said in his speeches 'we want to be just and moral... and to maintain order and spread justice without the fear of coercion,'" he wrote, before adding that "as Spanish subjects we have the right to be attended to,

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<sup>67</sup> De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del poder judicial (1926-1930)," 99.

<sup>68</sup> This is discussed in detail in De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del Poder Judicial (1923-1926)"; De Benito Fraile, "La independencia del poder judicial (1926-1930)."

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Primo de Rivera's open letter to José Galibán, Vice-President of the *Consejo Directivo Nacional* of *Unión Patriótica*, of June 1928. In it he re-affirmed the need to give "citizens more than a mere feeling, but rather the absolute guarantee that justice in Spain has become fair, quick, understanding, inexpensive and immune to all power and influence." Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 75.

<sup>70</sup> Original: "Ahora que hay justicia en las Alturas y que se camina... hacia una nueva y decorosa España..." wrote one resident of Orense as he introduced his denunciation to the authorities shortly after the coup. AHN, Primo, Bundle 53, File 506, 24/10/1923.

<sup>71</sup> Another letter-writer, from Tenerife, demanded "justicia, pero justicia de verdad" for his friend, who had been dismissed from his position as village mayor in the purges of 1923 and 1924. AHN, Primo, Bundle 72, File 11152, 23/09/1926.

and that is how it shall be.”<sup>72</sup> Similarly, when the residents of Torre Endomenech (Castellón) wrote to Primo in June 1927 to protest against the transfer of land from their municipality to another, they spoke of their conviction “that if it were not for [Your Excellency’s] heroic gesture Spain would be in the greatest commotion, because the detestable communism would surely reign in it.” More significantly, however, it was this commitment to order as the alternative to revolutionary upheaval that allowed them to make their claim: “And because we live in a regime of patriotism, purity and justice, what is happening to us is doubly sensitive.”<sup>73</sup>

The regime’s professed commitment to the interests of justice and the rule of law were undermined by its tendency to arbitrarily detain prisoners *incomunicado*. This practice was the target of sharp criticism by members of the legal profession, something which detainees echoed in their letters to the authorities. Upon the fall of Primo de Rivera’s government in 1930, the future Minister of the Interior of the Republic, Rafael Salazar Alonso, described *incomunicación* as the “great horror” of a dictatorship that was “given over to the most savage and repugnant policing system.”<sup>74</sup> Writing in the same year, Quintiliano Saldaña attacked the role of the military courts in this form of repression. “Torture was abolished in Spain by the Cortes of Cádiz,” he wrote, “but an institution that maintains it in spirit survives in our military legislation, and that is the coercive continuation of *incomunicación*.”<sup>75</sup> In criminal courts, he added, this form of isolation was limited by law to periods of three and five days (*Código Penal*, Article 214). In courts martial, however, there was no such restriction; *incomunicado* detentions were entirely at the presiding officer’s

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<sup>72</sup> Original: “El ilustre General Primo de Rivera ha dicho en sus discursos ‘queremos ser justos y morales... manteniendo el orden y distribuyendo la justicia sin miedo a la coacción,’” he wrote, before adding that “tenemos derecho como súbditos españoles a que se nos atienda, y así será.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 73, File 11730, 12/09/1927.

<sup>73</sup> Original: Similarly, when the residents of Torre Endomenech (Castellón) wrote to Primo in June 1927 to protest against the transfer of land from their municipality to another, they spoke of their conviction “de que a no ser por el gesto heroico de VE España estaría hoy en el mayor desorden, porque de seguro imperaría en ella el detestable comunismo.” More significantly, however, it was this commitment to order as the alternative to revolutionary upheaval that allowed them to make their claim: “Y por eso que vivimos en un régimen de patriotismo, de pureza y de justicia, es doblemente sensible lo que nos ocurre.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 74, File 12353, 16/06/1927.

<sup>74</sup> Salazar Alonso, *La justicia bajo la Dictadura*, 123.

<sup>75</sup> Saldaña, *Al servicio de la justicia*, 40.

discretion.<sup>76</sup> The opaque manner in which these tribunals operated arises in these petitions.

José Lillo Ferrandís, a docker from the city of Valencia, was detained by the police in the city in mid-March 1929 and held *incomunicado* in the Cárcel Celular (Cellular Prison) for 38 days.<sup>77</sup> At the end of this period he was removed from his cell and conveyed to a special court in the prison. Although this court found no reason to proceed with his prosecution, Lillo was not released. A report attached to his file indicated that the Ministry of Justice had looked into the matter and found that he was being held *gubernativamente* (without trial) by the provincial Civil Government under its exceptional powers. This meant that it could not intervene in the matter. There is no indication as to Lillo's subsequent fate, though his case neatly indicates the jurisdictional quagmire which detainees faced; in this account there were as many as three different legal authorities at work in deciding the outcome of his detention and, in the end, it was discovered that his imprisonment was owed to the whims of the Civil Governor, who was empowered to take the measures he saw fit to guarantee public order.

Another prisoner in the city's Cellular Prison complained that he and his fellow "*presos de quincena*" (minor criminals) had also been arrested arbitrarily "for the simple fact of being known by the police" and that they remained in jail, "where they are not completing a single fortnight, but rather five or six in a row, that is to say, whole months of distressing imprisonment for no crime other than that of having been prisoners already."<sup>78</sup> He challenged Primo de Rivera to show that his regime was truly

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<sup>76</sup> Article 478 of the *Código de Justicia Militar* (Code of Military Justice) was highly vague and provided only that, "[*incomunicación*] may not last any longer than the time necessary to avoid collusion amongst the presumed culprits, or with other parties." *Código de justicia militar de 27 de septiembre de 1890 y legislación complementaria del mismo* (Madrid: Talleres del Depósito de la Guerra, 1906), 172.

<sup>77</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 27, File 9538, 09/07/1929 & 23/08/1929.

<sup>78</sup> Original: Another prisoner in the city's Cellular Prison complained that he and his fellow "*presos de quincena*" had also been arrested arbitrarily "*por el solo hecho de ser conocidos por la policia*" and that they remained in jail, "*donde no cumplen una sola quincena, sino cinco o seis repetidas, es decir, meses enteros de prisión aflictiva sin otro delito que el haber estado presos otras veces.*" AHN, Primo, Bundle 25, File 9140, 21/11/1928 & 01/12/1928. This jurisdictional confusion was echoed in the request by the *Agrupación Socialista Palentina* (Palencia Socialist Association) that their member José María Viñuela be released from his detention in a regional prison. The Ministry of Justice replied that it had no record of Viñuela's trial and that he had, therefore, most likely been sentenced by a military court over which it

one of “clemency” and “justice,” as it claimed, and order that they be freed from their never-ending detention. In its response to the men, however, the Ministry of Justice again claimed that it did not have jurisdiction over the matter, as their punishments had also been issued by the provincial authorities.

Similarly, José Alberola Navarro, who had been arrested and imprisoned indefinitely after giving a talk on education at a meeting of a local workers’ group, demanded that his case be brought to court, if a case against him truly existed.<sup>79</sup> “I have not committed any crime, or offence as surely if I had incurred the sanction of the law, I would have been handed over to the jurisdiction of the Courts of Justice or to the government authorities,” he wrote.<sup>80</sup> He referred to a recent change in the law which required the Council of Ministers to approve exceptional detentions like his (something which, evidently, it had not done) and asked:

And if I have not committed any crime, why deprive me of my freedom? Why am I being deprived of it, without telling me the reason which excuses or justifies it? There is nothing more terrible than being subject to a loss of freedom, while being unaware of the reason for this and time this is to last. And as only a mistake could make my imprisonment, which has gone on for seventy days, last any longer, I demand JUSTICE.<sup>81</sup>

Although it was much less common, some prisoners responded with humour. This was the case in the message written in verse form by Carlos Fernández Ortuño, a man sentenced to five months’ imprisonment in Madrid’s Model Prison in the summer of 1927 for allegedly distributing immoral publications.<sup>82</sup> Despite the levity of his words, however, Fernández’s poem nevertheless contained a claim akin to those analysed already in this chapter. Not only did he allege that his prosecution had been based on the accusations of “false moralists,” who were corrupt in their own right, he regarded his treatment as excessive, especially in comparison to others who went

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had no authority. No other information was supplied to Viñuela’s supporters. AHN, Primo, Bundle 17, File 5662, 09/11/1925 & 25/11/1925.

<sup>79</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 70, File 10693, 20/05/1926. The law in *Gaceta de Madrid*, 17/05/1926.

<sup>80</sup> Original: “Yo no he cometido delito, ni falta alguna ya que seguramente de haber incurrido en la sanción de las leyes, hubiera sido entregado a la jurisdicción de los Tribunales de Justicia o de la autoridad gubernativa,” he wrote.

<sup>81</sup> Original: “Y si no he cometido delito ¿a qué privarme de libertad? ¿por qué se me tiene privado de ella, sin decirme el motivo que la excuse o justifique? Nada más terrible que verse sujeto a la privación de libertad, ignorando el motivo de ella y el término que ha de tener; y como solo un error puede hacer perdure mi prisión que dura más de setenta días, demandando JUSTICIA.”

<sup>82</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 22, File 7626, 10/09/1927.

unpunished for similar crimes. Most importantly, he felt he had been denied the right to appeal his sentence, leading to what he regarded as “the civil death of an honourable man.” He wrote:

Cinco meses de arresto es la condena  
con la que dura Ley me ha castigado  
sin advertir que tan terrible pena  
es la muerte civil de un hombre honrado.  
He pedido, ¡y hasta eso me han negado!  
el favor de esa ley, fía y serena,  
que a tanto autor indigno se ha otorgado  
para librarlo de la vil cadena.

...

Por obra de unos falsos moralistas  
que tendrán los pecados a montones,  
estoy preso, ya un mes, entre anarquistas,  
sádicos, asesinos y ladrones...  
¡Y hay que ver la basura que en revistas,  
novelas y otras mil publicaciones,  
vierten, a diario, los “pornografistas”,  
sin que la Ley les vaya con sanciones!<sup>83</sup>

It is worth adding that these criticisms applied equally outside the criminal courts, where there was no coercion on the part of the government. In one notable civil-law case which came before the Ministry of Justice, the owner of a toy factory in Barcelona, José Ysuar Serveto, complained to Primo that his competitors had unfairly obtained a legal order which prevented him from producing a certain model of mechanical doll.<sup>84</sup> In his appeal to Primo he referred to a recent interview, which the dictator had given in *La Nación*:

[Your Excellency] says “THE LAW MUST BE PROTECTION FOR THE POOR, NOT FOR THE AUDACIOUS, NO WRITTEN LAW HAS ANY VALUE IF IT HARMS THE PATRIA SOCIETY OR THE TRUE CONCEPT OF JUSTICE AND THE MOST MODEST CITIZEN, [WHO] HAS THE RIGHT TO THE PROTECTION AND CARE OF THE RULER.”<sup>85</sup>

Ysuar Serveto conveniently hid the fact that the case was really about the enforcement of a patent, choosing instead to end his letter with the lofty assertion that “I believe

<sup>83</sup> As the original is in verse form, I have opted not to translate the text.

<sup>84</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 20, File 6716, 28/09/1926.

<sup>85</sup> Original: In his appeal to Primo he referred to a recent interview, which the dictator had given in *La Nación*: “Dice VE ‘EL DERECHO DEBE SER AMPARO DE LOS DEBILES, NO DE LOS AUDACES, NO HAY LEY ESCRITA QUE TENGA VALOR ALGUNO SI DAÑA A LA PATRIA A LA SOCIEDAD O AL VERDADERO CONCEPTA DE LA JUSTICIA Y EL MÁS MODESTO CIUDADANDO, TIENE DERECHO A LA PROTECCION Y DESVELO DEL GOBERNANTE.’”

we have the right to be protected by [Your Excellency] who only attends to things that are just.”<sup>86</sup>

In Bilbao, José Padilla Aróstegui lamented his and his sister’s unjust treatment by a lower-court judge during the liquidation of a company.<sup>87</sup> Padilla wrote that his spirit had been emboldened by the establishment of the dictatorship four and a half years before, however. “We could easily have resigned ourselves to suffering the outrages and injustices that have been committed against my sister and me if these had been inflicted on us in the previous regime,” he declared as he made clear that he expected his petitions, hitherto ignored, to be answered by Primo.<sup>88</sup> The government’s inaction over his family’s case had made him question the legitimacy of a regime whose principal aim, he believed, must be to “most fervently worship the reign of justice, as, if this were not the case, it would become an odious despotism which all of us, who take pride in ourselves as patriots and citizens, would be obliged to eliminate as something shameful to human dignity.”<sup>89</sup> Like many other petitions of this nature, Padilla’s ended with an implicit threat to the order which the regime wished to protect. So too did that of a group of farmers from Villanueva de Arzobispo (Jaén) who, in their dispute with a *Delegado Gubernativo* posted to their province, demanded the immediate introduction of measures that would “give back the faith that this village always had in the Military Directorate and dispel the atmosphere that has been forming here that we are not in a regime of justice, but of military terrorism.”<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Original: Ysuar Servto conveniently hid the fact that the case was really about the enforcement of a patent, choosing to end his letter with the lofty assertion that “creo tenemos derecho a ser amparados por VE que solo atiende las cosas que son justas.”

<sup>87</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 23, File 8172, 23/03/1928.

<sup>88</sup> Original: “Los atropellos e injusticias que con mi hermana y conmigo se han cometido es fácil nos hubiéramos resignados a sufrirlos si estos se hubieran perpetrado en el Régimen anterior,” he declared, as he made clear that he expected his petitions, hitherto ignored, to be answered by Primo.

<sup>89</sup> Original: The government’s inaction over his family’s case had made him question the legitimacy of a regime whose principal aim, he believed, must be to “rendir el culto más ferviente al reinado de la Justicia, pues de no ser así se convertiría en un odioso despotismo al que estaríamos obligados todos cuantos nos preciamos de patriotas y ciudadanos a extirpar como algo oprobioso para la dignidad humana.”

<sup>90</sup> Original: So too did that of a group of farmers from Villanueva de Arzobispo (Jaén) who, in their dispute with a *Delegado Gubernativo* post to their province, demanded the immediate introduction of measures that would “devolver a este pueblo la confianza que siempre tuvo en el Directorio Militar y disipar la atmósfera que se va formando de que no estamos en un régimen de justicia, sino de terrorismo militar.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8595, 20/02/1925.

### The repression of communists and syndicalists – letters from prison

The military terrorism to which the residents of Villanueva de Arzobispo referred in their letter would be keenly felt by the revolutionary workers' movement, one of the two principal *bêtes noires* of the regime, alongside the representatives of Catalanism, who will be discussed in their own right later. Primo's seizure of power was not an explicitly anti-communist gesture. Indeed, as García has remarked, communism seemed to rank below the threats of economic ruin, corruption, the war in Morocco and separatism in Primo's manifesto in September 1923. Nevertheless, the regime quickly began to act as if the threat of revolution was imminent. Primo's language of national regeneration, it turned out, was perfectly compatible with a discourse of fear that would clearly anticipate the Nationalist side in the Civil War.<sup>91</sup> At the time of Primo's coup d'état, the workers' movement was already in retreat after the boom it had experienced from 1918 to 1920. The PSOE was determined to maintain party integrity after the schism that led to the creation of the *Partido Comunista de España* (Communist Party of Spain) in 1921.<sup>92</sup> The latter organisation, which had a membership of just 5,500 upon its creation, was on the verge of disintegration by 1923, having obtained no seats in the general election of 1923; the PSOE, in comparison, received seven, its highest total up to that point.<sup>93</sup> The anarcho-syndicalist *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (National Confederation of Labour) was ideologically divided and had been driven into hiding by the repression unleashed by the Restoration government in Cataluña, its former stronghold. In the early months of the dictatorship, members of the PCE and CNT were arrested en masse, while the parties' meeting centres were closed, although censorship prevented the press from reporting this. The public activity of the CNT, in particular, was curtailed by the regime's decision to enforce legislation from 30 March, 1923, which banned the advertisement of meetings by syndicalist groups. The same law also required all unions to present copies of their regulations, membership lists and minutes to the

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<sup>91</sup> García, "Historia de un mito político," 9–10. On the Nationalist discourse of regeneration see Muro and Quiroga, "Spanish Nationalism. Ethnic or Civic?," 19.

<sup>92</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 204.

<sup>93</sup> Ben-Ami, *Dictadura*, 19.



Government so that these could be officially approved.<sup>94</sup> When a syndicalist assassinated the state executioner for Barcelona in May 1924, the regime responded by ordering 200 detentions, banning the publication *Solidaridad Obrera* (Workers' Solidarity) and closing the premises occupied by unions affiliated with the CNT. This drove many of its leaders into hiding in Spain or across into France. Thereafter, the Spanish-French border became the site of a number of incidents between the security forces and anarchist conspirators.<sup>95</sup> In Cataluña, this ultimately led many of the CNT's unions to join the right-wing *Sindicatos Libres* (Free Trade Unions), which experienced a surge in growth.<sup>96</sup>

Prosecution for the possession of illicit political literature was a topic that recurred in the petitions written by communists and syndicalists, as well as by their families, who expressed indignation at the manner in which these documents were obtained by police. For some this came with the accusation that they had been engaged in illegal printing, without submitting the material for prior censorship, though for others their punishment came by mere association.<sup>97</sup> This was the case when, in August 1926, amid the supposed return to normality heralded by the transition to the *Directorio Civil*, a group of policemen entered the home of Entiguiano Badillo Ruíz, a prisoner in the province of Santander, to carry out a search of the property, "en busca no sé de qué" (looking for I don't know what), as Badillo put it.<sup>98</sup> Upon failing to find anything untoward, the policemen confiscated a number of books, which, Badillo claimed, had belonged to an unnamed friend of his, who had since moved to Vizcaya in search of work. The works appear to have been political in nature, although the letter-writer denied any knowledge of this, as since then, he alleged, he had been unfairly "fichado como comunista peligroso" (put on file as a dangerous communist) and surveilled in his job as a newspaper seller. This had led to his arrest by the authorities later that month, followed by his remand in preventative custody, where he remained for some four months without charge. Badillo protested his

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<sup>94</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 204–8.

<sup>95</sup> A firsthand account of the period is given by *cenetista* Josep Peirats in José Peirats, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution*, ed. Chris Ealham, vol. 1 (Hastings: The Meltzer Press, 2001), chap. 2.

<sup>96</sup> Eulàlia Vega, "Anarquismo y sindicalismo durante la Dictadura y la República," *Historia Social*, no. 1 (1988): 56–57.

<sup>97</sup> A case of illegal printing in AHN, Primo, Bundle 69, File 9566, 07/08/1925.

<sup>98</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 73, File 11819, 18/12/1926.

innocence and, while it seems that he may not have been telling the full story about his plight, such was the lack of detail, he claimed that the material which he had been engaged in distributing was fully legal. There is no indication as to his subsequent fate, though he appeared to have suffered greatly already. His six children, he added, depended on his “*onrado jornal*” (onourable [sic] day-wage) of nine pesetas and were being denied this “*por tan insignificante delito*” (for such an insignificant crime).

Hilario Arlandis Foat, a marble-worker from Valencia, wrote repeated letters to the authorities between December 1924 and October 1925 to secure the release of his son, Hilario Arlandis Esparza, a prominent syndicalist who had been detained in Barcelona by the regime in the summer of 1924. Despite his father’s feigned incredulity, Arlandis Esparza was already well-known to police and had previously been a member of the CNT, representing the organisation at the first congress of the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern) in Moscow in 1921, alongside fellow-delegates Andreu Nin and Joaquín Maurín. Upon his return from Moscow, however, he was arrested in Berlin at the behest of the Spanish government on suspicion of being involved in the killing of Prime Minister Eduardo Dato in 1921, although he was released after one month in custody.<sup>99</sup> In 1922, Arlandis Esparza would abandon the CNT to join the recently formed PCE and, by April 1923, he had been named head of the *Agrupación Comunista de Valencia* (Communist Association of Valencia).

Arlandis Foat, his father, wrote his first letter to the authorities some five months after his son’s detention, but this letter was relatively unremarkable.<sup>100</sup> In August 1925 he wrote again to remind Primo that “on different occasions you [formal] have made your love for justice public” and that this bound him to order his son’s release. Failing this, he asked that his son be transferred to a prison closer to his home in Valencia so that he could, at least, visit him: “Otherwise it will be my ruin, as much in a moral sense as in a spiritual and material one.”<sup>101</sup> After complaining further that the prison authorities continued to intercept his son’s mail, something which

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<sup>99</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 69, File 9906, 27/11/1929.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 13/12/1924.

<sup>101</sup> Original: In August 1925 he wrote again to remind Primo that “en diferentes ocasiones ha hecho público su amor a la justicia” and that this bound him to order his son’s release. Failing this, he asked that his son be transferred to a prison closer to his home in Valencia so that he could, at least, visit him: “De lo contrario será mi ruina tanto en el orden moral, como espiritual y material.”

prevented packages of food from reaching him, Arlandis Foat asked, “¿Será atendida mi súplica?” (Will my plea be attended to?). Clearly it was not, as, in October 1925, he contacted the authorities again to decry that his son had now been imprisoned for 16 months and demand his release, “since no kind of prosecution has been brought against him.”<sup>102</sup> Despite the letter-writer’s pleas, however, the Director General of Security informed Primo’s bureau that he was opposed to Arlandis Esparza’s release due to his importance to the *Partido Comunista*, to which he was still thought to be fully committed. Proof of this, he noted, was found in November 1924, when Arlandis Esparza’s prison cell was searched by the authorities, leading to the discovery of extensive communist material, including copies of *La Batalla*, of which he had been editor, and the party accounts. A report attached to his file by the Chief of Police of Barcelona, and entitled “Arlandis Esparza Hilario – Marble Worker. Communist of the most significant order,” added that he was one of the chief propagandists of communism in Spain and, somewhat fancifully, given his imprisonment, that he remained “in intelligence with all of the primates of communism and in possession of its secrets.”<sup>103</sup>

It was also common for prisoner petitioners to describe the moral and political transformations, which they purported to have undergone during their detention, as they requested their freedom. This was the case when a group of four prisoners held in Barcelona’s *Modelo* prison, Angel Pumarega, Ramón Merino Gracia and brothers Manuel and Francisco Valls, sought their release from indefinite detentions imposed by the provincial authorities in January 1925. All four were prominent communists, although Pumarega and Merino Gracia were the most well-known. Both had been amongst the founders of the PCE in 1920 and in the summer of 1921 had attended the Third Congress of the Comintern in Moscow, where Merino Gracia met Lenin. Pumarega, for his part, had abandoned the party after its first congress in 1922 over its

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<sup>102</sup> Original: Clearly it was not, as, in October 1925, he contacted the authorities again to decry that his son had now been imprisoned for 16 months and demand his release, “[ya que] no se instruye proceso de ninguna clase contra él.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 69, File 9906, date unknown (c. October 1925).

<sup>103</sup> Original: A report attached to his file by the Chief of Police of Barcelona, and entitled “Arlandis Esparza Hilario – Marmolista. Comunista de los más significados,” added that he was one of the chief propagandists of communism in Spain and, somewhat fancifully, given his imprisonment, that he remained “en inteligencia con todos los primates del comunismo y en posesión de los secretos del mismo.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8595, 31/01/1925.

decision to leave behind its antiparliamentary stance that year. Sometime in 1924 both were arrested in Barcelona and held by the Military-Civil Governor of the province, alongside the brothers Valls, under the exceptional powers granted by the *estado de guerra*.<sup>104</sup> By January 1925, all four had been imprisoned for between five and nine months each, according to their letter.<sup>105</sup>

The purpose of the group's petition was to publicly declare their decision to depart "absolutely from all syndical or political organisations described as 'revolutionary,' whatever their school or name."<sup>106</sup> The workers' movement, particularly in the city of Barcelona, they wrote, had been corrupted by "all manner of vices and irremediable errors," ranging from "threat and armed coercion amongst the workers themselves, to serious assaults, absurd 'attempts' at revolution and attacks in gangs."<sup>107</sup> The effect of this had been to drive the workers back into their homes and cause the authorities to impose an extended state of exception in the region, the reason for their current detention. Claiming that they no longer saw any serious future in the movement, they declared that they had even rejected the benefits offered by their parties to prisoners of a 'social' nature.<sup>108</sup> As a demonstration of their sincerity, the men took the unusual step of directing an open letter to the editors of the Barcelona daily *La Vanguardia* to publicly renounce their former political affiliation. The note, which appeared in shortened form on the second page of news items on 24 December, 1924 stated:

The below-signed, government prisoners in the cellular prison of Barcelona, who are no longer attached to the communist party or any syndicalist tendency or the politics of the workers' movement, wish to make it public that they reject all responsibility for

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<sup>104</sup> The splits are described in Víctor Alba, *The Communist Party in Spain*, trans. Vincent G. Smith (New Brunswick; London: Transaction Publishers, 1983), chap. 3. On Pumarega see *Ibid.*, 61. On Merino Gracia see Colin M. Winston, *Workers and the Right in Spain, 1900-1936* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 259–60.

<sup>105</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8226, 08/01/1925.

<sup>106</sup> Original: The purpose of the group's petition was to publicly declare their decision to depart "en absoluto de toda organización sindical o política adjetivada de 'revolucionaria,' cualesquiera que sean su escuela o nombre."

<sup>107</sup> The workers movement, particularly in the city of Barcelona, they wrote, had been corrupted by "toda suerte de vicios y errores incorregibles," ranging from "la amenaza y la coacción armada entre los mismos obreros, hasta el atentado, los absurdos 'ensayos' de revolución y el ataque en cuadrilla."

<sup>108</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8226, 08/01/1925.

or solidarity with any form of agitation or propaganda, in case their names are used for those purposes.<sup>109</sup>

Their decision to do this had an important symbolic value. Most significantly, it appropriated the regime's technique of publishing the details of arrests and convictions in order to 'name and shame' its enemies, and inverted it for their own purposes. The authorities' response to the men's letter has been lost, but a short note attached to the file recorded that the Military-Civil Governor of Barcelona had recommended to Primo that none of them, except Merino Gracia, be released due to their extensive criminal records.<sup>110</sup> It is not clear why Merino Gracia was freed immediately and the others not, given his close association with the communist movement. However, his conversion seems to have been genuine. In 1925, he re-emerged in Barcelona as a member of the Carlist reactionary Ramón Sales' *Sindicatos Libres* and contributed to the organisation's national congress, while lauding it as the true heir to Pablo Iglesias, the founder of the PSOE.<sup>111</sup> Pumarega was released sometime after this and remained active in communist circles, while also working in publishing, most notably as a proof-reader for José Ortega y Gasset's elitist journal *Revista de Occidente*. In 1931, he came full circle by becoming subeditor of *Mundo Obrero* (Workers' World), the periodical of the *Partido Comunista de España*.<sup>112</sup>

In October 1926 the Ministry of the Interior received a similar letter from another prisoner in the *Modelo* of Barcelona in protest at the circumstances of his detention. Óscar Pérez Solís, who described himself with some understatement as simply an adult and journalist by profession, was a former artillery officer who had emerged as a leading figure first in the PSOE and then in the *Partido Comunista de España* after its creation in 1921, before becoming editor of the latter organisation's newspaper, *La Bandera Roja* (The Red Flag), and a member of its central committee.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Original: "Los que suscriben, presos gubernativos en la prisión celular de Barcelona, desligados tanto del partido comunista como de toda tendencia sindical o política del movimiento obrero, desean hacer público, por consiguiente, que rechazan toda responsabilidad y solidaridad con cualquier clase de agitación o propaganda, en provisión de que sus nombres sean utilizados para dichos fines." *La Vanguardia*, 24/12/1924. The prisoners listed this incorrectly as 23/12/1924 in their letter.

<sup>110</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8226, undated note.

<sup>111</sup> Winston, *Workers and the Right in Spain, 1900-1936*, 259–60.

<sup>112</sup> Víctor Fuentes and Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *La marcha al pueblo en las letras españolas, 1917-1936* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 2006), 37, fn 11.

<sup>113</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 20, File 6833, 22/10/1926.

Although Pérez Solís' radically left-wing political leanings made him a target for regime repression, as in the case of the four men above, the story of his life would become fascinatingly entwined with that of the Primo de Rivera family as a whole. Pérez Solís had been one of the principal organisers of a failed general strike in Bilbao in the aftermath of an incident that saw a squadron of Basque army recruits mutiny in the port of Málaga on 23 August, 1923. Led by their corporal, Sánchez Borroso, the group of some 74 soldiers shot their sergeant and refused to board a transport ship which was to convey them to Melilla, whence they would be deployed to the Moroccan campaign. The mutiny, like the strike attempt, was quickly subdued and Sánchez Borroso sentenced to death by a military court for his part in the unrest, although the case divided public opinion.<sup>114</sup> The government's decision to pardon the corporal on 28 August, after a major press campaign in his favour, outraged the officer corps and definitively convinced Primo de Rivera that he should rebel against the elected government.<sup>115</sup> Pérez Solís was quickly apprehended by the authorities, receiving serious injuries in the process, and, after spending several months in prison for his role in the failed strike, fled to France, before travelling to Moscow, where he represented Spain at the 1924 Comintern World Congress. He was allowed to return to Spain at the end of the year under the terms of an amnesty, although his renewed activities with the PCE led to his arrest and imprisonment by the regime in February 1925 on the charge of inciting rebellion.

In his letter to Primo, written during this second period of imprisonment, Pérez Solís spoke in the voice of an ordinary citizen rather than as a communist agitator, even though his involvement in the party's resistance to the regime was by then notorious. He made no mention of his political activities, describing instead how, "in observance of the highest duties of conscience and citizenship," he had dedicated his life to the struggle against *caciquismo* and the pursuit of "an entirely human justice" in

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<sup>114</sup> For a description of the events see *ABC*, 25/08/1923.

<sup>115</sup> Speaking to a Belgian newspaper in 1926, Primo de Rivera stated that "[t]he absolution of Barroso made me appreciate the scale of the horrible abyss into which Spain had been thrown." To this Ben-Ami adds: "Those in the military did not see the Málaga mutiny as a simple act of insubordination but rather as a reflection of the collapse of the law as a dissuasive element and of a general atmosphere of 'defeatism,' which had been cultivated by 'anti-patriotic, communist and syndicalist' separatists." Ben-Ami, *Dictadura*, 31–32.

Spain.<sup>116</sup> Referring to Primo de Rivera's earlier pronouncements that the nation's courts had long been one of the main instruments of *caciquismo*, he declared, "[t]he docile servitude of many courts provided *caciques* with the legal means – legal, in appearance – of moving their most capable and determined enemies away from the *caciquil* domain where they waged war upon them," and alleged that his own detention had been the work of his adversaries in this struggle.<sup>117</sup> Though Pérez Solís declined to describe the details of his case, as many political detainees did, he argued that the new *Código Penal*, then in preparation by the regime, should amend the law in such a way that it became more difficult for *caciques* to influence the courts, as, he maintained, had occurred during his own prosecution.

That Pérez Solís omitted much of the detail surrounding his imprisonment was unsurprising, for it was his wont not to incriminate himself. His reputation, however, made it implausible that Primo's bureau would not detect the true reason for his detention. Yet Pérez Solís' letter indicates how, even after the transition to the *Directorio Civil* in December 1925, when the supposed return to normality dominated the discourse of the regime, the critique of *caciquismo*, a highly malleable concept, remained part of the political *lingua franca* and represented an easy manner in which one could state one's credentials as a supporter of the government, even if only indirectly. While Pérez Solís' file gives no indication as to his subsequent fate, his biography is widely known. His letter, it is clear, was unsuccessful in bringing about his release, though he would undergo an extraordinary transformation before completing his sentence in August 1927. During his time in prison he would come under the influence of the Dominican priest and syndicalist José Gafo Muñiz, who visited him there and guided his conversion to Catholicism. Upon his release, Pérez Solís would retreat from public life, before accepting a role in the recently-established state-owned petroleum company, *Compañía Arrendataria del Monopolio de Petróleos*

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<sup>116</sup> Original: He made no mention of his political activities, describing instead how, "en cumplimiento de altos deberes de conciencia y de ciudadanía," he had dedicated his life to the struggle against *caciquismo* and the pursuit of "una justicia íntegramente humana" in Spain. AHN, Primo, Bundle 20, File 6833, 22/10/1926.

<sup>117</sup> Original: Referring to Primo de Rivera's earlier pronouncements that the nation's courts had long been one of the main instruments of *caciquismo*, he declared, "[l]a dócil servidumbre de muchos tribunales proporcionaba así a los caciques el medio legal – legal, en apariencia – de alejar, del feudo caciquil donde les movían guerra, a sus enemigo más capaces o más resueltos," and alleged, rather improbably, that his own detention had been the work of his adversaries in this struggle.

(CAMPESA), in 1928. In March of the same year, the Catholic newspaper *El Debate* published a letter written by Pérez Solís to Gafo Muñiz, in which he renounced his former ideology, much like Pumarega and his fellow prisoners.<sup>118</sup> During the Republican period he would go on to become a prominent member of the *Falange Española* (Spanish Phalanx) and a confidant of the party's leader, Primo's son, José Antonio.

The Primo de Rivera regime drew inspiration from Italian Fascism in some areas – a taste for mass political rallies and the eventual installation of *Unión Patriótica* as the single party (something suggested to Primo by Mussolini), for example. Yet it departed from its Italian counterpart on how it perceived the threat posed by communism. Whereas Mussolini declared that the communist peril had largely been overcome upon his taking power in 1922, Primo's administration regarded this as a constant menace; this reflected the influence not of Fascism, but rather of continental conservatism more generally on its ideology.<sup>119</sup> As the Spanish regime cracked down on the revolutionary left, the discovery of plots, both alleged and real, against it became a feature of political discourse.<sup>120</sup> This was something of a self-fulfilling prophecy, however. By driving the CNT and communists underground, the dictatorship contributed to the emergence of the very atmosphere of secrecy in which these plots bubbled. Lest we forget, even Primo's seizure of power was planned under a veil of secrecy in the summer of 1923. Indeed, as Ucelay and Tavera have argued, this was one of the main legacies of the regime. "In so far as it closed off the possibility of free movement in political life," they write, "all activity seemed to be a conspiracy."<sup>121</sup> As we will see in the next section, the same broken logic came to be applied to a new category of political enemy, so-called 'bad Spaniards.'

### ***Malos españoles* and separatists**

The regime was not solely concerned with the damage control of arrests and imprisonment at home. The many acts of patriotic affirmation organised by the

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<sup>118</sup> The letter is reproduced in Fernando Soldevilla, *El año político (1928)* (Madrid, 1928), 105–6.

<sup>119</sup> García, "Historia de un mito político," 12.

<sup>120</sup> This is illustrated quite clearly in González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, chaps. 4 & 5.

<sup>121</sup> Ucelay-Da Cal and Tavera García, "Una revolución dentro de otra," 117.



government through the *Somatén*, *Unión Patriótica*, military and press were accompanied by public campaigns against ‘*malos españoles*’ [bad Spaniards], as well as the prominent foreigners who endorsed their views. As Quiroga notes, these were designed to demonstrate to the world that Spain stood by Primo de Rivera and that his government, therefore, was legitimate.<sup>122</sup> The first of these took place in January 1924, when the dictatorship organised a march past the Royal Palace to honour the King and make amends for those who had criticised the new political situation in the country. The event was attended by 5,000 mayors and some 1,500 boy scouts, in addition to masses of *somatenistas*. This was followed a week later by a three-day celebration of the regime in Barcelona. Many more would occur throughout the dictatorship.<sup>123</sup> The identification of these ‘bad Spaniards’ by the regime is highly significant, as this would be taken up again by the Nationalist side during the Civil War and used to insert the participants in the conflict into the parallel cultures of *victory* (acclaim) and *defeat* (silence) in the years following the formal end of hostilities.<sup>124</sup>

One of the first figures to be targeted by these campaigns was Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, the writer and republican politician, who, in late 1924 published a polemical, anti-monarchy letter under the title of *Una nación secuestrada* (A Nation Kidnapped).<sup>125</sup> The letter made three main accusations against the King, each of which the government regarded as defamatory: that Don Alfonso had favoured the German side in the First World War against the interests of Spain; that he had unfairly used his position to profit from business deals; and that he had worsened the situation in Morocco by interfering in decision-making without the support of the Ministers or High Command. The regime, which rigorously censored public discussion of the document, responded by charging Blasco Ibáñez with the crime of *lèse-majesté*, although the writer refused to attend his trial in Madrid. When the Spanish government pressed its French counterpart to try him in Paris for defaming a foreign

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<sup>122</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 172–73.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 156–57.

<sup>124</sup> Anderson and del Arco Blanco, “Construyendo la dictadura y castigando a sus enemigos,” 132. A thorough exploration of this theme can be read in Michael Richards, *A Time of Silence: Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco’s Spain, 1936–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>125</sup> Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, *Una nación secuestrada: (el terror militarista en España)* (Paris, 1924). The initial print run of the letter was 2 million copies. The government attempted to prevent its circulation in Spain by seizing copies of it at borders and ports. Soldevilla’s *Año político* tells us that Blasco Ibáñez used airplanes to drop copies over Spanish territory. Soldevilla, *El año político (1924)*, 424.

head of state, the complaint was admitted by a French court. This development caused the matter to be debated in the French parliament, where the Prime Minister, Édouard Herriot, lamented that he was unable to intervene. Several days later, on 20 January, 1925, the trial was halted at the request of Alfonso XIII himself. Herriot responded by thanking the monarch “for this personal demonstration, which he has just given, of his liberalism.”<sup>126</sup> In Spain, however, the town council of Valencia nevertheless changed the name of the *plaza* named after Blasco Ibáñez, while Martínez Anido organised a march of thousands of *somatenistas* in support of the King on 23 January, 1925.

Shortly after the publication of the letter in December 1924 the founder and editor of the newspaper *La Monarquía* (The Monarchy), Benigno Varela, directed an enraged letter to Primo de Rivera to demand that Blasco Ibáñez be stripped of his Spanish citizenship for disloyalty to the nation.<sup>127</sup> Though Varela, a former republican himself, had energetically criticised Blasco Ibáñez from the pages of his newspaper, he wrote to Primo now as a private citizen, whose outrage was based primarily on personal experience, rather than an editorial line (“Yo, humilde español” [I, a humble Spaniard], he called himself as he made his complaint).<sup>128</sup> The infamous letter, he declared, had been “pagado con dinero ruso y masón” (paid for with Russian and Freemason money), and, as such, offended the memory of two of his nephews, who had been killed on military campaign in Morocco. Varela’s belief that Blasco Ibáñez was in foreign pay echoed a popular view that had already been promoted by the regime and in the right-wing press, part of the red-peril myth engendered across Spain after the Revolution in Russia.<sup>129</sup> Varela wrote now for his nephews, “for the memory of my dead, for the memory of all the heroes that were mutilated by Abd-el-krim’s mob of murderers, for all the Spaniards whose noble feelings of patriotism are not yet lethargic,” and asked that the government issue a decree which read simply: “VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ, A TRAITOR TO HIS PATRIA, IS A SPANIARD NO LONGER.”<sup>130</sup> Martínez

<sup>126</sup> Soldevilla, *El año político (1924)*, 440.

<sup>127</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8089, 15/12/1924.

<sup>128</sup> On the exchange see Soldevilla, *El año político (1924)*, 427.

<sup>129</sup> García, “Historia de un mito político,” 10.

<sup>130</sup> Original: Varela wrote now for his nephews, “por la memoria de mis muertos, por la memoria de todos los héroes que mutilaron las turbas asesinas de Ab-el-krim, por todos los españoles que no tengan aletargados los sentimientos del más noble patriotismo,” and asked that the government issue a decree which read simply: “VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ TRAIOR A SU PATRIA, YA NO ES ESPAÑOL.”

Anido responded to Varela's letter the following month, but informed him that such a path of action would not be possible, as Blasco Ibáñez's crimes did not constitute grounds for the removal of citizenship, as established by the Constitution and *Código Civil* (Civil Code).<sup>131</sup>

The image of Blasco Ibáñez and the other bogeymen of the regime was often invoked by those seeking to direct government repression towards the target of their denunciations. A letter sent by Leonardo Fernández, a Spaniard residing in Buenos Aires, to denounce his countryman and fellow resident in the Argentinian capital, Mariano Calero, is exemplary in this regard. It is not clear how Fernández identified Calero as a figure of suspicion in the first instance, though it was not uncommon for Spaniards residing outside the national territory to offer their services to the Spanish government as spies, even if these offers were rarely accepted.<sup>132</sup> Even so, Fernández did everything in his power to incriminate Calero and reported that he had boarded a steam liner destined for Spain with the intention of effecting anti-monarchical propaganda upon arrival. "This is a case of a very bold person, of very wishful thinking," he declared, before adding that he believed him to have already made a trip to Spain in the previous 12 months to lay the ground for his plot.<sup>133</sup> Calero's unreliability in political terms was well established, according to Fernández. In Buenos Aires he had been the founder of a secret magazine which had published a cover portrait of none other than Miguel de Unamuno, the prominent intellectual enemy of the regime. If this were not enough to discredit Calero, Fernández also wrote that "[a]s

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<sup>131</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 65, File 8089, 07/01/1925. Soldevilla reports that Varela too fell foul of the regime for his role in the exchange with Blasco Ibáñez, and was detained by the regime in great secrecy on 21 May, 1925. The reason for this was not public knowledge at the time of publishing, however. Soldevilla, *El año político (1925)*, 200–201.

<sup>132</sup> See, for example, the case of Félix Ferrer Gracia, who asked to be named a member of the secret police and deployed in France so that he could eliminate "las malas raíces contra Primo de Rivera y su gobierno" (the rotten roots against Primo de Rivera and his government). The authorities rejected his request on the basis that appointments were by *oposición* only. AHN, Primo, Bundle 79, File 14647, 08/02/1929 & 30/04/1929. See also that of Toribio García, a deserter from Guardia Civil who lived in the Perpignan area of France. He claimed to have become a member of a left-wing organisation that was planning an assassination attempt against Primo de Rivera, though he was willing to work against them on the regime's behalf. His request was also rejected – in this case the authorities believed him to have suffered a mental breakdown. AHN, Primo, Bundle 76, File 13256, 24/01/1928.

<sup>133</sup> Original: "Se trata de un individuo muy audaz, de muchas ilusiones," he declared, before adding that he believed him to have already made a trip to Spain in the previous 12 months to lay the ground for his plot.

I understand it, this person is a fugitive or deserter.”<sup>134</sup> Most significantly, however, Fernández alleged that Calero was a high-profile republican and had been followed by the persistent rumour “that Blasco Ibañez [sic] was going to name him governor of Málaga as soon as monarchy was deposed,” something which he reportedly refused to deny.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, he believed Calero to be in close contact with Blasco Ibañez in Paris through a Spanish relative who travelled there frequently. Upon receiving Fernández’s letter the Ministry of the Interior ordered that Calero be placed under surveillance. Two months later, security officials in Málaga reported that he had not been seen to speak to anyone “de ideas avanzadas” (of advanced ideas) and that the operation had been abandoned as a result.<sup>136</sup> It seems unlikely that the regime would be unaware of the activities of a figure alleged to be a prominent supporter of Blasco Ibañez and other prominent opponents of the regime. Even though the letter-writer’s accusations were later revealed to be untrue, his message was nevertheless highly effective in bringing about a response by the repressive arm of the state. This was achieved through the triple accusation that Calero was a deserter, the printer of illicit material and a supporter of the republican movement, all of which classified him as a potential enemy of the *primorriverista* state.

The prying eyes of Spaniards abroad relayed important information back to the authorities in Madrid and the provincial capitals. In Barcelona, where the regime’s anti-separatist mania was most pronounced, the Civil Government received word from Santiago de Cuba that the president of the separatist “GROP NACIONALISTA RADICAL CATALUNYA” (letter-writer’s formatting) had embarked on a ship destined for Barcelona.<sup>137</sup> The man in question, Pedro Clavé (Pere Claver in Catalan form), was, he claimed, “the chief of the many Catalans who dedicate themselves in Cuba to defaming Spain” and was a contributor to newspapers with titles such as *Nació Catalana* (Catalan Nation) and *Patria* (Fatherland). The letter-writer, Miguel Canilo,

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<sup>134</sup> Original: If this were not enough to discredit Calero, Fernández also wrote that “[t]engo entendido que esta persona es prófugo o desertor.”

<sup>135</sup> Original: Most significantly, however, Fernández alleged that Calero was a high-profile republican and had been followed by the persistent rumour “de que Blasco Ibañez [sic] lo iba a nombrar gobernador de Málaga en cuanto destronaran la monarquía,” something which he reportedly refused to deny.

<sup>136</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 73, File 11647, 08/09/1926 & 10/11/1926.

<sup>137</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 67, File 9476, 16/07/1925. Clavé had, indeed, been one of the founders of the founders of the *Grop Nacionalista Radical* in La Habana, Cuba, alongside Salvador Carbonell i Puig, in 1908.

who signed his letter with the name EL ESPAÑOL (the Spaniard), was in no doubt of the propriety of his actions or of Clavé's guilt:

And, as a Spaniard, I have the right to inform you of this as soon as I know, so that he be detained for punishment as the law indicates when he steps on Spanish soil, because it is not fair that a Spaniard who has denied being Spanish so many times and has spoken so badly of them wants to go amongst the good ones while he is in Spain, only to come back here and continue just as he was before, defaming and affronting [Spain], flying the Catalan separatist flag and saying "I would rather be black than Spanish."<sup>138</sup>

The transatlantic denunciation of "malos españoles" by diverse groups continued until the end of the regime. Not even the clergy was excluded. In January 1929, for instance, Valentin Osorio, a Catholic priest residing in Arteaga (Santa Fe) in Argentina wrote to Primo on behalf of "all of the Spaniards on this side [of the ocean], who feel the love of country circulate through our veins" to denounce the activities of Antonio Dubois, a resident in Madrid, who, he claimed, regularly sent "articles that are shameful to Spain" to the Argentinian newspaper *La Capital* (The Capital).<sup>139</sup> "The authorities must call this man to order," he wrote ominously at the end of his message before invoking God's blessing on the matter.<sup>140</sup>

At home, the regime's efforts to inhibit the regionalist movement in Cataluña led it to infringe upon forms of cultural expression that were rooted in everyday life and had hitherto been largely unaffected by the Restoration governments' efforts to

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<sup>138</sup> Original: The man in question, Pedro Clavé (Pere Claver in Catalan form), was, he claimed, "el principal de los tantos catalanes que se dedican en Cuba a difamar a España" and was a contributor to newspapers with titles such as *Nació Catalana* and *Patria*. The letter-writer, Miguel Canilo, who signed his letter with the name EL ESPAÑOL (the Spaniard), was in no doubt of the propriety of his actions or of Clavé's guilt: "Y yo como Español tengo el derecho una vez que lo se, de avisarle Ud. para que en cuando pise tierra española, sea detenido para castigarlo como marque la ley; porque no es justo que un español que tantas veces a negado ser español y ha ablado tan mal de ellos, quiera pasar ahora entre los buenos mientras esté en España para luego volver aquí a seguir como hasta ahora estaba difamandola y ultrajandola, llevando la bandera separatista catalana y diciendo "Primero prefiero ser negro que Español."

<sup>139</sup> Original: In January 1929, for instance, Valentin Osorio, a Catholic priest residing in Arteaga (Santa Fe) in Argentina wrote to Primo on behalf of "todos los españoles de aquende, que sentimos circular por nuestras venas el amor patrio" to denounce the activities of Antonio Dubois, a resident in Madrid, who, he claimed, regularly sent "artículos deshonorosos para España" to the national newspaper *La Capital* (The Capital).

<sup>140</sup> Original: "Es necesario que las autoridades llamen al orden a dicho Señor," he wrote ominously at the end of his message before invoking God's blessing on the matter. AHN, Primo, Bundle 78, File 14164, 13/09/1929. In contrast, Osorio referred to Primo de Rivera and his supporters as "buenos españoles."

disrupt the associational and institutional movements in the region.<sup>141</sup> Amongst these measures were the demands that the names of streets and villages be *castilianised* and that the public performance of traditional dances, like *sardanas*, be limited.<sup>142</sup> The suppression of regional symbols by the government in September 1923 applied to the sporting world also, where Spain's popular football clubs were obliged to fly the *Rojigualda* national flag at their stadiums and print it on official documents.<sup>143</sup> In Cataluña, the ever-popular Futbol Club Barcelona had already developed a reputation as a Catalanist organisation due to its support of the Lliga Regionalista's (Regionalist League) pro-autonomy campaign in 1919 and its subsequent adoption of Catalan as its official language, together with its use of the *Senyera* at its stadium, *Les Corts*. The regionalist identity of the club had, at times, already brought its supporters into conflict with those of its local centralist-leaning rival, Real Club Deportivo Español. The repression of Catalan symbols was deeply unpopular amongst Barça's supporters and in June 1925, during an exhibition match (in support of the Orfeó Català choral society) against Club Deportivo Júpiter, the second-division champions, they booed the Marcha Real (Royal March) as it was played in Les Corts by a British Royal Navy band, before cheering the rendition of 'God Save the King' enthusiastically. The military authorities responded by closing the stadium for six months and ordering the club's Swiss founder and President, Hans Gamper, to resign and abandon the country.<sup>144</sup> As Quiroga notes, however, this had a largely counter-productive effect and contributed to the Catalanist image of the team, which experienced a large growth in its membership during the dictatorship.<sup>145</sup>

The event was notorious and in January 1928, some two years after Les Corts had been reopened, J. Casas Filiu, a resident of Barcelona, who described himself as "un buen español" (a good Spaniard), directed a lengthy letter to Primo de Rivera to complain about the separatist threat represented by the football club.<sup>146</sup> Casas was

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<sup>141</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 108.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 101. See also Ben-Ami, *Dictadura*, 133.

<sup>143</sup> Fn 17.

<sup>144</sup> A detailed description of these events can be found in Jaume Claret and Jaume Subirana, "1970, 1925, 2009: Whistling in the Stadium as a Form of Protest," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 21, no. 1 (2015): 75–88.

<sup>145</sup> Quiroga, *Football and National Identities in Spain*, 145.

<sup>146</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 76, File 13137, 17/01/1928.

quite sure that regionalism and the more radical separatism were one and the same thing and referred to his hope that Primo would continue his campaign against the “rabble which hides the infamous scourge of separatism under the cape of regionalism.” In Barcelona, he feared, the Federación Catalana de Fútbol (Catalan Football Federation) and FC Barcelona longed to see the name of Spain sullied and to “spew out the poison that they carry in their rotten body.”<sup>147</sup> Casas cautioned the dictator against dismissing the sport as a mere pastime and warned that both organisations were, in fact, attempting to infect “the majority of Barcelona’s youth, the future men of tomorrow, with their separatist ideas.”<sup>148</sup> The club, he alleged, continued to produce documents in Catalan and, due to its “*caciquismo*,” was forcing its membership to use the language by erecting signage and issuing tickets in it rather than in Castilian. This meant that those who came from elsewhere in Spain were unable to find their seats at the stadium, an example of “*villanía*” (villainy) of the highest order! Casas revealed himself to be an Español supporter, though it is clear that his comments on Barça went beyond mere sporting rivalry, albeit despite some familiar complaints about refereeing decisions. Referring to the whistling incident in 1925, Casas echoed the discourse of the regime by describing the *Culés* (Barcelona supporters) as “*malos españoles*” (bad Spaniards) for their resistance to the display of the national flag. Español and its support, in comparison, were quite the opposite, but were being squeezed out by what he viewed as an alliance between its rivals and a biased regional federation, a metaphor for the aims of separatism more generally. Symbolic proof of this came during their latest derby game, during which, he claimed, the crown-shaped crests on the season tickets of the Español club members were deliberately defaced by the turnstile operators at Les Corts. For this Casas asked Primo

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<sup>147</sup> Original: Casas was quite sure that regionalism and the more radical separatism were one and the same thing and referred to his hope that Primo would continue his campaign against the “*chusma que bajo la hipócrita capa del regionalismo se encubre la infame plaga del separatismo.*” In Barcelona, he feared, the Federación Catalana de Fútbol (Catalan Football Federation) and FC Barcelona longed to see the name of Spain sullied and to “*escupir el veneno que llevan dentro de su pútrido cuerpo.*”

<sup>148</sup> Original: Casas cautioned the dictator against dismissing the sport as a mere pastime and warned that both organisations were, in fact, attempting to infect “*con sus ideas separatistas a la mayor parte de la juventud de Barcelona, futuros hombres del mañana.*”

de Rivera to ensure that FC Barcelona used only Castilian in future and that the undesirable elements in the club administration be purged by the government.<sup>149</sup>

The regime's tendency to meddle in all aspects of Catalan civil society also caused it to inflict what González Calleja has, with a degree of ironic understatement, described as "affronts, big and small, on almost all of the [region's] professional groups, due to conflicts of interest, usurping their functions, rigid government control, arbitrariness and coercion."<sup>150</sup> Amongst the most prominent of these cases was its conflict with the *Colegio de Abogados de Barcelona* (Barcelona Bar Association), which had traditionally published its yearly *Guía Judicial* (Judicial Guide) in Catalan. In January 1924, the Military-Civil Governor of Barcelona, General Losada, ordered the *Colegio's Junta* (Committee) to publish the document in Castilian. After scheduled elections returned a markedly Catalanist *Junta*, however, the organisation voted to resist the measure at its general assembly on 10 May. The authorities responded by fining its members 500 pesetas each for their continued refusal to cooperate. This was then appealed to the provincial courts, which refused to hear the case. On 5 March 1926, the government moved to dissolve the *Junta* and exile its members to the provinces of Castellón, Huesca and Teruel.<sup>151</sup> A new, pro-regime *Junta*, led by Joaquín Dualde Gómez, was installed shortly after this. Two weeks later, on 17 March, the government gave new powers to the Civil Governors to punish those who "offend against the use of and respect for the Spanish language, the Spanish flag, anthem and national symbols," a measure that was provoked by the *Colegio's* intransigence.<sup>152</sup> This was followed on 8 May by a decree which forbade the organisation from convening extraordinary general assemblies, meant to guarantee its future docility.<sup>153</sup>

For some, this anti-Catalanist mood served as a convenient backdrop around which to base complaints about their own professional lives. Manuel Alcáraz Maínez, a lawyer and property registrar from Puigcerdá (Gerona), wrote to Primo in November 1926, the same year that the bar association dispute reached its climax, to allege a

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<sup>149</sup> The file contained a generic response, which was never sent to Casa, as he failed to provide a return address. It stated that the military authorities had placed the club under strict surveillance.

<sup>150</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 108.

<sup>151</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 06/03/1926.

<sup>152</sup> Fn 19.

<sup>153</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 109. The law in *Gaceta de Madrid*, 09/05/1926.



Catalanist plot against him by local notaries public and clerks.<sup>154</sup> Alcáraz, who described himself “as perhaps the most enthusiastic and loyal person in this town, as can be proved by the fact that I am the only subscriber to *LA NACION* from the first issue,” had undertaken to investigate hidden inheritances and tax fraud in the area, only to meet with the resistance of those officials, who “declared a war to the death on me.”<sup>155</sup> His enemies sought to have him transferred to another district by bringing proceedings against him, but had not succeeded. They responded to this by presenting new claims, this time backed up by false witnesses, who were of dubious morality. Their aim, Alcáraz claimed, was to have him removed automatically from his role for three minor infractions, although their crimes, he insisted, were far greater and amounted to a case of classic *caciquismo*. He accused them of having their clerks sign bogus inheritance documents and of charging to submit other cases to the appropriate registries. In short, he was convinced, it was his centralist convictions and commitment to the law that made him their adversary: “They are bothered by a public servant who does his duty and is a supporter of this regime, and a Spanish and Aragonese one to boot. None of them is a supporter of the government and none of them signed the plebiscite.”<sup>156</sup> Alcáraz appealed to Primo de Rivera for protection from his accusers, whom he labelled “bad Spaniards,” while asking him to appoint an official to formally, and definitively, investigate his conduct so that his innocence could be proved. Some two weeks later, the Civil Governor of Gerona wrote to General Martínez Anido to inform him that the letter-writer was well-known for his unreliability and that he believed his allegations to be an elaborate attempt to justify dubious claims of professional persecution. Despite this, Alcáraz’s language, which indulged the regime’s darkest fantasies by equating *caciquismo* to Catalan treachery, was effective in provoking a response from the government, whose *Vicepresidente* and Minister of the

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<sup>154</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 72, File 11585, 08/11/1926 & 17/11/1926.

<sup>155</sup> Original: Alcáraz, who described himself as “quizá la persona más adicta y fiel en esta villa como lo prueba el hecho de ser el único suscriptor a *LA NACION* desde el primer número,” had undertaken to investigate hidden inheritances and tax fraud upon assuming his role in the area, only to meet with the resistance of those officials, who “me declararon la guerra a muerte.”

<sup>156</sup> Original: In short, he was convinced, it was his centralist convictions and commitment to the law that made him their adversary: “les estorba un funcionario que cumple con su deber y además es adicto a este Gobierno y es español y por añadidura aragonés. Ninguno de ellos es adicto al Gobierno ni ninguno firmó el plebiscito.”

Interior, Martínez Anido, personally referred the matter to the Civil Governor, before the latter dismissed it.

In the town of Valls (Tarragona), Luis Tomás, the Vice-President of the local *Unión Patriótica* chapter, asked the government to review the appointment process which had seen his son-in-law, Perfecto Gascón, passed over for the job of doctor at a nearby spa. Complaining that his home had always been a “bulwark against separatism,” Tomás claimed that it had been made “the first victim of Catalanism.” He accompanied his letter with a recommendation (now lost) penned by the Vice-Admiral Marquess of Magaz, Primo’s nominal deputy during the *Directorio Militar* period and, later, Spanish ambassador to the Vatican, and wrote that if Primo knew of “the many things that I have done in favour of the Monarchy during my long political life” he would ensure that Gascón was given the role instead of the Catalanist who occupied it.<sup>157</sup> The combination of Magaz’s note and Tomás’ accusatory language piqued the interest of the authorities, as in the example above. However, the investigation that followed revealed that Mr. Gascón had, in fact, been overlooked for the rather more prosaic reason that the other candidate had more experience.<sup>158</sup>

While the government’s anti-separatist measures were designed to target Catalan, Basque and Galician regionalists in equal measure, it is clear from the denunciations that Catalan separatism featured more prominently in the popular imaginary. In what is the only case that I have encountered of a denunciation related to Basque separatism, Luis Dorao, President of the *Asociación de la Prensa de Vitoria* (Press Association of Vitoria) and a teacher by profession, accused the mayor of Vitoria (Álava) of being an “undercover separatist” that was motivated by a perverse desire to create “municipal schools, intended to satisfy separatist whims, with the taxpayers’

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<sup>157</sup> Original: Complaining that his home had always been a “baluarte contra el separatismo,” Tomás claimed that it had been made “la primera víctima del Catalanismo.” He accompanied his letter with a recommendation (now lost) penned by the Vice-Admiral Marquess of Magaz, Primo’s nominal deputy during the *Directorio Militar* period and, later, Spanish ambassador to the Vatican, and wrote that if Primo knew of “lo mucho que he hecho durante mi larga vida política a favor de la Monarquía” he would ensure that Gascón was given the role instead of the Catalanist who occupied it. AHN, Primo, Bundle 77, File 13649, 05/06/1928.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 26/06/1928.

money.”<sup>159</sup> At a time when the government was constructing 5,000 schools, the mayor, he insisted, was acting in the manner of a *cacique* and trying to appoint “primary-school teachers who are not national as he sees fit, thus fulfilling personal and political agreements and satisfying personal hatreds.”<sup>160</sup> Dorao described himself as a “humble citizen” and “mortal with many faults” but claimed, quite evocatively, that, unlike the mayor, he did not suffer from “the most serious one [defect] of being an enemy of Spain and let alone being so secretly.”<sup>161</sup> He was, he concluded, willing to go to any length to ensure that Primo de Rivera became aware of the truth of the matter. In this example, again, we see the ease with which people were able to associate the threat of separatism with the corruption previously known under *caciquismo*.

Throughout the dictatorship the regime promoted a sacred concept of the nation, which it deliberately married to Catholic dogma, albeit in a manner that assured the supremacy of the state. The Church responded enthusiastically in the first instance by supporting both the government campaign against *malos españoles* abroad in 1924 and the state’s so-called civilising mission in Morocco. All over Spain the ceremonies of state were infused with religious and secular elements in the service of a patriotic religion of state.<sup>162</sup> Yet in Cataluña the Church rapidly became a target of *primorriverista* repression, despite its public support for the *golpe de estado* in 1923. As early as 21 September, the government banned the Church’s Pornells de Joventut youth group, due to its regionalist outlook. This was followed by the imprisonment of dozens of priests, who were accused of separatism, and the closure of the Academia

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<sup>159</sup> Original: In what is the only case that I have encountered of a denunciation related to Basque separatism, Luis Dorao, President of the *Asociación de la Prensa de Vitoria* (Press Association of Vitoria) and a teacher by profession, accused the mayor of Vitoria (Álava) of being a “separatista encubierto” (undercover separatist) that was motivated by a perverse desire to create “Escuelas Municipales para satisfacer caprichos separatistas con el dinero del contribuyente.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 79, File 14514, 09/01/1929. On Dorao’s biography see Javier Díaz Noci, “Historia del periodismo vasco (1600-2010),” *Mediatika. Cuadernos de Medios de Comunicación*, no. 13 (2012): 173.

<sup>160</sup> Original: At a time when the government was constructing 5,000 schools, the mayor, he insisted, was acting in the manner of a *cacique* and trying to appoint “a su capricho maestros que no sean nacionales, cumpliendo de esta manera con los compromisos personales y políticos y dejando satisfechos los odios personales.”

<sup>161</sup> Original: Dorao described himself as an “humilde ciudadano” and “mortal [con] muchísimas faltas” but claimed, quite evocatively, that, unlike the mayor, he did not suffer from “la gravísima de ser enemigo de España y mucho menos de ser enemigo encubierto.”

<sup>162</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 42–44.

Católica de Sabadell (Catholic Academy of Sabadell).<sup>163</sup> In 1924, members of a number of congregations were fined by the regime, while the annual procession to Montserrat was also banned due to its regionalist symbolism. In June of the same year, the Captain General of Cataluña ordered the creation in Barcelona of a *Junta de Acción Ciudadana* (Committee of Civic Action), which was to monitor the activities of the province's religious congregations and ensure that Catalan was not used in churches. Primo, for his part, began to publicly warn the Church in the region against promoting ideas that would question the principles of authority and of Spanish patriotism upon his return from the state visit to Italy in December 1923, likely an attitude inspired by Mussolini's position towards the Italian Church.<sup>164</sup> Perhaps the most prominent figure in the cultural resistance to the dictatorship in Cataluña was the Bishop of Tarragona, Francesc Vidal i Barraquer, who, together with the Bishop of Barcelona, Josep Miralles, refused to oblige his subordinates to give sermons in Castilian. Primo sought to guarantee their compliance by engaging in intense negotiations with the Vatican through the Marquess of Magaz, who was named Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See in 1926. The Vatican eventually gave way to Magaz's demands in 1928, due, as González Calleja has argued, to its greater desire to "preserve its privileged relations with the most ultra-Catholic regime in Europe than to defend the cultural peculiarities of the Catholic Church."<sup>165</sup> Between November 1928 and February 1929 the Vatican discreetly issued five decrees regarding the use of regional languages and obliged the bishops to see that these were enforced.

In June 1929, a mere six months before Primo de Rivera's resignation, a doctor from the mining community of Fígols (Barcelona), Fidelio Merrara Descalzo, denounced the clergy there and in the larger town of Berga for failing to preach in Castilian.<sup>166</sup> The population of the area, he wrote, was only 40% Catalan, as many people from other regions had moved there to work. From a functionalist point of view, therefore, it made sense in his view that sermons be given in Castilian, which all

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<sup>163</sup> The repression of priests took place in other regions also. See, for example, the case of the Navarrese priest Serafin Sola, who was exiled to Valladolid shortly after the creation of the dictatorship. AHN, Primo, Bundle 78, 14056, 11/09/1928.

<sup>164</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 50–51.

<sup>165</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 97.

<sup>166</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 27, File 9502, 30/06/1929.

could understand. Merrara seemed to be of an anti-clerical disposition and showed a certain distrust of the Church's activities, particularly in regard to education, which it controlled. "As for how they teach in the school (served by priests and nuns)," he wrote, "I know no better than the rest if there is any Castillian but some of the nuns know neither a little, nor a lot, nor any of the Spanish language."<sup>167</sup> This surprised him, as of the four priests in the locality, three were salaried by a local landowner ("uno de los hombres más españolistas de Cataluña" [one of the most *españolista* men in Cataluña]) and the other by the state itself. Merrara, who openly described himself to Primo as a "liberal y enemigo por naturaleza de las dictaduras" (liberal and natural enemy of dictatorships) captured much of the ambivalence felt towards the regime by many in the population. He had, for example, become a member of the *Unión Patriótica*, although not out of any real support for the dictatorship: "I put up with it out of passivity and, why not say so, because I was influenced by the success of the government." When Primo ordered that members of the *Unión Patriótica* begin informing on one another, he abandoned the organisation, "because I do not wish to denounce anyone that the government judges nor believe that this is a right that we should exercise." Merrara understood the incongruity of his position now, though, and wrote that "it is a paradox that I am revealing this to you and telling you what these *señores* priests are doing in this province." However, he was convinced that what these priests were doing was not against "the government, or the regime, or the system, but rather, unknowingly, against Spain."<sup>168</sup> The letter-writer noted that he had used his personal letterhead so that the authorities could respond to his allegation but asked that he not be identified publicly by them, before concluding that he probably had no reason to hide if what he said was true. His own ambivalence towards secrecy, therefore, contrasted starkly to his description of the priests and nuns, whom he

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<sup>167</sup> Original: "De como enseñan en la escuela (servidas por sacerdotes y monjas)," he wrote, "no se más que los restos si hay castellano pero algunas monjas no saben ni poco ni mucho ni nada el idioma español."

<sup>168</sup> Original: He had, for example, become a member of the UP, although not out of any real support for the dictatorship: "transigí por pasividad y ¿por que no decirlo? influenciado por los éxitos del gobierno. When the government ordered that members of the *Unión Patriótica* begin informing on one another, he abandoned the organisation, "porque no quiero delatar a quien juzga al gobierno y entender que es un derecho que debemos ejercitar." Merrara understood the incongruity of his position now, though, and wrote that "es una paradoja que yo le manifiesto esto y le diga lo que hacen en esta los señores sacerdotes." However, he was convinced that what these priests were doing was not against "el gobierno, ni el regimen, ni el sistema, sino, inconscientemente, contra España."

accused of clandestinely teaching in Catalan. In this case it was clear that the nationalist principles which he shared with the government trumped any of the progressive political values that he may have held as a self-described liberal. For this reason, it seems like a suitable example upon which to end this chapter.

## Conclusion

The documents examined in this chapter – both from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice - do not, on the whole, contain details of the court proceedings which facilitated the prosecution of the detainees, when these did occur. Trials were by no means guaranteed due to the prevalence of arrests made *gubernativamente*; that is, by the provincial governments using the special powers conferred on them by the *estado de guerra*. These detentions effectively amounted to internment for some of the prisoners considered above. In such cases, the Ministry of Justice was unable to intervene, while the Ministry of the Interior, under General Martínez Anido, was generally disinclined to do so. In the case of jailed syndicalists and communists, the traditional presumption of innocence offered by the legal system was stripped from the detainees. Petitioners, for their part, tended not to formulate legal claims of a technical nature in their letters to the government. Instead, they made justice-focused appeals to the authorities, which emphasised their moral duty to act in the interests of fairness, often while invoking the pronouncements of Primo de Rivera on the matter. In this, the regime's rhetoric on the need to reform the administration of justice, even if this was a fiction under Minister Ponte Escartín, proved to be of symbolic importance. The need to avoid self-incrimination also meant that petitioners were forced to avoid providing all but the most necessary detail of their cases, as, despite their protestations to the contrary, it appears most were indeed associated with the revolutionary left. This left them with few discursive strategies and even fewer of the levers common to petitions (e.g., threats to become disorderly) to employ in their interactions with the government. The appeals made to Primo were not, in general, pleas to the goodness of his heart. Letter-writers attempted to appropriate the rhetoric of the dictator and hold him to his word on this. Justice, however, could be invoked for any number of purposes, many of which were motivated by personal interest, or, in the case of the imprisoned enemies of the regime, simply denied.

The chapter has also demonstrated the ambivalence associated with petitioning the government on questions related to public order and national integrity. The files upon which this thesis is based do not contain any instances of denunciation targeted at communist or anarchist revolutionaries. It is more probable that such material was passed directly to the security services, rather than the ministries responsible for them, hence their absence here. In the case of letters which relate to *malos españoles* and the threat of separatism, primarily of the Catalan variety, writers showed a willingness to engage in denunciation, though this was on a far smaller scale than the denunciation of *caciques* which accompanied the creation of the dictatorship. The form which this denunciation of separatists took bore a striking resemblance to the earlier variety. Denouncers sought to discredit their targets by layering the language of anti-*caciquismo* over the regime's discourse of national unity: they were corrupt, deserters, in the pay of the Masons and Russians, and so forth. The struggle to eliminate *caciquismo*, as we saw in Chapter One, was couched in nationalist sentiment, though the denunciation of *malos españoles* and separatists went beyond this by questioning their very Spanishness. *Caciques* were associated with a number of different traits – ill-gotten *richesse* in particular. Yet they remained a feature of the communities which they dominated and, as such, much of the information offered to the government about them and their activities was gleaned from this environment by neighbours who observed their conduct and its impact on their lives. In comparison, those denounced to the government for supposed crimes against the *Patria* were more peripheral to daily life. They carried out their schemes in secret, away from view in other countries and in separate cultural institutions and professional bodies, which the ordinary person, the *buen español*, was unable to penetrate. As in the case of the denunciations made about *caciques* – and, indeed, denunciations in all contexts – the accusations made against the supposed enemies of the state could be used to settle old scores, rather than for the civic-minded purpose suggested by the rhetoric of national unity. In this way, the manner in which ordinary Spaniards spoke of justice, public security and the separatist threat seems to confirm Agamben's notion of an emptying of the law. This was something which, in a wide variety of ways, anticipated the violence of the Civil War.

## Chapter Six | Women's petitions, 1923-1930

### Introduction

In 1926, a group of high-society women sent a manifesto to the leadership of *Unión Patriótica* to call for the participation of women in the *Plebiscito Nacional* (National Plebiscite) called by Primo de Rivera on the continuation of his regime. While of dubious legality, the Plebiscite was the first time women were granted the opportunity to vote on a question of national import like this and the aristocrats' manifesto was marked by a certain condescension towards their fellow *españolas*. In it they warned:

We must demonstrate that we know how to be true Spaniards, that we are guided by the longing for a great and strong *Patria* for our children. Let us not be carried away by little passions inspired by selfishness; let us put all of this aside before the high ideal of the *Patria*.<sup>1</sup>

This perceived need for women to publicly prove that they deserved to be counted as citizens became one of the central features in the struggle for female emancipation in the early twentieth century, though, in reality, the business of *being* a citizen would occur primarily in the realm of everyday life.

Despite Spain's neutrality in the First World War, the demands imposed on the population during the conflict served to blur the boundaries that had hitherto separated the sexes, both morally and spatially, leading to a reconfiguration of female citizenship. The arrival of the new archetypes of the flapper and the *garçonne*, for some, came to symbolise the emergence of modern, mass society in Spain. Worry over these developments led to a flood of discursive production from within all political traditions, leading to the simultaneous reformulation of definitions of femininity and, in no small degree, new possibilities for women.<sup>2</sup> The dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera has rightly been described as an "opportunity for women" in this regard, that is, despite the regime's conservative outlook and unrestrained authoritarianism.<sup>3</sup> Under

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<sup>1</sup> Leandro Álvarez Rey, *Bajo el fuero militar: la dictadura de Primo de Rivera en sus documentos, 1923-1930* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2006), 128.

<sup>2</sup> Nerea Aresti, "Masculinidad y nación en la España de los años 1920 y 1930," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 42, no. 2 (2012): 56.

<sup>3</sup> Paloma Díaz Fernández, "La dictadura de Primo de Rivera. Una oportunidad para la mujer," *Espacio Tiempo y Forma. Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*, no. 17 (2005): 175–90.



Primo the discourse of national regeneration, which had emerged in the aftermath of Spain's capitulation in the Spanish-American War of 1898, was modified to offer women a more active role in society, particularly in the struggle to eliminate *caciquismo*, a key ideological tenet of the regime, as we have already seen.<sup>4</sup> As well as granting women important changes in status, including, for the first time, the right to vote, the regime engaged in a process of mass nationalisation that sought to redefine the relationship of the female citizen to the state, as it did in the case of men. For women, however, the majority of the rights-concessions granted during the regime would be short-lived, either being superseded during the Republican era, that is after the brief interregnum of the Berenguer and Aznar administrations in 1930 and 1931, or retrograded entirely in the dictatorship that followed the Civil War. Because of this, it is particularly important to consider the ways in which women developed a political and national consciousness outside the channels of the state.

Following from Chapter One, the need for a feminist reading of citizenship during the Restoration is clear. As Ángel Duarte has argued, the once-prevailing notion of the Spanish citizenry's political demobilisation during the Restoration was due to an over-concentration by historians on electoral practices and official life.<sup>5</sup> In this light, any analysis which understands citizenship solely as a status that is conferred by the state risks doubly excluding women. Not only would this deny women equality to men in strictly legal terms, the notion that the population was demobilised would also seem refute the possibility that women did anything to lay claim to such a status.<sup>6</sup> This was clearly not the case, as their letters of petition attest.

This chapter describes the manner in which women narrated the changes brought about during the dictatorship in those petitions and considers how these developments contributed to their understandings of citizenship. Single-author letters by women have featured in lesser quantity than those written by men in the preceding chapters. The denunciation described in Chapters Three and Four was largely the

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<sup>4</sup> Inmaculada Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación: ser españolas en el siglo XX," in *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón and Xosé-Manoel Núñez Seixas (Barcelona: RBA, 2013), 181–82.

<sup>5</sup> Ángel Duarte, *La España de la Restauración (1875-1923)* (Barcelona: Hipotesis, 1997), 84.

<sup>6</sup> See Somers, "Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere."

preserve of men. Indeed, my research has only revealed a handful of cases in which women engaged in the practice as individuals, rather than as signatories in a collective denunciation. There are several reasons for this. While it is true the dictatorship took place at an important juncture in the history of female emancipation in Spain, Spanish society nevertheless remained highly patriarchal. Since men were typically the heads of household at this time, it bears out that they would lead interactions with the state below the collective level. Indeed, as we will see over the coming pages, it was frequently in the absence of male figures that women petitioned the government on an individual basis, although this is not to imply a diminished capacity for self-representation. Despite this, the rate of female illiteracy was also significantly higher than the male rate, meaning that women left fewer written traces of their interactions with the state. The chapter first explores the place of women in the discourse of national regeneration which the regime co-opted as its own in 1923. It then examines the major political developments that affected women during the dictatorship, before considering how women narrated their experiences according to the themes of public morality, mutual obligation and domesticity.

### **The place of women in the discourse of national regeneration**

In the discourse of nineteenth-century Spanish liberalism, national and gender identities were interconnected. As Archilés Cardona has remarked, a key element in the representation of the nation by liberal elites in Spain, as in other countries, at this time was the selective use of images of female figures as allegories, “a feminisation of the national body.”<sup>7</sup> Images of this type performed an important function in simplifying an abstract concept like the nation for a large section of the population. Yet female involvement in the liberal project was more than merely symbolic: women were also styled by liberal thinkers as the guardians of national honour, the educators of patriots and the promoters of good customs. Diverse as these roles were, however, most were essentially passive and limited to the realm of the home, meaning that the configuration of a national identity for women occurred primarily through channels

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<sup>7</sup> Ferran Archilés Cardona, “Piel moruna, piel imperial. Imperialismo, nación y género en la España de la Restauración (c. 1880-c. 1909),” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez. Nouvelle série* 42, no. 2 (2012): 45.

and spaces which were not directly linked to the state.<sup>8</sup> As Spain entered the twentieth century, the nationalisation of women continued to rely primarily on these informal structures, though the state education system would soon supersede them as it began to accommodate female students in greater numbers in an effort to counteract the national decline perceived in the aftermath of the Disaster of 1898.<sup>9</sup> Education policy, therefore, is key to understanding Spanish women's experience of citizenship in the early-twentieth century.

The incorporation of girls into state schools began in 1857 with the promulgation of the *Ley Moyano* (Moyano Law), the act which laid down the structure of the Spanish education system for the next 100 years.<sup>10</sup> Articles 100 and 114 of the law mandated the construction of schools for girls in villages of more than 500 inhabitants and the creation of *Escuelas Normales* (Normal Schools) to train women as primary school teachers for the first time. Despite these developments, the concept of women's education established in the law was predicated on the traditional division of labour between the sexes. As such, instruction for women was intended to prepare them for life in the home, rather than at work.<sup>11</sup> There was little continuity in the policies adopted by the governments which ruled for the remainder of the nineteenth century, but from 1885 onwards the *Fomento* (Public Works) ministerial brief, to which education was attached, was generally occupied by liberal figures that were sympathetic to the progressive pedagogical aims of the *Instituto de Libre Enseñanza* (Free Educational Institution), a leading civil-society voice on education policy at the time.<sup>12</sup>

The twin crises brought on by the *fin de siècle* and the colonial disaster in 1898 led to widespread acceptance that the education system was in need of radical reform. In 1900, a dedicated *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes* (Ministry of Public Education and Fine Arts) was established. Following this, in 1901, the Liberal education minister, the Count of Romanones, reformed the primary school system and merged

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<sup>8</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación," 169.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>10</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 10/09/1857.

<sup>11</sup> Geraldine M. Scanlon, "La mujer y la instrucción pública de la ley Moyano a la II República," *Historia de la Educación: Revista interuniversitaria*, no. 6 (1987): 194.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

the male and female curricula, while primary education was also made obligatory for boys and girls between the ages of six and 12.<sup>13</sup> In 1910, the Liberal ministry of José Canelejas removed the requirement that women obtain institutional permission before continuing their education beyond primary level.<sup>14</sup> Reform to secondary education was more limited, however.

The developments in the education of women in the decades preceding the dictatorship are perhaps best expressed by the changes in the female illiteracy rate: in 1860, shortly after the introduction of the *Ley Moyano*, this was 86%. By 1900 this had fallen to 69% and to 40% by 1930.<sup>15</sup> Between 1910 and 1930 the number of girls attending primary school also increased by 57%, while the number of female students in secondary education rose from 14.7% to 26.7%.<sup>16</sup> From 1910 onwards, there was also no legal obstacle for women to attend university. This led to a steady rise in the number of female students in Spain; during the academic year of 1931-1932 women represented 8.9% of the student population at universities.<sup>17</sup> By 1923, coeducation was also common in state-run secondary schools, but this was primarily for economic reasons. While these developments can be partially attributed to the rise of feminist currents in Spanish society at this time, they also reflect a growing interest by the Restoration political elite in the mass nationalisation of women.

The crisis of national identity experienced in Spain at the *fin de siècle* was also a crisis in manhood. The nature of the Spanish defeat by the United States of America in the war of 1898 led to a widespread concern about the 'weakness' and 'feminisation' of the nation amongst cultural and political elites. As Blasco Herranz has noted, "in the discourse of many regenerationists, the cause of said weakness was a decay in the characteristics of the authentic Spanish man; that is, in bravery, manliness, virility and strength."<sup>18</sup> As a result of this, the nation's hopes of regeneration came to be invested in women, who were thought to have remained untainted by the shame of

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<sup>13</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 30/10/1901.

<sup>14</sup> Scanlon, "La mujer y la instrucción pública," 201-4.

<sup>15</sup> The 1860 figure is drawn from *Ibid.*, 207. The 1900 and 1930 figures in Vilanova Ribas and Moreno Juliá, *Atlas de la evolución del analfabetismo en España de 1887 a 1981*, 166.

<sup>16</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación," 176.

<sup>17</sup> Scanlon, "La mujer y la instrucción pública," 206-7.

<sup>18</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación," 170.

capitulation. Within this schema, women, the family and the institution of marriage came to be regarded as microcosms of the nation and the barometers of its health. It was through these channels that the next generation of robust, virile Spaniards would be reared. Women and the historic discourse of domesticity, therefore, became a metaphor for the authentic Spain and its future.<sup>19</sup> The centrality of women to the regeneration of the nation found expression across the political landscape in Spain, with most parties essentially agreeing on the gendered division of roles between men and women.<sup>20</sup>

The process of mass nationalisation overseen by states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries went hand-in-hand with the consolidation of the modern notion of sexual difference. The education of women for this purpose was linked fundamentally to their function as mothers, what was perceived at this time as “the maximum horizon for women’s self-fulfillment (sic) and social role.”<sup>21</sup> This was encouraged by new conceptions of both masculinity and femininity, which were based on pre-discursive biological difference and, therefore, legitimised as scientific (often with the help of in-vogue eugenics theories). These discourses would find expression among liberal, and often progressive, groupings in particular.<sup>22</sup> This change corresponded to a wider process of modernisation in Spanish (and European) society, during which questions of gender identity, like other social issues, progressively passed from a religious legitimation to a medical and scientific footing. As such, the representatives of the liberal professions began to supplant the clergy as male authorities on social and cultural norms.<sup>23</sup>

This was particularly true in the case of motherhood, which was reconceptualised by a new class of lay moralists as the social duty of women. Dr. Gregorio Marañón, a republican philosopher and endocrinologist of world renown,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 173–75.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Nash, “Un/Contested Identities: Motherhood, Sex Reform and the Modernization of Gender Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Spain,” in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood. Female Identity in Modern Spain*, ed. Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Radcliff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 27.

<sup>22</sup> Aresti, “Masculinidad y nación,” 58.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Nash places this rivalry between doctors and the clergy in the broader struggle by physicians to gain political recognition of the sociocultural status of their profession. Nash, “Un/Contested Identities,” 33.

became the leading voice in the medical-gender discourse of motherhood around the time of the dictatorship.<sup>24</sup> Although Marañón promoted equality of social status between the sexes, his ideas were essentialist and continued to emphasise biological difference between the sexes. In his view, the simple possession of ovaries and a womb by women made motherhood a defining characteristic of femininity.<sup>25</sup> Thus, while the voices of Marañón and others challenged some aspects of the nineteenth-century discourses of domesticity for women, they reinforced others around a gendered division of family roles, which bound women to rearing. In his reflections on "true masculinity," Marañón wrote that men should dedicate themselves to productive work: "The most virile man is the one who works the most, the one who best overcomes other men, and not the *Don Juan* who ridicules poor women."<sup>26</sup> Those wishing to challenge the prevailing gender norms at this time, therefore, would have to contend both with these seemingly indisputable statements of 'scientific' fact and with the traditional teachings of the Church, which were equally inflexible.

The gradual secularisation of Spanish society in the early decades of the twentieth century meant that the Church came to rely heavily on the support of women. While the regenerationists were levelling a stern critique at the deficient models of masculinity that had dominated at the turn of the century, so too did certain elements of organised Catholic activism. For these militants, clergy and lay alike, the decline of Spanish manhood was linked to the effects of modernity – materialism, sensuality and a retreat from faith.<sup>27</sup> This transformation was couched in nationalist sentiment by the Spanish Church, which, in a 1926 pastoral, lamented the replacement of "ancient, profoundly Christian *españolismo*" by a corrupting "modernist foreignism [extranjerismo]."<sup>28</sup> In the eyes of the Church, women remained morally uncorrupted and largely un-mobilised for the defence of Catholic orthodoxy, especially in comparison to men, who appeared increasingly distanced from God and religion. For

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<sup>24</sup> His most important exposition on the subject is Gregorio Marañón, *Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual* (Madrid: Suc. de Rivadeneyra, 1926).

<sup>25</sup> Marañón argued against large families, especially among the poor, however. Frances Lannon, "Los cuerpos de las mujeres y el cuerpo político católico: autoridades e identidades en conflicto en España durante las décadas de 1920 y 1930," trans. María J. Seguí Cosme and Salvador Seguí Cosme, *Historia Social*, no. 35 (1999): 71.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Aresti, "Masculinidad y nación," 59–60.

<sup>27</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación," 178.

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Lannon, "Los cuerpos de las mujeres y el cuerpo político católico," 67.

this reason, the Catholic Church also invested the women of the nation with the moral force to bring about its regeneration.<sup>29</sup> This came with a number of caveats. On the matter of the perceived decline in moral standards and the “corruption of habits,” particularly in relation to dress, the Church presented women as temptresses that lead men to sin. In this way, it articulated a dual discourse which simultaneously proclaimed women to be responsible *and* irresponsible figures. As Lannon writes:

In the desired form of society that was being sketched out in this discourse, there would be a stable hierarchy of classes based on difference. Men and women, boys and girls, would largely live in separate gender spheres. Spanish culture and social conventions would be based on Catholic tradition and would resist foreign influences, and the doctrine of the Church would be the authorised spring of morality and the arbiter of what is natural.<sup>30</sup>

In this light, the position of the Church was not dissimilar to that of progressive liberals like Marañón, who also promoted a vision of gender that was based on inherent biological difference.<sup>31</sup> For the Church, therefore, the threat represented by medical science was not necessarily due to its content as such, but rather the challenge this posed to its previous monopoly on moral authority. The Church nevertheless experienced considerable success in promoting its own vision of femininity in the face of these modern, secularising tendencies. This can be detected in the boom in women joining religious communities in Spain (and committing themselves to celibacy) at this time. Between 1860 and roughly 1900, the number of *religiosas* doubled, from 20,000 to 40,000; by 1930 this would increase to 60,000, a figure that was three times greater than the number of men in religious life at the same time. For some women, the celibate and communitarian life represented a valid alternative to the domestic responsibilities brought by marriage and family.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Blasco Herranz, “Mujeres y nación,” 178.

<sup>30</sup> Lannon, “Los cuerpos de las mujeres y el cuerpo político católico,” 69–70. The Church’s position on marriage and the family would be re-stated in the encyclical *Casti connubii*, issued Pius XI in December 1930, a little less than a year after the end of the regime in Spain. The document strongly alluded to the 1880 encyclical on marriage, *Arcanum divinae sapientiae*, although it denounced that the strictures contained therein had not been followed sufficiently in the subsequent 50 years. Amongst Pius’ innovations was the suggestion that to pursue equality between husband and wife was to devalue the dignity of motherhood.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

While religious lifestyle was clearly not suitable for the majority of women in Spain, the Church's influence was still considerable. More women than men attended mass regularly, even in the rural south, where attendance figures were lowest, while strong philanthropic and associational cultures began to emerge around women's groups like *Acción Católica de la Mujer* (Women's Catholic Action [ACM]), founded in 1919.<sup>33</sup> This supposed 'feminisation of religion,' was the subject of sustained criticism by anti-clerical, and typically republican, groups in Spain, who thought women to be vulnerable to priestly domination. This discourse was characterised in large degree by condescension and paternalism, and led to the emergence of negative feminine stereotypes, which were reproduced frequently in the progressive press. As Salamón Chéliz writes, "this makes clear that, alongside a conservative anti-feminism rooted in Catholicism, there was a leftist anti-feminism that was fundamentally anti-clerical in origin."<sup>34</sup>

Despite the emergence of new discourses of femininity at the turn of the century, national regeneration did not mean full political citizenship for women. Separate gender roles were emphasised anew, while the 'reproductive body' of women came to be tied inseparably to the very idea of regeneration itself. In the view of Mary Nash, this had grave implications for female citizenship: "The definition of the social role of women through maternalism redefined motherhood as a common good, thus transcending women's individual rights as persons."<sup>35</sup> This led to the emergence of the concept of 'social motherhood' – the dedication of maternal resources and services to society. This, Nash argues, established the basis for a differential gender citizenship in which men

had the right to exercise political citizenship based on direct involvement in the public world of politics. In contrast, a social citizenship founded on human reproduction but also on social motherhood was the grounds for women's political integration. This powerful political framework legitimated women's access to some spaces within the public arena, while guaranteeing that others were out of bounds.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>34</sup> María Pilar Salomón Chéliz, "Beatas sojuzgadas por el clero: la imagen de las mujeres en el discurso anticlerical en la España del primer tercio del siglo XX," *Feminismo/s*, no. 2 (2003): 42.

<sup>35</sup> Nash, "Un/Contested Identities," 35.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 35–36.



How, then, would the Primo de Rivera regime incorporate women into its efforts to redefine Spanish citizenship in nationalist terms?

**The dictatorship: “A movement of men?”**

In Primo de Rivera’s manifesto to the Spanish people, published on 13 September, 1923, he wrote, “This is a movement of men: anyone who does not feel this masculinity in full should wait in the corner and not disrupt the great days ahead that we are readying for the *Patria*.”<sup>37</sup> The regime which he established would, according to its own rhetoric, attempt to transcend the class division that had come to the fore in Spanish society during the First World War by mobilising the population. Yet there was some ambiguity over what sections of this should be mobilised. The language the regime used in its public discourse sought to create a sense of class harmony, but this was primarily an effort at promoting the military’s very particular vision of national unity: “The Primo regime conflated the language of the nation with the language of the right. ... [T]he elision between ‘right-wing’ and ‘patriotic’ marked the contrast with the ‘debased’ liberal language of party politics.”<sup>38</sup> The emphasis the regime placed on the ‘eternal values’ of the nation seemed to reinforce the traditional gender roles which largely limited women to the household.

The key civic institutions of the regime, *Unión Patriótica* and the *Somatén*, “functioned according to an explicitly masculine understanding of politics.”<sup>39</sup> Primo made a telling statement of his own views on this in a speech which he delivered at an *Unión Patriótica* banquet in Toledo in June 1924. After speaking about the need to build a *Patria* in Spain, he asked his exclusively male audience for their assistance:

When you go home, take the jubilation that we will bring by saving the *Patria* with you. Take it to your wives and your children, because this work of saving Spain needs the help of ladies due to its spiritual character...<sup>40</sup>

Home and family, as we can see, were Primo’s primary reference points in this appeal to mobilise the female half of the Spanish citizenry. In this instance, though, he did not

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<sup>37</sup> Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 20.

<sup>38</sup> Vincent, “Spain,” 191.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>40</sup> Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 250.

even speak to women directly; the process was to be mediated by their husbands, who were to act as his messengers beyond the external walls of the home. This seemed to implicitly accept that this was a private domain, which the state would not infringe upon. José María Pemán, the *Unión Patriótica* ideologue, confirmed this when he declared that “the threshold of the house is one of the boundaries of the State.”<sup>41</sup> Despite the dominance of discourses like this which associated females with domesticity, women also came to occupy a more prominent place in the public sphere during the dictatorship, both as a result of the regime’s policies and through the activities of civil-society groups, particularly those of a Catholic nature.

When Primo’s government granted limited voting rights to women in the *Estatuto Municipal* (Municipal Statute) of 1924 this provoked a polemic over the extent to which women should participate in politics. The reasons presented against their participation, as González Castillejo notes, were “their limited level of culture, as well as the need to entrust the fate of the country to science, rather than female instinct.” On the other hand, “there were more than a few [individuals] who took advantage of the concessions made by the Dictatorship in order to praise it and categorise it as beneficial for women, who... should [have been] grateful to the almighty Father and benefactor, [Don] Miguel Primo de Rivera.”<sup>42</sup> Women, however, were considered by some in the regime to be untainted by the legacy of *caciquismo*. Accordingly, the *Estatuto Municipal* granted Spanish women the right to vote for the first time, albeit in limited circumstances. But if this concession had the potential to redefine female citizenship in Spain, much of this went unrealised due to the suspension of formal elections for the duration of the dictatorship.

When Primo called the National Plebiscite in September 1926, he summarised the vision which had guided these earlier reforms: “The main cell of the nation,” he declared in the biological language typical of the regenerationists, “must be the municipality and that of the municipality must be the family, with its ancient virtues

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<sup>41</sup> Pemán y Pemartín, *El hecho y la idea de la Unión Patriótica*, 222.

<sup>42</sup> María José González Castillejo, “Entre lo público y lo privado: mujeres y ciudadanía durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera,” in *Mujeres y dictaduras en Europa y América: el largo camino*, ed. Concepción Campos Luque and María José González Castillejo (Málaga: Servicio de Publicaciones e Intercambio Científico de la Universidad de Málaga, 1996), 70.

and its modern civic ideas.”<sup>43</sup> If the municipality was to be the lowest level of the state administration, then the family, rather than the individual, was to be the basic unit in these communities. The dependable structures and traditional authority of the household, therefore, served as the bridge between citizen and state. Indeed, as Primo later made clear, the home was where the “patriotic and civic solidarity” of children would be brought to life by the “bonds of love.”<sup>44</sup>

When the preamble to the 1924 *Estatuto* announced that, “The original source of municipal sovereignty lies in the people; suffrage, therefore, must be its means of expression,” it did so without implying the *popular* sovereignty to which the Restoration elites had been so hostile.<sup>45</sup> ‘Municipal sovereignty’ did not lead back to a parliament in Madrid. Despite this, this re-defined vision of sovereignty meant that women could be included in suffrage for the first time, as outlined in Article 51 of the document.<sup>46</sup> This was followed on 12 April, 1924 by a decree which purged the pre-dictatorship electoral register and ordered the creation of a replacement that would incorporate the newly eligible women voters.<sup>47</sup> The ACM would play a prominent role in publicising these concessions through meetings and lectures, and in registering women to vote. This was of symbolic importance, as it helped to legitimise the idea of female suffrage, particularly to women themselves, for, as Blasco Herranz has written, Catholic women

were in principle not necessarily favourable to the new mode of feminine social-political participation. ... The calls for more people to register for the electoral roll conceptualised the vote as a form of ‘sacred duty’ and responsibility to church and nation. The ascription of a natural tendency to women to set out to save the former

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<sup>43</sup> Primo de Rivera, *La Dictadura a través de sus notas oficiosas*, 99.

<sup>44</sup> Primo de Rivera, *Disertación ciudadana*, 15.

<sup>45</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 09/03/1924.

<sup>46</sup> It stated: “Spaniards over the age of 23 will be electors in each Municipality, while those who are over the age of 25 and feature on the Electoral Register formed by the relevant State body will be eligible for election. Female heads of household will have the same right to vote and their names will be used to create an appendix to the Electoral Register in each Municipality. Those female Spaniards who are over the age of 23 and are not subject to parental authority, marital authority or guardianship, and are residents within the municipal limits, with an open home, will be listed in this appendix.” *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 12/04/1924. In the preamble, Primo explained the need for this: “The Government is eager to return to Spain the mechanism that corresponds to it as a constitutional State, and, as an initial measure, this demands a refined purge of the electoral register, given that the current one looks antiquated, suffers from numerous defects and, additionally, does not include the women or the males to whom the Municipal Statute has extended the right to vote.”

provided a foundation for this, and the ACM appealed to Spanish national identity to encourage women to act as citizens.<sup>48</sup>

By the end of the registration drive, some 6,783,629 voters had been entered onto the list, of whom 1,729,793 were female.<sup>49</sup>

Article 84 of the *Estatuto Municipal* also allowed female heads of household to become councillors and mayors in local government for the first time.<sup>50</sup> The municipality, the regime declared, was a natural extension to the home environment in which the female citizen operated. According to this vision, her role in managing the domestic sphere would leave her well-equipped to engage in the political activity which directly affected it.<sup>51</sup> In total, there were at least seven female mayors and 18 female councillors across Spain during the dictatorship, all of whom were staunchly conservative and unwavering in their support of the regime.<sup>52</sup> While this was clearly a new departure for Spanish society, it was hardly a radical one as these developments rested on a principle of axiomatic sexual difference, rather than any notions of egalitarianism between the sexes.

On 21 March, 1925, the regime promulgated the *Estatuto Provincial* (Provincial Statute), the legislation that reformed the nation's *Diputaciones Provinciales* (Provincial Governments) and crystallised Primo's configuration of the state's administrative structure.<sup>53</sup> The law identified the province as the organisational substratum that lay immediately below the state itself, thus eliminating the space for

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<sup>48</sup> Inmaculada Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship and Female Catholic Militancy in 1920s Spain," trans. Jeremy Roe, *Gender & History* 19, no. 3 (2007): 455.

<sup>49</sup> Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 180.

<sup>50</sup> On this the *Estatuto* stated: "In order to be a Councillor it is necessary: 1. To be listed on the Electoral Register of the corresponding Municipality. 2. To know how to read and write, except in Municipalities of less than 1,000 inhabitants. 3. To be twenty-five years old or more. Female heads of household are eligible as long as they do not lose this status and as long as they meet the requirements set out in the previous paragraph." *Gaceta de Madrid*, 09/03/1924.

<sup>51</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación," 182.

<sup>52</sup> Some of these councillors served in the municipal administrations of large population centres and provincial capitals. These included Bilbao, Toledo, San Sebastián, Barcelona, Vigo and Segovia. The mayors, in comparison, held office only in rural areas. These women were Concepción Pérez Iglesias (Portas, Pontevedra), Petra Montoro Romero (Sorihuela de Guadalimar, Jaén), Candelas Herrero del Coral (Castromocho, Palencia), Benita Mendiola (Bolaños de Campos, Valladolid), Amparo Mata (Sotobañado, Palencia), Matilde Pérez Mollá (Cautretondeta, Alicante) and Dolors Codina i Arnau (Talladell, Lérida). Guadalupe Gómez-Ferrer Morant, "Las primeras alcaldesas de España: El acceso de las mujeres a los poderes públicos," *La aljaba*, no. 19 (2015): 64–65. Earlier figures had placed the number of female mayors at six. See Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 184.

<sup>53</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21/03/1925.

regional associations like the *Mancomunidad* (Commonwealth) that had grouped the four Catalan provinces together since 1914.<sup>54</sup> Building upon the *Estatuto Municipal* of the previous year, the new *Estatuto Provincial* defined the province as an extension of the municipalities contained within its territory. On this basis, women were also granted the right to vote in elections for *Diputaciones* and to serve in their administrations. In reality, no such elections were ever held and, in contrast to the case of the municipal administration, women's involvement in the new *Diputaciones* was essentially nil.<sup>55</sup>

There has been some debate about the reasons behind the regime's decision to extend limited voting rights to women in the twin *Estatutos*. Pilar Folguera has suggested that it was not due to the exertion of any strong political pressure by women, but rather due to the regime's desire to be seen by the world to govern a modern, European nation.<sup>56</sup> Eduardo Aunós, Primo's Minister for Labour during the *Directorio Civil* (Civil Directorate), expressed a similar view when he asserted that the *Estatuto Municipal* had been designed by Calvo Sotelo with "limitless enthusiasm" but that "[it is] clear that... it errs precisely due to its excessive faith in democratic principles, which, in practice, had to be infringed [by the regime] anyway." Aunós, though, believed that Calvo Sotelo was motivated by a desire not "to stand out as an exception among the men of that time" while drafting the law.<sup>57</sup> Gómez-Ferrer, however, rejects this notion and highlights the efforts by Spanish women to claim rights that had previously been the exclusive domain of men. Primo and his administration, she holds, were aware of these demands and wished to appease this

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<sup>54</sup> Thus there were three main levels in the *primorriverista* state administration: the state, the province and the municipality. González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 136.

<sup>55</sup> Díaz Fernández cites the case of Catalina Alastuey, who was an acting member of one of the professional panels of the *Consejo Administrativo de Navarra* (Administrative Council of Navarra), as the only case of a woman to serve on a *Diputación* during the dictatorship. Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 184.

<sup>56</sup> Pilar Folguera, "Revolución y Restauración: La emergencia de los primeros ideales emancipadores (1868-1931)," in *Historia de las mujeres en España*, ed. Pilar Folguera et al. (Madrid: Síntesis, 1997), 484.

<sup>57</sup> Eduardo Aunós, *Calvo Sotelo y la política de su tiempo* (Madrid: Ediciones Españolas, S.A., 1941), 55. Indeed, Calvo Sotelo himself cited his ambition for Spain to be the first 'Latin' nation to grant the vote to women as a crucial factor in his deliberations on the *Estatuto*. He also wished to avoid the anomaly by which women could be elected to public roles without themselves being able to vote. See Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 181.

sizeable section of the population by granting voting rights.<sup>58</sup> González Castillejo, in contrast, argues that the regime aimed to gain the support of women in order to ensure its continuation in the medium to long term. This can be observed in its efforts to involve them in *Unión Patriótica's* mass demonstrations and to mobilise female voters in the National Plebiscite campaign of 1926.<sup>59</sup> This position is echoed by Díaz Fernández, who also points to the involvement of women in the renewal of the *Ayuntamientos* after the promulgation of the *Estatuto Municipal* as evidence of an increasing desire by women to participate in formal politics.<sup>60</sup>

Granting limited voting rights to women may well have been a question of public image for the regime as Aunós suggested. However, the views of Gómez-Ferrer, González Castillejo and Díaz Fernández are much more complete than those of the one-time Minister. Not only did the regime continue the state-led nationalisation of the female population begun in the Restoration era, it came to rely heavily on female support. While women were never actually afforded the opportunity to vote in municipal or provincial elections by the regime, their backing was decisive in the National Plebiscite of 1926, which not only allowed women to participate, but also lowered the female voting age to 18. In a *nota oficiosa* issued on 8 September, 1926, Primo explained this decision:

Given the intense participation by women in all of the activities of modern social life, we deem that granting [them] rights equal to those of the other participants in the plebiscite would not be fulfilling a precept of courtesy... but rather a duty of justice...<sup>61</sup>

This crucial development meant that women amounted to a majority (52%) on the electoral register created especially for the Plebiscite. Of this, some 40% participated to give their assent to the regime, a figure close to that of men. In total, the regime received some 6,697,164 signatures of endorsement.<sup>62</sup> In an exercise of public acclamation, these 3.5 million female voices were critical in creating the appearance of

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<sup>58</sup> Gómez-Ferrer Morant, "Las primeras alcaldesas de España," 57–58.

<sup>59</sup> González Castillejo, "Entre lo público y lo privado," 72.

<sup>60</sup> Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 186.

<sup>61</sup> Fernando Soldevilla, *El año político (1926)* (Madrid, 1926), 360–61.

<sup>62</sup> Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 186. This figure appears to be somewhat dubious. According to Soldevilla, the office charged with the organisation of the plebiscite calculated the number of voters as 5,917,102. Primo de Rivera, though, announced the significantly higher figure of 6,697,164 upon meeting with his cabinet and, seemingly, overruling the earlier calculation. Soldevilla, *El año político (1926)*, 360.

broad support for the new *Directorio Civil*, which Primo had created less than a year before. Ultimately, this would also provide the general with additional leverage in his interactions with the King, Alfonso XIII, who was becoming less inclined to endorse Primo's measures due to the indefinite continuation of the dictatorship.<sup>63</sup>

In September 1927, after a year of resistance, Don Alfonso relented to Primo's demands that an *Asamblea Nacional* (National Assembly) be convened to begin the process of drafting a new constitution. In keeping with the precedent set earlier in the dictatorship, women were granted the right to become members (*asambleístas*) with relatively few restrictions.<sup>64</sup> When the *Asamblea* met for the first time on 11 October, 1927, 13 of its 429 members were women, all of whom had been selected due to prominence in their respective professions. Three more women would later join them as *asambleístas*.<sup>65</sup> There is some evidence from the petitions contained in the Ministry of the Interior files that women attempted to influence the composition of the *Asamblea Nacional* so that it better represented their interests, as one series of letters, sent in 1929 by the subscribers of a women's magazine, *Mujeres Españolas* (Spanish Women), narrates.<sup>66</sup> They wished to have the Viscountess of San Enrique, editor of the publication and one of the signatories of the 1926 women's manifesto, named an *asambleísta*. Ultimately, the Viscountess and her supporters would be unsuccessful in achieving her nomination to the *Asamblea*, as the regime would collapse shortly after the letter-writing campaign took place.

While the new *Asamblea* was given very limited capacity for legislative initiative, Primo charged its *Sección Primera* (First Chamber) with preparing the *Anteproyecto de Constitución* (Draft Constitution) that would eventually replace the Constitution of 1876. Its recommendations would never be implemented; indeed, their

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<sup>63</sup> Gómez-Navarro, "El rey ante la dictadura," 353–61.

<sup>64</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 14/09/1927. This was confirmed in the *Reglamento Provisional de la Asamblea Nacional*, issued on 20 September, 1927. See *Gaceta de Madrid*, 21/09/1927.

<sup>65</sup> The first 13 women were Natividad Domínguez Atalaya, Micaela Díaz y Rabaneda, María de Maeztu y Whitney, María de Echarri y Martínez, Concepción Loring y Heredia, Carmen Cuesta del Muro, Isidra Quesada y Gutiérrez de los Ríos, Blanca de los Ríos Nostench, María López de Sagrado y Andrés, Teresa Luzzatti Quiñones de López de Rúa, Josefina Olóriz Arcelus, María López Monleón and Trinidad Von Scholtz-Hermensdorff. They were joined by María de los Dolores Perales y González Bravo, María Doménech de Cañellas and Clara Frías Cañizares. Two more women who were selected as *asambleístas* declined to take their seats. Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 187.

<sup>66</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 80, File 15018.

failure to attract support contributed to the collapse of the regime in 1930. Although the state that the new Constitution proposed to create would be highly authoritarian, the document envisaged granting the vote to Spaniards of both sexes, as long as they had reached the required age and enjoyed the full plenitude of their civil rights. As symbolically important as this was, we should not overestimate its potential impact. Only half of the single-chamber parliament which it proposed to create would be elected and it could easily be overridden by the King, the government or a new, powerful *Consejo del Reino* (Royal Council).<sup>67</sup>

There was never much consensus amongst the feminist women's groups that collaborated with the regime.<sup>68</sup> As Franco Rubio has noted, though, the granting of voting rights to women in 1924 was well-received by many in Spanish society and even attracted positive comments from left, including in *El Socialista*, the PSOE mouthpiece, whose columnist, Manuel Cordero, wrote of the implausibility of the situation which had emerged: "The female vote represents a revolutionary act and it seems rather odd that it was a reactionary spirit that carried out this reform in Spain."<sup>69</sup> The extension of the suffrage to women, however, was conceived of as part of a wider project by the regime to achieve the nationalisation of the female population. While much of this process was carried out through the state, the government expanded upon this base by co-opting a number of women's organisation, particularly those identified with the Social Catholic movement, whose programme and model of womanhood it appropriated.

The history of Catholic women's associations in Spain has undergone a re-evaluation in recent years. Lannon, for example, once wrote that during the 1920s, "Catholic thinking did not contribute to the positive model of the active and autonomous citizen, who participated in public matters by her own individual right."<sup>70</sup> Blasco Herranz, however, has warned against accepting the idea "that Catholicism, in all of its forms, was one of the major fetters restricting women's emancipation, and

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<sup>67</sup> Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera*, 298–302.

<sup>68</sup> Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 185.

<sup>69</sup> Cited in Gloria A. Franco Rubio, "Los orígenes del sufragismo en España," *Espacio Tiempo y Forma. Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*, no. 16 (2004): 481.

<sup>70</sup> Lannon, "Los cuerpos de las mujeres y el cuerpo político católico," 77.



therefore a central factor in Spanish feminism's historical weakness and late arrival."<sup>71</sup> Spanish women, she argues, were deeply involved in the social-Catholic movement from its inception in 1891, when Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.<sup>72</sup>

In Spain, the ACM emerged as the largest women's organisation of this kind and was adopted by the regime as the principal bearer of a *primorriverista* "State feminism," beginning during the plebiscite campaign in 1926.<sup>73</sup> For the ACM this was a useful alliance, which helped to boost its membership from 50,000 in 1921 to 118,000 in 1929.<sup>74</sup> While groups like this may have promoted a conservative worldview that was centred on religion and ostensibly hostile to many of the demands of liberal feminism, their popularity nevertheless "[indicates] Catholic women activists' acceptance, whether conscious or not, of modern conceptions relating to social intervention, the nation, political efficacy and women."<sup>75</sup> This shows clearly that Catholicism could contribute to the growth of national and political consciousness amongst women, even if this was framed primarily in relation to piety, the home and differentiated gender roles, and, indeed, denied by the Church itself. Primo's decision to base *Unión Patriótica* around a nucleus of social-Catholic organisations meant that Catholic women could also be nationalised through *Unión Patriótica's* female wing, which, from 1925 onward, organised cultural, propagandistic and educational activities for women.<sup>76</sup> That said, the influence of *Unión Patriótica* on the female population was much more limited than that of the ACM.<sup>77</sup>

From the point of view of women, the reforms carried out during the dictatorship were mixed. While there was undoubtedly progress towards a greater degree of equality in some areas, this was wrapped in a conservative understanding of society and often limited by design. Their much vaunted voting rights, in particular,

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<sup>71</sup> Blasco Herranz ascribes the popular acceptance of this view to "the application, or rather a certain interpretation, of an Anglo-American model of the development of feminism, and in particular of activists' approaches and strategies." "Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship," 441.

<sup>72</sup> A key element of the process of re-Christianisation which this proposed was the creation of lay associations that would promote the interests of the Church. It was during the reign of Benedict XV (1914-1921) that the Church hierarchy began to directly encourage women to involve themselves in such groups, thus leading to their spread across the nations of Europe.

<sup>73</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación," 183.

<sup>74</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Citizenship," 448.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>76</sup> Blasco Herranz, "Mujeres y nación," 182-83.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

proved to be something of a false dawn given that they were only exercised in a dubious plebiscite which ultimately granted Primo free reign to attempt to demolish the Restoration Constitution. Citizenship, however, cannot be evaluated solely as a status or a collection of rights. Beyond the realm of formal elections, women were encouraged to participate in the particular form of politics favoured by the regime. For a small minority, this came through active involvement in municipal administrations; for many more, this was achieved through membership of women's organisations. Both of these channels, though, were public and are more accessible to researchers now. This does not mean that those women who did not engage in such activity should remain invisible to us. In fact, the practice of petition, which has been the central theme of this thesis, shows us how many of these women made claims to the state, thereby engaging in the *practice* of citizenship in their everyday lives.

### **Women and the campaign for public morality**

From the mid-nineteenth century, the Spanish conservative right had been obsessed with maintaining the 'social order.' This was something that would continue during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, Primo and his supporters justified his seizure of power by the need to stop the spread of 'social disorder' in Spain, something which they repeatedly declared had been enabled by the ineffectiveness and, even, connivance of the civilian authorities.<sup>79</sup> Much of this was focused on preventing a revolution that might affect the socio-economic structure of society, hence the repression of the radical left. There was also a moral dimension to this, however. As part of its programme of national regeneration, the regime proposed to reform the habits (*costumbres*) and behaviour of the Spanish people so that they would become better citizens. This would partly be achieved through *Unión Patriótica* and the *Somatén*, which were created to encourage civic engagement and spiritedness. Morality, though, was considered vulnerable and the regime set out to protect this by enforcing prohibitions on gambling, blasphemy, pornography and other public vices. This brought it into close contact with the position of the Catholic Church, but the

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<sup>78</sup> On this topic see González Calleja, "La defensa armada del «orden social» durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1923-1930)," 61–77.

<sup>79</sup> Freire, "La reforma de la vida cotidiana," 226–27.

government would differ with the ecclesiastic authorities over the limits to state intervention on such matters.

The increased emphasis that the regime placed on the active, but rather limited, participation of women in politics went hand in hand with this campaign for public morality. Primo made his vision clear when he stated that it was the regime's intention "to surround women with a respect that grows day by day, while granting her the participation she merits in social life."<sup>80</sup> This vision corresponds to what González Castillejo has called the *mujer-musa* (woman-muse), one of four prototypical female figures which the regime invoked to replicate and legitimise its discourse.<sup>81</sup> The muse was embodied in the form of the *madrina de guerra* (war godmother), women who engaged in written correspondence with Spanish soldiers while they served away from their homes.<sup>82</sup> *Madrinas* would also play a leading role in the *primorriverista* liturgy of state by serving in the many dedications the regime made to the flag and the *Madre Patria*, which was also represented in female terms. While the symbolism behind such ceremonies was clearly rooted in tradition, patriotic rites like this also served to promote a more active role for women in the public sphere. This muse was depicted as the embodiment of goodness, purity and beauty, all of which required special protection by the state. As such, Article 819 of the new Penal Code introduced by the regime in September 1928 made the catcalling of women in public (*el piropo*) a criminal offence that was punishable by between five and 20 days in prison or a fine of 50 to 500 pesetas.<sup>83</sup>

In July 1929, public opinion was shocked by an incident which occurred on Madrid's Gran Vía as a newly-wed couple, Joaquín Díaz de Meneses, a doctor from León, and his wife, María Otero, from Santa Fe, Colombia, strolled on the boulevard. The couple stopped at a tobacco shop and, as Otero waited for Díaz at the door, she

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<sup>80</sup> Primo de Rivera, *El pensamiento*, 76.

<sup>81</sup> The others were the *mujer-madre* (mother), *mujer-patria* (homeland) and *mujer-ciudadana* (citizen), all of which are discussed in their own right in this chapter, though not named as such. González Castillejo, "Entre lo público y lo privado."

<sup>82</sup> The culture of letter-writing that surrounded the *madrinas de guerra* has been discussed in detail in Sierra Blas, "¡Cuidado con la pluma! Los manuales epistolares en el siglo XX."

<sup>83</sup> The measure was included in the subsection entitled "On offences against public morality." In a typical declaration of the regime's chauvinism, the law made clear that the prohibition included even catcalls made "with the aim of being polite." *Gaceta de Madrid*, 13/09/1928.

was approached by travelling street musician from Granada, José González de la Cámara, who attempted to engage her in conversation and then groped her when this was refused. When told of the outrage by Otero, Díaz struck González, whereupon the latter produced a blade and attacked him, stabbing Otero in the abdomen and arm in the process. Emergency surgery saved her life, but, as the *ABC* newspaper reported, she ultimately lost the use of her hand due to her injuries. González, the attacker, was detained shortly afterwards. Despite the incident attracting considerable public attention, the newspaper added that the population had largely limited itself to criticising the attacks in private conversations, rather than openly demanding reprisal.<sup>84</sup>

The day after the assault, Pedro Serrano Macías, a Colombian tourist, broke with the silent shock described by *ABC* and wrote to Primo to express the sarcastic view that “if those of us from abroad must continue to be outraged in this way, you must grant us permission to carry revolvers as defence against knaves [like González].”<sup>85</sup> This was a matter of great importance to the regime as many tourists, like Serrano and the couple, were expected to attend the Ibero-American and International Expositions, which were being held simultaneously in Sevilla and Barcelona that summer. Two days later, Primo wrote to the Supreme Court Prosecutors’ Office to demand a strong response from the judiciary, not merely due to the severity of the crime, but because Spain’s good name was in jeopardy.<sup>86</sup> Primo also published a *nota oficiosa* the following day, on 17 July, in which he made reference to criticisms levelled at the regime for failing to address the matter publicly sooner. “It is pleasant for the government to realise that when, on those rare occasions it does fall silent in the face of some event that moves public life, opinion yearns for its voice,” he sneered at the suggestion. “Civic action,” he went on,

must contribute, in an effective and virile way, to curbing brazenness of this nature, which today makes us blush [with shame]. It is also to be hoped that the authorities and judges, who should have an understanding sense of social reality, do not question

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<sup>84</sup> Reports on the incident and on Otero’s recovery can be read in *ABC*, 14/07/1929 & 25/07/1929.

<sup>85</sup> Original: The day after the assault, Pedro Serrano Macías, a Colombian tourist, broke with the silent shock described by *ABC* and wrote to Primo to express the sarcastic view that “si hemos de seguir siendo ultrajados los extranjeros en esa forma, debe concedérsenos permiso para portar revólver como medio de defensa ante los pícaros.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 27, File 9531, 14/07/1929.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 16/07/1929.

or bother those that take the noble task of defending the weak sex from the thuggish coarseness of street *conquistadores* [Lotharios] upon themselves too much.<sup>87</sup>

Later that day, a prosecutor wrote to Primo to inform him that a number of witnesses had heeded his call for civic action and given testimony at González's preliminary hearing.<sup>88</sup> In September 1929, the head of Primo's bureau sent the general a memorandum to inform him that González had been sentenced to 13 years in prison for the attack.<sup>89</sup>

That Primo called for a "virile" response to the attack was significant. The attacker, González, was a wandering guitar-player from Granada and seemed to conform to the social stereotype of the untrustworthy, passion-led *andaluz*. In his letter to the dictator, the tourist, Serrano, had called him "canalla flamenco" (flamenco swine) and warned against allowing wandering musicians like him from playing on the street due to their taste for wine.<sup>90</sup> The conservative journalist César González Ruano echoed this when he wrote pompously that the event had, without doubt, resulted "from the so-called *flamenquismo*, under whose name insolence and ruffianism are brought together and mixed to excess."<sup>91</sup> During the trial, the authorities echoed these criticisms and characterised González as a troublemaker, who was given over to vices like drink and revelry, the prototype of the sexist and violent *Don Juan* character denounced by religious and secular moralists since the turn of the century. Ultimately, as Cases Sola writes, the regime attempted to use the Gran Vía incident to highlight the need bring about a return to gentlemanliness and gallantry, the traditional values of Spanish manhood, which had been corrupted by modernity.<sup>92</sup>

Despite the regime's efforts to create a cult of maternity and the repeated denunciation of the Catholic Church, the use of contraception was also becoming more widespread in Spain, as it was elsewhere in Europe. This is reflected in declining birth-rates nationally.<sup>93</sup> The regime made its attitude to abortion clear in December 1928,

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<sup>87</sup> ABC, 17/07/1929.

<sup>88</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 27, File 9531, 17/07/1929.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 19/09/1929.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 14/07/1929.

<sup>91</sup> Cited in Adriana Cases Sola, "El género de la violencia. Mujeres y violencias en España (1923-1936)" (Universidad de Alicante, 2016), 120.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Lannon, "Los cuerpos de las mujeres y el cuerpo político católico," 75.

when the bishops of the province of Sevilla wrote to Primo to demand government action to prevent the spread of freemasonry and “neo-Malthusian practices.”<sup>94</sup> A number of days later Primo’s bureau instructed Martínez Anido to take the repressive measures required for this, while also highlighting the need to prevent the circulation of a text entitled *Medios para evitar el embarazo* (Methods for Avoiding Pregnancy) in Spain. “It is simply a libel,” the note made clear,

written in a rude and tasteless manner, in which ideas that are dissolvent to the State, morality, family and society are shamelessly and impertinently spread... prompting an aversion to children and the hatred of the working class towards power and towards the well-off.<sup>95</sup>

The Penal Code of 1928 established a range of sanctions against those who sought or carried out abortions, or induce miscarriage in themselves or in someone else.<sup>96</sup> It also made clear that these sanctions would apply to any medical professionals involved in such activities, including midwives. Regardless of these measures, women, particularly from the working class, continued to access the services of “unscrupulous” doctors and midwives, whom they learned about by word of mouth or surreptitious advertisements in newspapers.<sup>97</sup>

In 1923, the Convention for the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in Obscene Publications was agreed at the League of Nations in Geneva.<sup>98</sup> Spain was a signatory of the treaty, which banned the production, possession and trade of such material. In 1926, the year it came into effect, Amadora Díaz Santín fell foul of these laws when she was arrested and fined 100 pesetas for distributing what the authorities called “pornographic books.”<sup>99</sup> She claimed to be sick and unable to pay the sum, and asked Primo for clemency in a petition that was almost illegible. Two months later, Primo’s secretary informed him that the fine had been reduced by the *Dirección*

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<sup>94</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 76, File 12975, 09/12/1928.

<sup>95</sup> Original: “Es simplemente un libelo,” the note made clear, “escrito de modo chabacano y soez, donde con todo impudor y descaro se propagan ideas disolventes contra el Estado, contra la moral, contra la familia y contra la sociedad... excitando la aversión a los hijos y el odio de los proletarios hacia el poder y hacia las clases acomodadas. Ibid., undated. These views were echoed by José Pemartín in Pemartín, *Valores históricos*, 385–86.

<sup>96</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 13/09/1928; Título VII, Capítulo V.

<sup>97</sup> María José González Castillejo, “Sobre identidad y rebeldía: la construcción del género y la clase en la dictadura de Primo de Rivera,” *Baética: Estudios de arte, geografía e historia*, no. 31 (2009): 516.

<sup>98</sup> Freire, “La reforma de la vida cotidiana,” 232.

<sup>99</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 70, File 10696, 24/05/1926.

*General de Seguridad* (Directorate General of Security [DGS]) on the condition that she commit not to sell such material again, even though Díaz had another outstanding for the same offence.<sup>100</sup>

At the beginning of 1927, Martínez Anido reported that the kiosks and travelling vendors that sold immoral publications and images had been eliminated from Spain altogether. This was a considerable exaggeration.<sup>101</sup> In November of the same year, the *Liga Contra la Pública Inmoralidad* (League against Public Immorality) held a major conference, which Martínez Anido attended, aimed at promoting Catholic mores and increasing cooperation between civil-society groups like it and the regime. In a royal decree issued in response to these demands later in the month, however, the government admitted that it had never collected any statistics on the repression of immorality.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, censorship officials found it extremely difficult to ensure that publications were “of good taste,” especially when they involved text. Even purely factual newspaper reports could infringe on these rules.<sup>103</sup>

The beginning of the twentieth century saw some effort to regulate prostitution and impose hygienic standards on the activity in Spain. A number of Catholic lay organisations like the *Real Patronato para la Represión de la Trata de Blancas* (Royal Board of Trustees for the Suppression of White Slavery), made up of high-society ladies, sought to resist these measures.<sup>104</sup> In 1918 there was a major drive by the government to prevent the spread of ‘venereal disease’ by assigning medical officers to work in special clinics dedicated to treating them. The regime’s attitude towards prostitution was ambiguous and seemed to oscillate between tolerance and condemnation, particularly at a provincial level where there was significant variance in policy. Despite this, the health measures outlined in 1918 were only actually implemented 1924; that is, during the dictatorship.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 30/07/1926.

<sup>101</sup> Freire, “La reforma de la vida cotidiana,” 233–34.

<sup>102</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 15/11/1927.

<sup>103</sup> Hernández Vidal (alias Celedonia de la Iglesia), *La censura*, 161–62.

<sup>104</sup> Mary Nash, *Mujer, familia y trabajo en España (1875-1936)* (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial, 1983), 39.

<sup>105</sup> Jean-Louis Guereña, *La prostitución en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003), 241–43.

Consuelo Rivero Varillas, a woman residing in Madrid, sent Primo a short manifesto of ideas on the regulation of prostitution in Spain in August 1924.<sup>106</sup> “As prostitution is inevitable,” she told the dictator, “the lesser of two evils, as the saying goes, a social evil that is tolerated in all countries, the safeguard of maidens and unmarried women, a precept of physiology,” it was her view that its clandestine practice should be banned and special buildings designated for the activity; furthermore, the women involved should not be allowed to live in those places, only to work. She also asked that police searches of these premises not be carried out on a whimsical basis, but rather when the circumstances really called for it and “with more good judgement and less disdain, and without addressing anyone as *tú* or harassing them, as if they do live by that industry... they deserve some respect, some due to their age and all of them due to their sex.”<sup>107</sup> Rivero’s views were progressive and defiant, and wished to see prostitution classified as a public-health matter, rather than a policing one. They were also subversive in the way they invoked womanhood as an object of esteem. Working in such an environment, she suggested, did not strip women of their femininity or any of the other characteristics which the regime publicly revered. Primo, for his part, seems to have deliberated on Rivero’s ideas. However, a note sent to him by the *DGS* suggested that she had been arrested for clandestine prostitution in Madrid and was the owner of a tolerated brothel there also. For this reason, it suggested that her views be discounted, as her comments appeared to anticipate.<sup>108</sup>

As we saw in Chapter Three, in their investigations into the backgrounds of letter-writers, the authorities would look for signs of their reliability. The *DGS* played an important role in this process and sometimes used prostitution to discredit

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<sup>106</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 63, File 6996, 20/08/1924.

<sup>107</sup> Original: “Como la prostitución es inevitable,” she told the dictator, “un mal menor, como va dicho, un mal social tolerado en todos los países, salvaguardia de doncellas e hijas de familia, un precepto de fisiología,” it was her view that its clandestine practice should be banned and special buildings be designated for the activity; furthermore, the women involved should not be allowed to live in those places, only to work. She also asked that police searches of these premises not be carried out on a whimsical basis, but rather when the circumstances really called for this and “ejercida con más prudencia y menos jactancia, y sin tutear ni vejar a personas, que si bien viven de esa industria... merecen algún respeto, algunas por su edad y todas por su sexo.”

<sup>108</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 63, File 6996, 12/10/1924. A report of her arrest in *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Madrid*, 26/07/1924.



petitioners. In one case, a man wrote to Primo shortly after the coup d'état to complain about his dismissal as Deputy Mayor in one of Madrid's districts. His private life, the DGS reported, was salacious, however: "He is very well-known in Madrid, especially for having been the lover of the well-known easy woman nicknamed 'Pepita the Malagueña,' and he has always lived under the protection of and in relation to this type of people."<sup>109</sup> It added that his mother was the proprietor of a house of ill-repute called "La Mezquita" (The Mosque), where he was once the person in charge. On the basis of these associations, his claim was also disregarded.

The police too could be accused of impropriety in matters relating to prostitution. The chief of the *Guardia Municipal* (Municipal Police) in Vitoria (Álava) was denounced to Primo for abusing his authority and exploiting his "fuerza caciquil" (force as a *cacique*).<sup>110</sup> The letter alleged that the chief had instructed the policemen under him to be on the watch for what the petitioner described euphemistically as "in-love couples" and for any "dishonest and immoral acts" that they might be engaged in in the city. The policemen were under strict orders to arrest the women and bring them to the police station, where the chief would interview them alone and threaten them "in order to obtain the pleasure of those poor women, who, out of fear of authority... surrender themselves against their will." The letter-writer provided a list of the women who could corroborate this and added that the aim of the denunciation was to "clean out the rotten roots of our politics," a clear invocation of Primo's biological language of regeneration.<sup>111</sup> The regime received several more complaints about the same police chief and took the matter very seriously by appointing a public

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<sup>109</sup> Original: His private life, the DGS reported, was salacious, however: "Es conocidísimo en Madrid, especialmente por haber sido amante de la conocida mujer fácil apodada 'Pepita la Malagueña', y siempre ha vivido al amparo y en relación con este género de gentes." AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 343, 08/10/1923.

<sup>110</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 396, 20/10/1923.

<sup>111</sup> Original: The letter alleged that the chief had instructed the policemen under him to be on the watch for "parejas enamoradas" and for any "actos deshonestos e inmorales" that they might be engaged in in the city. The policemen were under strict orders to arrest the women and bring them to the police station, where the chief would interview them alone and threaten them "para conseguir el placer de aquellas pobres mujeres que por el temor de autoridad... se entregan contra la voluntad de ellas." The letter-writer provided a list of the women who could corroborate this and added that the aim of the denunciation was to "sanear las raíces podridas que en nuestra política había," a clear invocation of Primo's biological language of regeneration.

prosecutor to investigate the allegations. These were determined to be true.<sup>112</sup> While it was not clear at his time of writing what the final outcome of the case was, the prosecutor noted that the details had been passed on to the mayor's office in Vitoria, presumably so the chief could be disciplined.

In Badajoz, also, the police superintendent was accused of taking advantage of "señoritas huérfanas" (orphan girls), whose names he threatened to inscribe on the register of prostitutes at the provincial-government offices in order to coerce them into performing sex acts on him. All of this, the letter-writer added, from someone who was "obliged to maintain order and personal safety" and yet was not "worthy of carrying out the role which he holds."<sup>113</sup> It is not clear what the relationship of the letter-writers, both of whom were male, was to the women they wrote about. It is nevertheless striking that the language of anti-*caciquismo* could, in the first case in particular, be used to make allegations of sexual violence against women who worked at the fringe of the law. In the second case, the language was less explicit in linking the superintendent's conduct to *caciquismo*, but the letter was sent at a time when the government was inviting denunciations from the population about the crimes of the democratic regime. The letter followed this logic and certainly fell into that genre. In that climate, therefore, the letters were certainly an attempt to attach the interests – and safety – of women who engaged in prostitution to the project of renewal launched by the new government. Thus, these cases neatly demonstrate the ambiguity behind the idea of national regeneration and the way it could be contested and appropriated by all manner of citizen and petitioner.

As this was occurring, the Catholic Church was attempting to achieve a symbolic re-ordering of reality by denying that social change was inevitable, or, indeed, positive. Traditionally, the ecclesiastic authorities rejected the existence of a private sphere that was separate from the public. As such, the Church gave a particular prominence to what others would have regarded as private conduct in its discourse on morality. The emergence of the modern woman as embodied by the flapper or

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<sup>112</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 396, 14/11/1923.

<sup>113</sup> Original: All of this, the letter-writer added, from someone who was "obligado a mantener el orden y la seguridad personal" and yet was not "digno de desempeñar el cargo que ocupa." AHN, Primo, Bundle 52, File 401, 21/10/1923.

*garçonne*, pictures of whom could be seen in advertisements and newspaper sections dedicated to women, was deeply challenging to the Church, even if the influence of this alternative image of womanhood was mainly limited to the cities. Its opposition to change, privacy and sensuality of all forms meant that the female body came to be regarded as a site in which some of the most important consequences of the demoralisation of society were being produced.<sup>114</sup> The regime's efforts to reform the behaviour and habits of the population, in contrast, were not applied directly to the bodies of women, abortion and, to a certain degree, prostitution aside. This is because it did not count women themselves amongst the characteristic dangers of modernity. The government may have prohibited the sale of pornography in public, for example, but this did not mean that men should not have access to the female body in certain circumstances, or vice versa.<sup>115</sup> Accordingly, it showed little interest in regulating matters it regarded as private like dress or sexual behaviour, thus diverging sharply from the Church's position. This, as Freire argues, was one of the lingering traces of Primo's liberalism.<sup>116</sup> Yet this split between public and private in Primo's thinking was by no means absolute. The regime showed no hesitation in denying the citizenry the basic rights expressed in the Constitution, nor those of the individuals which it imprisoned arbitrarily. At times, this required physically seizing the prisoners from their homes, as we will see later in the chapter.

### **Patriotism, paternalism and mutual obligation**

Throughout this thesis, we have seen how petitioners struggled to reconcile the charismatic construction of Primo de Rivera's authority to the increasingly rational-bureaucratic modes of interaction which the modern state demanded from its citizenry. Such interactions were meant to replace the mediation of middlemen like *caciques*, who dispensed favours and state resources to their clients on a largely *ad hoc* basis. The petitions sent to the authorities on social issues by the population in particular sat at an intersection between traditional views of norms and obligations and more formalised statements of rights. At a time when the regime was promoting

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<sup>114</sup> Freire, "La reforma de la vida cotidiana," 244.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 234–35.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

the public morality of its citizens, its own interactions with the population were becoming 'demoralised,' that is, removed of what E.P. Thompson calls "intrusive moral imperatives."<sup>117</sup> Petitioners, nevertheless, could seek to invoke a 'moral economy,' a set of implicit assumptions about fairness and traditional rights and customs that, as petitioners often argued, were backed up by some kind of popular consensus, when making claims to the state. This 'moral economy,' Thompson writes, "cannot be described as 'political' in an advanced sense, nevertheless it cannot be described as unpolitical either, since it supposed definite, and passionately held, notions of common weal – notions which, indeed, found some support in the paternalist tradition of the authorities..."<sup>118</sup> Petitions seem to diverge from Thompson's model as some level of political aspiration is always attached to them, even if they are made with a deliberately enlarged sense of morality.<sup>119</sup> Yet when a 'moral economy' was invoked, petitioners by no means did so as a matter of course; it often served as a last resort, when other avenues had been exhausted. In this way, petitions like this could be used to solidify claims to rights when the channels meant to guarantee them had failed.

Some of these letters invoked a sense of mutual obligation, as in the case of Carmen Gueron from Barcelona, who declared that she was the daughter of an army officer when she asked for clemency for her imprisoned son.<sup>120</sup> Others echoed the paternalistic representations of Primo in propaganda and official discourse. In 1925, one woman from Zorroza (Bilbao), whose husband had been "imprisoned and doubtlessly forgotten" in another province, asked the general for his release so that her family would not be exposed to further economic hardship. "[The below-signed]," she wrote, "expects nothing less, given the urgency of the case, from [Your Excellency], who has been and always is so gallant towards ladies."<sup>121</sup> As she closed her letter, she also congratulated Primo on the "pacification" of Morocco. Patriotic sentiments like this were common, but in some cases they verged on the ostentatious. As Emilia Calvo

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<sup>117</sup> Edward Palmer Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (1971): 89–90.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>119</sup> Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan*, 22.

<sup>120</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 28, File 9700, 02/07/1929.

<sup>121</sup> Original: One woman from Zorroza (Bilbao), whose husband "se halla recluido y olvidado sin duda" in the province of Zamora, asked Primo for his release so that her family would not be exposed to further economic hardship. "No espera menos, y con la urgencia del caso," she wrote, "de VE que tan galante ha sido y es siempre con las señoras." AHN, Primo, Bundle 17, File 5419, 12/06/1925.

from Galera (Granada) asserted extravagantly in 1928, when she appealed against her husband's dismissal as Secretary for the town, Primo had, in her view, been

gifted with extraordinary talent, saintly patriotism, the best of sentiments and the exceptional requirements [needed] to bear the great and commendable task that he is carrying out so that the sovereignty of justice may triumph, majestically and brightly, in all cases, with exemplary enthusiasm, while completely banishing the abuse and corruption of before, which turned Spain, in all its glory, into a small and poor nation.<sup>122</sup>

For this reason, she added, she liked to think of the dictator as her "segundo Dios" (second God). More conventional references to religion also served to create a shared moral universe between petitioner and official.<sup>123</sup> Expressions of support were certainly an important part of the rhetoric of supplication. For women, however, it was particularly imperative to strike a balance between the demands which they made of the authorities and signs of their loyalty to the regime. As Blasco Herranz has remarked, at a time when nationalism, and, indeed, imperialism, guided definitions of citizenship towards the individual's capacity to show and proclaim their dedication to the nation, patriotism became a key means for women to make claims for equal status to men and to be considered citizens.<sup>124</sup>

Primo's reputation for paternalistic benevolence preceded him. Even though most petitioners addressed their claims directly to Primo, they typically did so through the post or by registering complaints at government offices. On rare occasion, however, individuals also sought him out in person in order to request more immediate resolutions their cases. One such petition was made by Manuela Hernández Lorenzo, whose husband had been imprisoned in Ocaña (Toledo) for what she called a

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<sup>122</sup> Original: As Emilia Calvo from Galera (Granada) wrote extravagantly in 1928, when she appealed against her husband's dismissal as Secretary for the town, Primo had, in her view, been "dotado de talento extraordinario, de santo patriotismo, buenísimos sentimientos y de condiciones excepcionales para soportar con ejemplar entusiasmo la magna y meritoria labor que realiza a fin de que en todos los casos triunfe majestuosa y diáfana la soberanía de la justicia, desterrando totalmente los abusos y corruptelas de antes, que convertían la grandeza de España en una nación pequeña y pobre." AHN, Primo, Bundle 78, File 14227, 25/10/1928.

<sup>123</sup> Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan*, 59–61.

<sup>124</sup> Inmaculada Blasco Herranz, "La acción católica de la mujer y la participación política femenina durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera," in *Usos Públicos de la Historia. VI Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea*, ed. Carlos Forcadell Álvarez and Juan José Carreras Ares (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2002), 141.

“crimen pasional” (crime of passion).<sup>125</sup> When she heard that Primo would be coming to the city of Toro (Zamora), she went to meet him as he left a local church and threw herself at his feet to ask for clemency for her husband. “Your Excellency was so compassionate and magnanimous with [this] unfortunate young woman...” she wrote subsequently in her letter, “that in a moment you wiped away my sobbing with the smiling promise that on the saint day of His Majesty the King my husband would be fully pardoned.”<sup>126</sup> In her letter, she asked him to keep his word on this. Five months later, Primo’s bureau wrote to tell her that her husband’s sentence had been reduced by half and that this should lead to his prompt release.<sup>127</sup> This strategy was repeated by a woman from the province of Cádiz when she approached Primo at a public gathering to hand him some documentation about her claim for alimony. Fearing that Primo would not be able to act on her request given “the mass of people who constantly overwhelm you with their petitions and desires,” she wrote him a second letter to provide further detail on her case, all so that he could give it the deliberation it deserved.<sup>128</sup>

It is difficult to identify the precise criteria which dictated whether or not a request was granted due to the fragmented nature of the documentation that remains in the archives. Nonetheless, it is clear that a lack of familiarity with written expression was not necessarily a hindrance to petitioners if they could convince the authorities by other means. When petitioners were unable to make formal rights-based claims through reference to legislation or precedent, they could invoke a ‘moral economy.’ Carmen González, a forty-year-old widow from Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz), Primo de Rivera’s place of birth, sought to establish a moral connection with the dictator on the basis of this shared experience. “I am a daughter of Jerez (sic), baptised, confirmed and married in the Parish of San Miguel,” she made clear, “and as I am told that [Your Excellency] is so good that he never forgets his folk I write to [Your Excellency] to see if

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<sup>125</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 20, File 6744, 11/01/1927.

<sup>126</sup> Original: “Fue tan compasivo y magnánimo VE con [esta] desventurada joven...” she wrote, “que al momento enjugó mi llanto con la risueña promesa de que el día del santo de Su Majestad el Rey sería mi esposo totalmente indultado.”

<sup>127</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 20, File 6744, 24/05/1927.

<sup>128</sup> Original: Fearing that Primo would not be able to act on her request given “la aglomeración de personas que constantemente le agobian con sus peticiones y deseos,” she wrote to him again to provide further detail about her case, all so that he could give it the deliberation it deserved. AHN, Primo, Bundle 26, File 9248, 14/05/1929.

you would be so kind as to grant what I ask.” González’s circumstances were tragic and for this reason, perhaps, she did not limit herself to a single strategy when making her claim. “I am a widow at 40 years of age,” she added, “with 11 children, of whom 10 are in the ground; the one that I still have is working in Almería but has family and cannot help me.” Unable to support herself, she had sought assistance from a local charity in Jérez, but claimed that this had declined her request, for reasons which she did not specify. While González was convinced that she was due some form of alms, she had reached this conclusion without any knowledge of the conditions which decided this. To overcome this, she asked Primo to write her a letter of recommendation “so that they give me the aid that they give to others with less cause.”<sup>129</sup>

González’s letter was short and made no attempt to generalise her experience to other needy individuals. By detailing her suffering, González was attempting to invoke a sense of mutual obligation and fairness between her and the authorities. She had done her patriotic duty in providing children for *Patria*, despite the premature deaths of 10 of them, and yet, as she made clear, she had been abandoned by it. Dictatorship, as we have been observing throughout this thesis, creates a logic of exceptionality; this was reflected in petitions which often asked for extra-judicial solutions to their problems. González’s case, however, may truly have been exceptional. A response issued to her by Primo’s bureau in October of the same year indicated that he did provide her with the recommendation she had asked for, a small mercy, although it did not provide a reason for this.<sup>130</sup> In light of the cases described before this one, it is certainly possible that Primo granted this out of some nostalgia for his home. More probable is that he was convinced by a sense of moral obligation.

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<sup>129</sup> Original: “Soy hija de Jerez, bautizada, confirmada y casada en la Parroquia de San Miguel,” she made clear, “y como me dicen que VE es tan bueno que no olvida a sus paisanos a VE me dirijo para ver si tiene a bien concederme lo que le pido.” González’s circumstances were tragic and for this reason, perhaps, she did not limit herself to a single strategy when making her claim “Soy viuda con 40 años,” she added, “con 11 hijos, que están 10 bajo tierra, uno que me queda esta en Almería trabajando pero tiene familia y no puede socorrerme.” Unable to support herself, she had sought assistance from a local charity in Jérez, but claimed that this had declined her request for reasons which she did not specify. While González was convinced that she was due some form of alms, she had reached this conclusion without any knowledge of the conditions which decided this. To overcome this, she asked Primo to write her a letter of recommendation “para que me den el socorro que a otros dan con menos motivos.” AHN, Primo, Bundle 72, File 11158, 23/08/1926

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 26/10/1926.

The rational-bureaucratic ideal which characterises the modern state conceives of and favours writing as a more transparent medium of communication than speech. The bureaucratic writing-style which this demands, therefore, is, as much as possible, stripped of elements that entail affective ties or raise complications due to social context. In reality, petitions rarely conform to these standards; they narrate stories and events that are often deeply intimate.<sup>131</sup> This may lead them to alarm clerks or officials for describing matters outside of legitimate governmental discourse. Following from Somers' definition of citizenship as an 'instituted process,' however, we appreciate that this is in constant negotiations and always a two-way process between citizen-claimant and the state.<sup>132</sup> Based on the selection of petitions examined in this thesis, women were, in general, far more likely to narrate personal histories of woe, dearth and suffering than men, either on theirs or someone else's behalf. There are likely many reasons for this, though the care-giving role common to many women at this time was surely a major contributor to this. Even when these told of hardships, familial relationships and other topics that are normally not the business of government, they represent attempts to set the boundaries of citizenship and the responsibilities of citizens and the state towards one another.

María Valerio, a resident of Madrid, for example, wrote a short note to the authorities in December 1923 to express her concern at the treatment of a young boy, who lived in the same building as her, by his parents.<sup>133</sup> She and her neighbours had already been forced to report the parents to the police some time before and, although they had subsequently been sentenced to 30 days of imprisonment for cruelty, she lamented that the child had eventually been returned to the household. Valerio gave little detail about the intervening period but made clear that the boy was "suffering greatly" and "wasting away" due to his renewed mistreatment. An employee of the *Ayuntamiento*, she noted, had been sent to check on his wellbeing, but she believed that the child had not been able to respond truthfully to his questions

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<sup>131</sup> Cody, "Inscribing Subjects to Citizenship," 2009, 356–57.

<sup>132</sup> Somers, "Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere."

<sup>133</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 56, File 2292, 11/12/1923.



“because he is well-disciplined.”<sup>134</sup> Valerio asked that Primo intervene in the situation to protect the child and gave him the address of the family’s apartment so that he could do so. No further indication was given in the file as to the boy’s fate.

Valerio’s letter was a denunciation of sorts, but of a different kind to the accusations made against *caciques*, which were described in Chapter Three. Although she provided only minimal detail in her description of the situation, her knowledge about the child’s circumstances were intimate due to their similar living arrangements. Her petition, as a result, sat at the boundary of public and private; between the privileged observations of a neighbour, who lived in close proximity to the family, and the concerns of a citizen who wished ensure the welfare of a vulnerable person. Her efforts to alert the authorities were an attempt to make the boy’s suffering a matter of public import. By her account, however, the authorities’ response had been unable to penetrate the private environs of the boy’s household, where parental influence could obscure the child’s fate. That Valerio provided the family’s address is highly significant then: this was an invitation for the state to cross the private and public divide, much like she had done in the act of petitioning, and a demand that it act as the guarantor of a minimum of rights for the boy.

Petitions like this, which openly discussed the home environment, were quite common, even if others, like those in the next section, denounced the uninvited intrusion of the state into this realm. Like Valerio’s letter above, many used the language of accusation, thus bringing them into close proximity with the denunciatory genre, albeit usually to demand some corrective to justice, rather than a means of seeking retribution. A woman of very precarious literacy from Madrid asked Primo to intervene in the case of her pregnant daughter, who had been expelled from the marital home, alongside their infant son, by her unfaithful husband.<sup>135</sup> The woman and her daughter had reported the mistreatment to the police, but the man had been exonerated in court, much to their dismay. The letter-writer asked Primo to examine

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<sup>134</sup> Original: Valerio gave little detail about the intervening period but made clear that the boy was “sufriendo mucho” and “quedándose muy demacrado” due to his renewed mistreatment. An employee of the *Ayuntamiento*, she noted, had been sent to check on his wellbeing, but she believed that the child had not been able to respond truthfully to his questions “porque tiene mucha disciplina.”

<sup>135</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 57, File 2302, 14/12/1923.

the case and ensure that her daughter was not “abandoned by all the law and [that] the child that she is carrying inside be given acknowledgement of paternity and that he is protected by the law that, at least in my opinion, must exist,” though she did not know what this was.<sup>136</sup> Limited as the woman’s knowledge was, this was not a simple plea for largesse, but rather a demand for basic rights to welfare, which seemed to have been denied to her daughter.

In 1929, a woman from Jerez de la Frontera told a similar story, which had also passed through the legal system.<sup>137</sup> She had been separated from her husband for 12 years and was ill and struggling to support herself. Despite obtaining an order from the High Court in Sevilla, which obliged her husband to pay her 125 pesetas per month, in addition to a lump sum of some 4,000 more, she had yet to receive any payment from him and was unable to afford the medicine which she required. She described her experience as a “true torment in which I have had to struggle on, alone and without assistance” and asked for Primo to ensure that her husband paid her what she was due.<sup>138</sup>

Encarnación García, a widow from Baracaldo (Vizcaya), made another plea of this nature in July 1928 over her worry at the welfare of a woman and her daughter from the town of Haro (Logroño), some 80km away.<sup>139</sup> Mother and child, she reported, had fallen into “the greatest abandonment and destitution, with one having lost her husband and the other the uncle that served as her father.”<sup>140</sup> The man, a municipal policeman in Haro, had been knocked down and killed by a carriage on the public road in the town while on duty. While it is not clear what García’s connection was to this woman, she was convinced that the state’s response to the incident had been flawed. The driver of the carriage, she claimed, had not been punished for his involvement in the man’s death and now “walks so coolly through the streets that it is as if he had not

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<sup>136</sup> Original: The letter-writer asked Primo to examine the case and ensure that her daughter was not “desamparada de todo derecho y [que] el hijo que lleva en sus entrañas tenga reconocimiento paterno y sea amparado por la ley que a mi corto juicio debe existir,” though she did not know what this was.

<sup>137</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 26, File 9428, 14/05/1929.

<sup>138</sup> Original: She described her experience as a “verdadero calvario en el que sola y sin auxilio he tenido que luchar” and asked for Primo to ensure that her husband paid her what she was due.

<sup>139</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 77, File 13810, 17/07/1928

<sup>140</sup> Original: Mother and child, she reported, had fallen into “el mayor desamparo y miseria por haber perdido el esposo la una y el tío que le serbia de padre la otra.”

so much as broken a plate.” As for the *Ayuntamiento*, for which the man had worked, she added sarcastically, “it must come as satisfaction that the wife of a former employee finds herself in poverty.” García, for her part, hoped that the law might provide a solution to the woman’s plight, but her inability to cite a legal precedent precluded her from making a more elaborate claim to the authorities. Instead she invoked a moral economy and asked Primo to intercede in the matter and ascertain for her if the “law of refuge” could “[call] the mayor of Haro to order and [hand over] what belongs to her by law if anything belongs to her.”<sup>141</sup>

While García’s letter was dominated by her account of the suffering of the woman and the child, she sought to politicise the matter further by suggesting that their fate had somehow come to pass due to *caciquil* influence in Haro. “Considering that [the widow has] lost her husband,” she wrote, “may she not lose faith and let her see that since you have controlled the fate of Spain the law is equal for all, be they low or high [people], and that the time of *caciquil* favouritism has finished forever.”<sup>142</sup> By framing it in this manner, she was also threatening that any failure by the authorities to act would, in her eyes, amount to confirmation of this. Ploys of ‘coercive subordination’ like this were common in petitions at this time and, while they may well have been used to compensate for a letter-writer’s limited resources or knowledge, they too attest to the flexibility of discourse, which can be appropriated by those who are meant to be its recipients.<sup>143</sup> Despite its ingenuity, García’s strategy was ultimately unsuccessful, however. Primo’s bureau would later write to inform her that it would take no action in the woman’s case as the *Ayuntamiento* had already paid her the

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<sup>141</sup> Original: The driver of the carriage, she claimed, had not been punished for his involvement in the man’s death and now “anda tan fresco por la calle como si no hubiera roto un plato.” As for the *Ayuntamiento*, for which the man had worked, she added, “debe serbirle de satisfacción el que la esposa de un ex empleado suyo se alle en la miseria.” García, for her part, hoped that the law might provide a solution to the woman’s plight, but her inability to cite a legal precedent precluded her from making a more elaborate claim to the authorities. Instead she invoked a moral economy and asked Primo to intercede in the matter and ascertain for her if the “ley de amparo” could “[llamar] a la orden al alcalde de Haro y [entregar] a la viuda lo que en ley le pertenece si algo le perteneciese.”

<sup>142</sup> Original: “Ya que [la viuda] perdió el esposo,” she wrote, “que no pierda la fe y vea que dentro de España desde que VE rige sus destinos la ley para todos es igual altos y bajos y que acabo para siempre el tiempo de faboritismo caciquil.”

<sup>143</sup> On ‘coercive subordination’ see Cody, “Inscribing Subjects to Citizenship,” 2009, 363–64. Ploys like this have been observed in radically different contexts. See, for example, Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan*, 59.

statutory compensation required of it.<sup>144</sup> In relation to García's accusation that the driver had gone unpunished, the letter also made clear that no action could be taken as only the courts could rule on cases of a criminal nature, a response that contrasted starkly to the regime's many excesses in the repression of its enemies.

While women certainly invoked the unwritten rules of fairness behind the moral economy, almost all of those considered here made use of this strategy only as a last resort, when other means had failed. Most of their petitions recount long and laborious attempts to achieve restitution through legal means, either through the courts or some other elaborate bureaucratic system. Primo's intervention was sought only when these channels failed to alter their circumstance. These were typically only petitions of last resort, rather than a point of departure. This suggests a well-developed capacity for self-representation, even when these women were unaccustomed to such interactions. Moreover, many did so in the absence of male figures, often in trying circumstance when these had been imprisoned, were abusive or were no longer alive, a factor that served as an additional barrier. These narrations also suggest a more porous division between public and private than might have previously been appreciated. Additionally, the entry of the state into that realm was expected to be on the petitioners' terms, rather than uninvited. There was a certain expectation that such transgressions could be tolerated if they referred to basic rights to welfare.

### **Female domesticity or the home invaded?**

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, ordinary Spanish people wrapped their petitions in the language of the regime's discourse in an attempt to gain rhetorical advantages that might help their claims through the byzantine state bureaucracy. Women also tended to emphasise a rather orthodox vision of femininity and womanhood, but this too could bring benefits. If women were to carry out the esteemed mission of mothering the next generation of Spanish citizens, for example, then most expected that this task be suitably venerated by the state. Accordingly, the regime's uninvited, physical intrusions into the realm of household and family were

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<sup>144</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 77, File 13810, 29/12/1928.

met with outrage and calls on the government to ensure that this was protected. This was achieved through clever use of the language of female frailty, care-giving and innocence. In some cases, as we will see, it was highly effective in drawing a response from the authorities.

In Chapters One and Four we saw how the repressive measures unleashed by the dictatorship inspired a frenzy of letter-writing to the authorities, both from those who wished to aid in that repression and those who suffered it. This was certainly not unique to the Spanish case. As book historian Roger Chartier has suggested, “Written culture is inseparable from the violent gestures that repress it.”<sup>145</sup> Historically, the imprisonment of any person has served as a means of repressing his or her family; it is a form of social control that extends far beyond the individual. When somebody is detained, it is typically within the family that that person’s absence is most keenly felt, particularly if he or she serves in a care-giving role, be this to children or elderly family-members. From a financial point of view, though, this was perhaps more pronounced if that individual was male, due to their habitual status as primary bread-winner. In the view of Verónica Sierra Blas, who writes about the families of those imprisoned during the Franco dictatorship, “The absence of the male figure in the home implied a redefinition of gender roles, as well as the assumption of new responsibilities by the woman.”<sup>146</sup> For many women this involved making representations to the authorities on behalf of their families, something which many seemed unused to.

In September 1926, Consuela and María Augusta Gutiérrez, two sisters from Málaga, complained that their father, Augusto, a local doctor, had been unjustly fined 1,000 pesetas and banished to the town of Manzanares (Ciudad Real) by the regime one month before.<sup>147</sup> Although the sisters rejected the very notion that their father could have committed a crime, they asked Primo to review his case as they believed that his prosecution had come about due to a “an unjustified and false denunciation that a heartless man put in the hands of the Government.” The wave of denunciation that characterised the first year of the dictatorship may have subsided by this point,

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<sup>145</sup> Cited in Sierra Blas, “«Al otro lado de las rejas»,” 63.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>147</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 72, File 11225, 04/09/1926.

but the sisters' letter fed into lingering societal fears over the practice, which, as we have already seen, was notoriously problematic due to the prevalence of false or unverifiable claims. "Sir," they went on, "we only ask you that you study the case and decide in the name justice, and should our father have done something wrong [that you] pardon him sir. Look not at his sin, but rather at our innocence." This was not the justice of the courts: "Do it for us," they implored the dictator, "we, who are starting to live and are already suffering the sorrows of this life." That their father had been exiled to a town some 275 kilometres away, they wrote, meant that they had no way of supporting themselves, "our delicate mother" or "our poor granddad, who is already in his sixties and unwell." They begged Primo to return "peace to a home where there are only tears" so that their grandfather would not die "without being able to see his son."<sup>148</sup> Such statements sought to exaggerate their feminine helplessness in the absence of their *paterfamilias* and thereby inspire the sympathy of the authorities. In this instance the authorities were unmoved, though, as they considered Gutiérrez's crimes to be highly egregious. In a note that was attached to the sisters' file, Martínez Anido's secretary indicated to the head of Primo's bureau that Gutiérrez's punishment had been entirely justified, as he was considered to be the leader of a local republican group in Málaga and had been seen to wear a pin with the words '*Patria* and Republic' on his jacket. While the sisters' petition was ultimately unsuccessful, it is nevertheless clear that their affected discourse of feminine frailty helped it reach the highest echelons of the regime, something that was by no means guaranteed to petitioners.

Juana Sevilla, a sixty two year-old woman, who described herself as an "apenada madre" (sorry mother), used the same strategy when she sought to have her

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<sup>148</sup> Original: Although the sisters rejected the very notion that their father could have committed a crime, they asked Primo to review his case in the name of justice as they believed that his prosecution had come about due to a "denuncia injustificada y falsa que un hombre sin corazón hizo llegar a las manos del Gobierno." The wave of denunciation that characterised the first year of the dictatorship may have subsided by this point, but the sisters' letter seemed to feed into lingering societal fears over the practice, which, as we have seen, was notoriously problematic. "Señor," they went on, "solo os pedimos que estudiéis el caso y resolváis en justicia, y si nuestro padre hubiera hecho algo malo (que no podemos creer) perdonadle señor, no miréis su pecado, si no nuestra inocencia." This was not the justice of the courts: "Hacedlo por nosotras," they implored the dictator, "que estamos empezando a vivir y ya sufriendo las amarguras de esta vida." That their father had been exiled to a town some 275 kilometres away, they wrote, meant that they had no way of supporting themselves, "nuestra madre delicada" or "nuestro querido abuelito, ya más de sexagenario y enfermo." They begged Primo to return "la tranquilidad a un hogar donde todo son lágrimas" so that their grandfather would not die "sin poder ver a su hijo."

son, Bernardo García Sevilla, freed from his detention in the city's Cellular Prison.<sup>149</sup> García, she wrote, had been arrested by the police at their home in November 1928, but she made no mention of why. Some four months later he had been freed by a panel of military judges, who found no evidence of wrongdoing on his part. Much to her disbelief, her son was arrested in their home a second time in March 1929 on suspicion of plotting against the government.<sup>150</sup> Sevilla was incredulous at this and defended her son by making use of the well-known dictatorship-era trope of claiming apoliticism, insisting that "my son is not connected to any type of politics."<sup>151</sup> Indeed, she also suggested that his arrest owed to the foul play of unknown enemies, who had falsely denounced him. Like the sisters in the example above, Sevilla emphasised her feminine qualities, both as a mother, who cared for her son, and as an older woman, who relied on his care in order to survive economically. She asked Primo de Rivera to grant justice and order the release of her son in order to lessen "the sorrow of a mother who cries for her innocent son... For all the rigours of poverty that I must suffer, old and nearly blind as I am, for want of the wages on which the both of us survived."<sup>152</sup> In July 1929, a response issued to Sevilla stated that her son had been freed by the regime, although it noted rather grimly that "there was more than enough cause for his detention given his criminal record."<sup>153</sup>

Sevilla's petition focused almost entirely on the domestic sphere and gave very little impression of her life beyond it, except brief references to her poverty and precarious health, which must surely have limited this. In situating her complaint in this environment and replicating the language of maternal care Sevilla was also

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<sup>149</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 80, File 15091, 22/05/1929.

<sup>150</sup> It is not clear if this was a major plot against the government. However, it is worth noting that the new *Código Penal* (Penal Code), which was introduced in September 1928, included strike action and labour stoppages in its definition of rebellion. As a result, Sevilla could be referring to any number of incidents. González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 58.

<sup>151</sup> Original: Sevilla was incredulous at this and defended her son by making use of the well-known dictatorship-era trope of claiming apoliticism, insisting that "mi hijo es ajeno a política de ninguna clase."

<sup>152</sup> Original: She asked Primo de Rivera to grant justice and order the release of her son in order to lessen "la pena de una madre que llora a su hijo inocente de la macha que sobre su persona le han querido poner. Por todos los rigores de la miseria que anciana y casi ciega tengo que padecer por la falta del jornal que con su trabajo vivíamos los dos."

<sup>153</sup> Original: In July 1929, a response issued to Sevilla stated that her son had been freed by the regime, although it noted rather grimly that "su detención tuvo sobradísimos motivos dados sus antecedentes." AHN, Primo, Bundle 80, File 15091, 24/07/1929.

instrumentalising the discursive tools available to her. As we have seen, the home had already been transformed into a highly politicised site, which the regime had seemed to respect. Sevilla, however, wrote her letter at the time when repression was reaching a peak. Very soon, for example, the government would allow members of the *Somatén* to enter and carry out searches in the homes of those suspected of opposing the government.<sup>154</sup> If, according to the regime, the household was the realm in which women were to make their greatest contribution to the health nation, then, in Sevilla's account, it had been violated twice by the authorities as they arrested her son. Her petition did not make universal claims of justice for all prisoners, nor relate her son's experience to a wider community of citizens. Yet it also fed into the regime's structuration of society and demanded that this be respected. Moreover, the rather limited surroundings of the home provided a foil for García's political activities.<sup>155</sup> Whether or not Sevilla was party to this information is unclear, as it is also conceivable that García operated in secret. Nevertheless, this possibility was ultimately deflected by Sevilla's counter-accusation of false denunciation, behaviour that seemed to occur in an equally surreptitious, and, therefore, suspicious, manner. Constrained by circumstance as Sevilla may have been, the combination of infirmity and incredulity which she wove into her letter was ultimately successful in achieving her son's release, despite the regime's insistence that he was a dangerous man.<sup>156</sup>

A group of seven women from Gijón took this strategy to its extreme in 1926 when they protested against the arrest and incommunicado detention of their husbands.<sup>157</sup> At this time, state repression had yet to reach the levels described in

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<sup>154</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 162. See Chapter Five also.

<sup>155</sup> Comparing his story to the accounts in Chapter Five, it seems probable that he was the member of a cell of a radical left-wing organisation like the CNT, for example.

<sup>156</sup> A widow from Barcelona, who made use of similar language to Sevilla's, was also successful in having her son released from an eight-month prison sentence for fraud. "Excmo. Sr," she wrote, "soy una pobre viuda, asistida por una pobre hija que trabaja continuamente como bordadora para poder atenderme, que sufro miseria y la peor enfermedad que es la vejez, que soy hija de militar, que deseo que mi hijo, mi pobre hijo sea un perfecto cristiano viejo, y deseo verle tenerle a mi vera ahora que la vida para mi desaparece y solo lagrimas y pesares veo a mi alrededor" ("Most Excellent Sir," she wrote, "I am a poor widow, helped by a poor daughter who works constantly as a needlewoman to look after me; who endures misery and the worst of illnesses that is old age; who is the daughter of a member of the military; who wants my son, my poor son to been a perfect old Christian, and I wish to see him to have him by my side now that life for me is vanishing and I only see tears and regret around me."). AHN, Primo, Bundle 28, File 9700, 02/07/1929.

<sup>157</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 71, File 10917, 14/07/1926.



Sevilla's letter, though, as we will see, the men to whom the women referred were rather more remarkable than Sevilla's son. Like Sevilla, the women complained that the men's detention had led to the loss of the wages upon which their families relied. "We don't believe in the guilt of our husbands," they wrote,

nor does the crime that they are supposed to have committed make sense to us, as simply by living with them, we know about all of their activities, and we can assure you that they have never even committed a crime with their thoughts, so dedicated are they to the jobs which give sustenance to their homes.<sup>158</sup>

Having established the regime's moral obligation to release their husbands, the women sought to reinforce their claim by invoking a series of declarations made by Primo on the treatment of political prisoners, particularly those subject to incommunicado detentions. They maintained that another group of suspects, who had been arrested in Madrid at the same time as their husbands, had already had their solitary confinement lifted, although they hastened to add that any connection between the cases was only coincidental. "In those *notas [oficiosas]* plots aimed at creating instability in political life were discussed and we, who know that our husbands are not and never have been political, hope that Your Excellency will recognise this and grant them justice." The women ended their petition with a rather ostentatious invocation of mutual obligation: "In all of your speeches Most Excellent Sir: you make a call to Spanish womanhood and we, who count ourselves amongst them with pleasure and pride... ASK that our prisoners be freed or brought before a judge or court able to try them."<sup>159</sup>

The women's incredulity at the situation was revealed to be a farce. A report sent to Primo by Martínez Anido revealed that their husbands were, in fact, Eleuterio Quintanilla Prieto, Baldomero del Val Velasco, Francisco Herrera Fernández, Baldomero Fanjul Iglesias, Felipe Beltrán Carrasco, Félix Gazquez Alcaina and Amalio

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<sup>158</sup> Original: "No creemos en la culpabilidad de nuestros esposos," they wrote, "y no se nos alcanza el delito que pudieran haber cometido, pues conociendo – por convivir con ellos – todas sus actividades, aseguramos que ni aun con el pensamiento pudieron delinquir pues unicamente se dedican a sus ocupaciones que sirven para el sustento del hogar."

<sup>159</sup> Original: "En esas notas oficiosas se hablaba de un complot tendiente a producir intranquilidad en la vida política y nosotras que sabemos que nuestros esposos nunca fueron ni son políticos esperamos que VE reconociendo esto mismo, haga justicia." The women ended their petition with a rather ostentatious invocation of mutual obligation: "En todos vuestros discursos Excmo Sr: haceis un canto a la mujer española y nosotras que con gusto y orgullo nos contamos entre ellas... SUPPLICAMOS sean puestos en libertad nuestros presos o que sean sometidos a juez o tribunal competente que los juzgue."

Sarabia Sarabia, the first six of whom served as members of the National Committee of the anarchist *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (National Confederation of Labour), one of the regime's *bêtes noires*.<sup>160</sup> The men had been arrested by the regime on the night of 24 June after the failed *Sanjuanada* coup d'état against Primo de Rivera, on suspicion of being involved in the plot, while the last, Amalio Sarabia, was detained shortly after this for abetting another committee-member, Amalio Quiles Berenguer. The men were put on trial some nine months later and, despite the right-wing daily *ABC* noting that Baldomero del Val in particular was a "die-hard defender of the syndicalist organisation and man of action, who, in his speeches, shows his blind hatred towards the management class and a desire for revenge against the constitutional Powers, who must be considered an anarchist," the government was unable to connect them to the events the previous June and forced to grant their release.<sup>161</sup>

Even though the women's letter failed to secure their husbands' freedom before the trial, it is nevertheless remarkable from a rhetorical point of view. The women's ignorance of their husbands' political activities was clearly feigned, but they tried to invoke the home as a privileged environment which the regime should not be able to penetrate. They based their petition for clemency around the intimate knowledge afforded by marriage. When the men left this private realm, they were still firmly tied to family life and to the task satisfying the needs of their dependents through work. In this way, the women appealed to the image promoted by the regime of the household as the basis of society. According to *primorriverista* rhetoric, it was through the often nebulous divide between this private space and a more public life that citizens in the recast state would have to step, something to which the women seemed to be alluding. For, while they described their husbands as apolitical, the men remained anchored to their families and to a traditionally masculine sense of duty.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> AHN, Primo, Bundle 71, File 10917, 07/09/1926.

<sup>161</sup> *ABC*, 03/04/1927.

<sup>162</sup> Juliana Gabarron Miranda told of a situation that echoed the women's account. Her husband, Daniel Martín Sastre, she wrote, had been imprisoned in the Model Prison of Bilbao for reasons she did not know. She asked Primo to free her husband so that he could provide bread to his two daughters of two and four years of age respectively, to whom he was a good father. The regime rejected her claim, as Martín had been detained for distributing illegal propaganda and was awaiting trial by a military court. In fact, he had briefly served on the Provisional Committee of the *Partido Comunista de España*

In so doing, the women tried to align their husbands with the primary characteristics of the model of citizenship promoted by the government, even when these claims seemed dubious. In the repressive atmosphere created by the regime, this was one of the few options available to them and one which occasionally worked, despite the evident imbalance of power and resources between the authoritarian state and the citizens who petitioned it.

The household clearly dominated in these women's petitions, but this does not mean to say that they were not oriented towards the national community or that they were somehow pre-political. The tendency of the regime to invade the home and alter its structure through arbitrary imprisonment, in particular, challenged the rigid separation between the 'public' and 'private' during the dictatorship. Privacy, it appeared, could be invaded for the public good, however the regime defined it. The economic deprivation which typically resulted from this forced women to assume new roles and demanded that they represent theirs and their family's interests in a way with which they may previously have been unfamiliar. For women, there were clear advantages to emphasising their feminine qualities as mother and daughters in these interactions. As such, they played on an image of frailty, and powerlessness in the absence of their male relatives, in a manner that seemed to confirm the discourse of the regime. As has been made clear throughout this thesis, their instrumentalisation of this discourse was quite deliberate and occasionally succeeded in bringing about their aims, even when these did not align with the regime's.

## **Conclusion**

The collapse of the dictatorship in January 1930 was followed by the bizarre interregnum of the semi-authoritarian Berenguer-Aznar administrations until the municipal elections of April 1931, which led to the abdication of the King and the proclamation of the Republic. The attempts by the governments of the so-called *dictablanda* (soft dictatorship) to return Spain to its pre-coup state of 'constitutional

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(Communist Party of Spain) as the representative for the northern provinces of Spain, after its Central Committee was detained by the authorities in November 1924. His arrest coincided with that of Oscar Pérez Solís, the General Secretary of the PCE, who is discussed in Chapter Five. AHN, Primo, Bundle 17, File 5419, 12/06/1925. On the arrests see González Calleja, *El Máuser y el sufragio*, 418.

normality' had profound consequences for women. Paradoxically, the proposed restoration of parliamentary democracy in Spain meant rolling back women's recently-granted, though never formally exercised, voting rights, a requirement that highlights how unrealistic and untenable the monarchy had become. As such, women were excluded from voting when, on 14 February, 1930, the Berenguer government sought to remove and temporarily replace the municipal governments created under Primo de Rivera. The female *asambleístas*, who had been in place since 1927, also lost their seats when the *Asamblea Nacional* was dissolved the following day, as did the female mayors and municipal councillors. In the municipal elections that would eventually be convoked for 12 April, 1931, women were excluded entirely from the electoral register. It is certainly conceivable that the result might have been different if this had not occurred.<sup>163</sup>

The decision to strip women of voting rights belied their manifest capacity to engage in politics, even outside the boundaries defined by the regime. The petitions considered in this section show women who engaged in extensive claims-making processes in which they negotiated with the state over the formal and informal rights which they asserted, thereby engaging in the practice of citizenship as previously defined. Moreover, these petitions were rarely simple pleas for mercy or largesse. Instead, they were typically made after the failure of the bureaucratic or legal systems meant to guarantee their rights. In some cases, these failures owed directly to the state of exception created by the regime in 1923 and maintained throughout its existence. Women were not typically the targets of this repression, but they were very frequently the victims. This forced them into new modes of self-representation which they adapted to and used successfully.

Ultimately, their claims to being citizens did not have to be as ostentatious as the women who produced the manifesto in 1926 argued. This happened at the level of everyday life and through their interactions with the state, be this through civil-society groups, participation in local government or petitioning, as in the case of the women examined in this chapter. The Republic would make far greater concessions to women, before these were eradicated by Franco and the Nationalist side after the Civil War. In

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<sup>163</sup> Díaz Fernández, "Una oportunidad," 188–89.

both cases, the governments were freer than Primo de Rivera's, but for different reasons. The social, cultural and economic changes brought by the first dictatorship reached women in all their facets. The precedent set at this time could only be undone in the extraordinary and hyper-violent context of a civil war. Women, for their part, would be at the centre of events in the decade that followed the end of the Primo de Rivera regime.

## Conclusion

### The collapse of the dictatorship

The *Directorio Civil* period saw the steady erosion of support for the regime, culminating in 1929, its *annus horribilis*. It began with the uprising against the government led by the former Prime Minister José Sánchez Guerra in January. The aim was to expel the King from the country and establish a provisional government in Valencia that could call elections for new Constituent *Cortes*. Although this would fail due to the premature rebellion of some of the military units involved, it saw the convergence of three branches of opposition to the regime: the constitutionalist of the Restoration era, the Artillery Corps of the Army, which had been in dispute with Primo over reforms to the promotion system since 1926, and the Republicans. That all were prepared to violently resist the dictatorship was a major development. The regime responded to the insurrection by dissolving the Artillery Corps and putting the members who had participated on trial. Ultimately, the military's supreme court, the *Consejo Supremo de Guerra y Marina*, would opt for clemency and reduce the sentences given to those involved by lower courts. It was a clear demonstration that the Army no longer supported Primo. Sánchez Guerra's absolution by a military court on 28 October of the same year was another act of public censure.<sup>1</sup>

The failure of the *Anteproyecto de Constitución* (Draft Constitution) to attract any significant support in the summer of 1929 drove Primo to make preparations to hold a plebiscite and elections to bring about a 'legal' end to the dictatorship. When he asked the former Prime Ministers and Presidents of the Congress and Senate, representatives of the *Reales Academias* (Royal Academies), universities and members of the socialist *Unión General de Trabajadores* (General Workers' Union) to debate how to bring this about in the *Asamblea Nacional*, the response was negative. In December 1929, Primo met with his ministers to announce his intention to leave office and hand over power to a semi-dictatorial transitional government. Upon these plans being debated in cabinet on 31 December, the King asked for time to consider them, a request that represented an implicit withdrawal of support even for this. Behind the

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<sup>1</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 371–73.

scenes, Don Alfonso was conspiring against Primo. A plot for another military uprising was hatched for February 1930. On 20 January, Calvo Sotelo resigned from the government, what was already a sinking ship, partly due to the failure of his economic policies. Primo's last roll of the dice came when he tried to pre-empt the rebellion by sounding out the other Captains General of the Army on their support for the regime. The results of the infamous military poll were only two solid declarations of loyalty. Primo was left with no choice but to resign on 27 January, 1930. Less than two months later he died in a Paris hotel room due to complications from diabetes. The selection by the King of Dámaso Berenguer, a leading *palaciego* general, as Primo's replacement put paid to the widespread expectations of an immediate return to constitutionality. Nevertheless, the monarchy's days were numbered.<sup>2</sup>

### **The legacy of the dictatorship**

The dictatorship left a diverse inheritance, despite its evident failure and role in the eventual abolition of the monarchy in 1931. The letters examined in this thesis have clearly demonstrated that the years between 1923 and 1930 were marked by the spread of a regenerationist and anti-*caciquil* discourse across the Spanish population.<sup>3</sup> The success of the regime's efforts to elicit denunciations from the citizenry is evidence of this. The letter-writers themselves did not always engage in denunciation along the broad parameters set by the dictatorial administration. In 1923 and 1924, it was already apparent that the language of regeneration and anti-*caciquismo* was flexible enough to allow criticism of the dictatorial government itself. Most of this was targeted at the new municipal administrations installed by the regime in the first 15 months of its existence. However, this was also carried over to the work of the *Delegados Gubernativos*, who came to be regarded by many as *caciques* in uniform, rather than the 'Apostles of the Fatherland' that Primo and Martínez Anido had hoped for when they created the post. By the time the *Directorio Civil* was established in December 1925, Primo's priorities had changed and the war on *caciquismo* was wound

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 373–79.

<sup>3</sup> This is also the view of Robles Egea. Antonio Robles Egea, "Sistemas políticos, mutaciones y modelos de las relaciones de patronazgo y clientelismo en la España del siglo XX," in *Política en penumbra: patronazgo y clientelismo políticos en la España contemporánea*, ed. Antonio Robles Egea and José Álvarez Junco (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1996), 240.

down. Nevertheless, criticism of the government did not stop there, as the petitions from political prisoners and their female supporters in Chapters Five and Six, respectively, attest. It became apparent to those who wished to challenge the government on issues that were relevant to their lives, be these overtly political or more mundane in nature, that petition was a channel that the regime tolerated. Thus, even when other elements of the public sphere were severely restricted during the state of exception created by Primo, ordinary people remained in communication with the government.

This thesis has also made a significant contribution to our understanding of repression during the regime by demonstrating that the denunciation that took place during the *Directorio Militar* was not typically anonymous as has been previously suggested. As Chapter Three shows very clearly, most of the letters that the government received were not only signed but also included additional details about the senders so that the authorities could engage them in correspondence. Far more challenging from the point of view of the state was the prevalence of accusations that were essentially unverifiable or simply false. The difficulty that the regime experienced in investigating these claims was exacerbated by the lack of a repressive apparatus that was dedicated to this purpose and the fact that Primo's administration never truly controlled the courts which could issue the most severe punishments. In this way, the regulations of January 1924 demanding that the authorities pursue only denunciations accompanied by proof responded as much to the need to limit false accusation as to the regime's own administrative limitations.

The regime initially regarded the denunciation of *caciques* as a 'critical act of citizenship' that was very much in line with the tradition beginning in the French Revolution. This led it to emphasise publicity in the process of registering complaints about the conduct of state officials and *caciques*. However, the regime's attitude to the practice was extremely naive and soon its civic vision was undermined by the behaviour of parts of the population who seemed to exploit the system or, more commonly, ignore the government's instructions on how these were to be presented. While these denunciations emphasised the language of citizenship and framed their accusations as attempts to reclaim aspects of civic life that had been usurped or



corrupted by *caciquismo*, they also stretched the boundaries of what constituted governmental discourse, referring as they often did to highly personal matters or localised disputes. The very fact that these aspects of the denunciations alarmed government officials like the *Delegados* reflects how they also served as a channel for negotiation with the state over what could be considered legitimately public, as process that is essential to defining citizenship. This was also the case with petitions.

Throughout this study it has been apparent that there are still large gaps in our understanding of how repression was implemented during the dictatorship. As this thesis has shown, this repression was at the centre of the petitions made by the population to the authorities. While we are familiar with most of the laws that carried this out, as Chapter Four made clear, much less is known about the workings of the courts – civilian, military and special – and about the forms of sentence that they gave to the opponents of the regime. This is particularly clear in the case of the purges performed during the *Directorio Militar* period. The denunciation of *caciques* made up a significant part of this but it is not yet clear how the regime went about sanctioning the accused, nor why it seemed to face such difficulty in bringing about successful prosecutions when this was considered appropriate. Little is also known about the everyday implementation of the regime's repression by the police, army and security services, the intermediate layer between the dictatorial administration and the population. Future work must take an approach that can incorporate the multifarious aspects of this repression, rather than solely the measures introduced from Madrid. This must be performed from a from-below perspective. This study has demonstrated the value of such a methodology.

The denunciation which took place during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship was also marked by much of the ambiguity that surrounded the practice elsewhere in Europe during the twentieth century. The boundary between the denunciatory and petitionary genres was often unclear and this meant that both formats became infused with the language of the other. Petitions were often prompted by what the letter-writer perceived as a deficiency that had been caused by some administrator or official, while denunciations were usually accompanied by some kind of request. This meant that denunciations could also serve as citizenship claims, despite their many

negative aspects. Instances of denunciation over ideological concerns like political orientation were relatively rare in the files examined in this thesis, but they certainly did occur as we saw in Chapter Four. The identification of so-called *malos españoles* (bad Spaniards) in the discourse of the regime filtered down to the population and certainly prefigured the myth of 'Anti-Spain' that the Nationalist side later promoted. Far more common were accusations relating to *caciquismo*, although this could hardly be considered unpolitical in comparison. Under Primo de Rivera this was solicited directly from power, just as it was a decade later during the Franco era. In this sense, the ease with which the regime was able to induce the population into engaging in the practice is perhaps its most remarkable feature. This was mostly achieved without the identification of a clearly defined enemy, unlike in the aftermath of the Civil War, when the Republican side were labelled as '*los vencidos*' (the defeated) and subject to intense scrutiny by the Francoist 'New State.'

That the denunciations made between 1923 and 1930 were typically directed at individuals in the municipal, provincial or state administrations meant that they were close to the genre of bureaucratic denunciation which has been observed in many other contexts. The accusations made later during the Civil War period diverged significantly from this format but much of this can be explained by the violent context of the armed conflict that preceded them. Under Franco they were also accompanied by the creation of specialist and highly visible repressive apparatuses that were dedicated to the elimination of the regime's enemies. Nevertheless, it would be remiss to suggest that the mass, extra-judicial accusation of the 1920s did not contribute to a general brutalisation of Spanish politics as this was made in the clear understanding that it would result in punishment even if the regime struggled to bring this about. The lack of any kind of precedent to this meant that it contributed greatly to the erosion of the liberal tradition of self-limitation long before the emergence of clandestine opposition to the dictatorship and the monarchy itself.<sup>4</sup>

María Teresa González Calbet has remarked that the regenerationist discourse of the dictatorship was marked by a conflation between the excesses of the so-called

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<sup>4</sup> González Calleja, *La España de Primo de Rivera*, 386–88. See also Ucelay-Da Cal and Tavera García, "Una revolución dentro de otra."

*vieja política* (old politics) represented by *caciquismo* and the *turno pacífico* and politics in general.<sup>5</sup> This was certainly the case in the letters sent to the authorities during the *Directorio Militar* period, as these lavishly praised the dictatorship for overcoming the stagnation of the liberal regime. Despite this, the denunciations analysed in Chapter Three were almost uniform in their failure to call either the Restoration Constitution or the Monarchy into question. Yet we must not forget that most were written in the short window between Primo's seizure of power and the implementation of the *Estatuto Municipal* (Municipal Statute) in April 1924. At this point, the regime was still far away from its peak in late 1925 and early 1926 when the war in Morocco was reaching its conclusion, the economic situation had improved and, crucially, the King still endorsed Primo's rule.<sup>6</sup> As such, it is hardly surprising that few, if any, Spaniards were suggesting a radical alternative to the dictatorship or the Monarchy in their petitions at this time. Even so, denunciation and petition represented an important culture of protest which continued throughout the dictatorship. Later, when petitions began to attack the regime, criticism was mainly focused on the excesses of the repression which the government was coming to rely on as opposition to it grew. In the *Directorio Civil* period, as the discourse on *caciquismo* receded and the dictatorial administration's anti-liberal critique of the *canovista* structures radicalised in preparation for their replacement, support for the regime began to decline.<sup>7</sup> By then, however, significant damage had already been done to the Restoration order in the eyes of the population who had criticised it so severely in their letters. Thus, even as the Primo de Rivera administration moved towards its eventual collapse, a return to the previous form of government became impossible.

If the programme of indoctrination carried out by the regime led, as Alejandro Quiroga has argued, to a 'negative nationalisation' then the Spanish population was not passive in this process.<sup>8</sup> Through the claims contained in petitions, ordinary people could challenge and alter the vision of citizenship that was promoted by the

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<sup>5</sup> González Calbet, *La Dictadura de Primo de Rivera*, 265.

<sup>6</sup> On late 1925 and early 1926 as the regime's peak see Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera*, 510.

<sup>7</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 184.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 183–88.

government, particularly where it concerned the rights that were attached to this. The language of regeneration which the administration used to justify its early measure could be appropriated and directed against it for this purpose. This is particularly clear in the denunciations which criticised the new municipal governments early in Primo's rule and the petitions sent by Spanish women when trying to secure the release of their family-members, reviewed in Chapters Three and Six respectively. Repression also loomed over everyday life in Spain during the dictatorship and served as an important catalyst for this process, as this thesis has made clear. Ordinary people made ostentatious displays of deference and support but often indicated that their continued compliance and tolerance of this hinged on the response of the government. Such rhetorical strategies were employed in the full knowledge that the government continued to depend on public opinion, despite its efforts to rigidly control this. This served as a means of counteracting the evident imbalance of resources between the citizen and the dictatorial state. As numerous instances of petition examined in this thesis show, the latter often bowed to pressure exerted from below, even by the weakest members of society.

The nation was a constant reference point in the letters sent by ordinary people to the authorities. This shows that the regime's efforts to promote belonging to the national community above other ties were at least partially successful. Yet so too was justice, all the more so as the state of exception created by the dictatorship deepened. As Margaret Somers tells us, the constitutionally guaranteed rule of law is one of the core components of citizenship. In the absence of such law, individuals can appeal to norms of universal justice to guide its formation and this is precisely what occurred during the dictatorship period.<sup>9</sup> From the point of view of the ordinary people, claims about the need to uphold right and due process became a powerful tool for resisting the repressive measures introduced by the *Directorios Militar* and *Civil*. The regime itself was never truly freed from the law even as it attempted to fundamentally alter the constitutional order in Spain from 1927 onward. Like any other government, the Primo de Rivera administration was bound by the needs to make some ideological claim to represent the people and to present itself as legitimate,

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<sup>9</sup> Somers, "Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere," 612.

what Julio Aróstegui has referred to as the ‘pseudo-legality’ of dictatorship.<sup>10</sup> These demands meant showing some respect for legal precedent and tradition. The regime was constantly aware of its exceptional status and made frequent reference to an abstract form of justice in its discourse to compensate for this. Petition lent itself well to this atmosphere in that it naturally tends to seek extra-judicial solutions when legal argument has failed. While it has not been possible to determine the formal criteria that determined whether or not a claim would be accepted by the authorities, assuming that such criteria even existed, this thesis has revealed that such petitions were frequently successful in achieving the aims of their authors, despite the overt authoritarianism of the government. There were distinct advantages to appropriating and redeploying elements of the regime’s discourse for this purpose as this allowed letter-writers to express contrary opinions while still presenting themselves as ‘good’ citizens.

It is also important to observe that notions of justice featured prominently in the denunciations made to the regime during the *Directorio Militar* period. While these were sometimes marked by reference to hearsay or motivated by personal grudges, the majority were made in the belief that crimes had been committed by public administrators. *Caciquismo* was a floating signifier and the fact that much of this pre-dictatorship behaviour had been tolerated, if not endorsed, by previous governments meant that it could only be punished *ex post facto*. This pushed the law to its absolute limit. However, the concept of justice was equally as malleable as that of *caciquismo*, as we saw in Chapter Five. This could be invoked as much by those suffering from the repression implemented by the regime as by those who wished to contribute to it by eliminating the alleged enemies of Spain, particularly regionalists and separatists. This shows that the petitioners’ understanding of how the law should be applied was very often guided by factors like nationalism. In this sense, the subordination of justice to other concerns prefigured the mechanics of the post-Civil War repression.

The public sphere was severely limited for the duration of the dictatorship. The freedoms of gathering, association and expression were suspended, while key opinion-

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<sup>10</sup> Aróstegui, “Opresión y pseudo-juridicidad.”

forming institutions like the press were also rigidly controlled by the government. Because of this, petition represented an important channel through which dissent could be expressed freely to the authorities, even as the regime resorted to increasingly repressive measures amid its decline. Far from lying dormant, public opinion remained active throughout the dictatorship in this form and public letter-writing allowed ordinary people to imagine alternatives to the policies of the regime. Although these voices were often disparate, they contributed to the re-emergence of the public sphere upon Primo's resignation in January 1930. By making claims to the authorities, letter-writers successfully influenced government decisions and, in so doing, engaged in the practice of citizenship. Letter-writing, therefore, helped to facilitate the survival of a participatory, rather than merely acclamatory political culture during the dictatorship years. This ensured that public opinion could re-emerge rapidly in the 1930s.

If one of the chief aims of the regime was to achieve a controlled mobilisation of the Spanish population, particularly sectors that had hitherto been uninvolved in politics, then it was partially successful in this aim, even if this could not be exploited to ensure the 'constitutional' end to the dictatorship that Primo searched for.<sup>11</sup> As we saw in Chapter One, the imperatives of 'governmentality' meant that in the first instance much of the administration's nationalisation programme was focused on the elimination of *caciques*, the intermediaries between the state and the population. Although there is ample evidence that *caciquismo* adapted to these new circumstances, the purges carried out in the early months of the dictatorship certainly proved disruptive to the practice.<sup>12</sup> As Gómez Navarro argues, in the medium term the new political system ushered in by the dictatorship was able to take root, albeit in shallow form. This meant the emergence of a real possibility of turning to the central power of the state for protection from local abuses, a development that was, in Gómez Navarro's view, an important form of political mobilisation. However, while he suggests that this was limited due to the fact that much of it took place through the medium of letters, we must not discount the role played by claims-making in the

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<sup>11</sup> Quiroga, *Making Spaniards*, 184.

<sup>12</sup> See the essays in the final section of Robles Egea and Álvarez Junco, *Política en penumbra*.

evolution of citizenship practices.<sup>13</sup> The prevalence of letter-writing to authorities, be this in the denunciatory or petitionary genres, shows a clear capacity for self-representation, in the population, without the need for middlemen. By entering into negotiation with the state over matters that individuals thought should be of public concern, they engaged in a process which sought to alter and redefine the boundaries of citizenship during the dictatorship. While this did not lead to the regime establishing its vision of citizenship as hegemonic, these new forms of interaction would be carried over into the 1930s when public mobilisation came to dominate the political landscape. During the Republican era, a new and more divisive battle over the nature of Spanish citizenship would take place.<sup>14</sup> The strong public engagement in this topic was one of the dictatorship's principal legacies.

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<sup>13</sup> Gómez-Navarro, *El régimen de Primo de Rivera*, 505.

<sup>14</sup> Holguin, *Creating Spaniards*.

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