Late Spanish Fascists in a Changing World: Latin American Communists and East European Reformism (1956–1975) [*]

> Adolfo Suárez[’s government] was banana-republic thinking in its most international form. It makes sense. He never lived outside Spain and only read national press that said our friends were Latin Americans and Arabs and that French, English and American liberalism was anti-Spanish.[1]

Francoist Spain arose in a context of interwar ideological radicalisation and was supported by fascist powers: its visceral anti-communism emerged from a fratricidal dynamic. After the Second World War ended, once fascism in Europe was defeated and its memory condemned, the Spanish regime could only survive by aligning itself with the Western Bloc in a cold war that was providential for General Franco. The regime kept the memory of the Civil War alive at whatever price as a means of guaranteeing its longevity. In the 1960s, most of Europe still considered Francoist Spain a peculiar regime, a mix of fascism, traditional Catholicism and secular backwardness.[2]

My main aim in this article is to show how the political evolution of Western and Eastern Europe during the cold war cannot be fully understood without analysing the political experiences of countries that were not at the centre of the period’s political decisions, like Spain, whose evolution was inspired and suggested by strategies outside the political mainstream. These connections, which jump over conventional political and military barriers, can be very useful when reflecting on the need to establish a

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[1] Alonso Álvarez de Toledo, 'El muro de Berlín iba a caer de todos modos, pero yo le di el primer empujón” ,*XL Semanal*, 2 Nov. 2014, 64. This search is supported by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiviness of the Government of Spain. HAR2017-85967-P.

[2] Robert O. Paxton ‘Franco’s Spain in comparative perspective’, in Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, ed., *Falange. Las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936-1975)*, (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2012). The classic and most influential work about the nature of the regime is Juan José Linz, ‘An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain’, in Erick Allardt and Arjö Littunen, eds., *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems: Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology*, (Helsinki: The Academic Bookstore, 1964). The best biography about Franco is Paul Preston, *Franco. A biography* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993).

common view of the transatlantic political evolution in the second half of the twentieth century. Interactions between very different countries and regimes speak to us of a major entangled ideological and political reality that we assume to be the traditional Western point of view.[3] In this respect, the internal evolution of Francoist Spain from the mid-1950s through the 1960s portrays a peculiar political situation demonstrating the capillarity of political and social experiences across the Iron Curtain in Europe and Latin America.

In the 1950s, Spain was integrated in the western side of Europe, but remained true to interwar fascism, with a minority of influential sectors linked to the Single Spanish Party, the Falange,[4] which pursued its own third way, ignoring the North American and Soviet models. This was achieved by looking at what was happening in Eastern bloc countries, especially after the events in Hungary in 1956, the Eastern reformism until the Prague spring in 1968, and also the political experiments in Latin America, in other words the Cuban revolution, so close to the Spaniards as it was part of Spain until 1898.

Decontextualized Fascists: Falangists after 1945

The Falangist militants did not identify with Westerners, considered by them as the executioners of those who embodied *civilisation* in the World War (the Nazis and fascists), nor, of course, with the Soviets and other *satellites*. But the Falange knew the only chance to survive was to be very close to Franco in the aftermath of the Second World War.

[3] Some key books about the Cold War world are John L. Gaddis, *The cold war. A new history*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005) and Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, (New York: Basic Books, 2017). On Cold War Europe, see Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005).

[4] A global vision about Fascism in Philip Morgan, *Fascism in Europe. A biography* 1919-1945 (London: Routledge, 2003). The falangist movement made its appearance with a certain degree of difficulty in the context of international debates about fascism. Some of the most recent ones are: Antonio Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis, eds., *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe, 1919-1945*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). See also Constantin Iordachi, ed., *Comparative Fascist Studies. New Perspectives*, (London-New York: Routledge, 2010). Bibliography about Falange is too long to summarize here, from the first academic study by Stanley Payne in 1961 (Stanley G. Payne, *Falange: A history of Spanish Fascism*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961)) to more recent books such as Joan M. Thomàs, *Los fascismos españoles, (*Barcelona: Planeta, 2011). Two good reviews of falangist historiography are Joan M. Thomàs, 'Los estudios sobre las Falanges (FE de las JONS y FET y de las JONS): revisión historiográfica y perspectivas', *Ayer* 71, 2008 (3), pp. 293-318, and Julián Sanz Hoya, 'Falangismo y Dictadura. Una revisión de la historiografía sobre el fascismo español', in Ruiz Carnicer ed., *Falange.* There is high a number of studies of sectorial, local and regional character, but it still remains to establish, in a comparative way and at a European level, the integration of the Spanish falangist specificities along the whole Francoist dictatorship.

The Falangists, in the shadows of power in the late 1940s, revived at the beginning of the 1950s until the government crisis in 1957, where the men of political Catholicism linked to the priestly society of *Opus Dei* took hold of key government positions, especially in the economic area.[5] But the Falangists were still powerful in some areas, for example labour and youth; they had their own ministry, the Ministry of the General Secretary of the Movement, a strong presence at a local and administrative level (most province heads were Falangists) and the mass *encadrement* system, based on a fascist model, was continuing with the Women's Section (SF, Sección Femenina), the Youth Front (Frente de Juventudes), the Spanish University Union (SEU, Sindicato Español Universitario) and the official Worker's Union (Organización Sindical Española). This enormous structure was the same single party created by Franco in April 1937 and it remained in force until a few days before the first democratic elections after the Civil War in 1977. From 1957 it was called the 'Movement'.

After the failed attempt by the Secretary General Minister of the Movement, José Luis de Arrese, to reaffirm the significance of the Falange in 1956–57, in the early 1960s, led by his successor and National Union Delegate, José Solís Ruiz, the bureaucratised structure of the Movement attempted to manufacture a pressure group within the regime, taking advantage of the influence of the union structure. This group aimed to be a type of union-based national labour movement to maintain the Falange's social discourse, transmuting the old original fascism into social responsiveness as opposed to the 'right-wing' (Opus Dei ministers and their allies) faction that wanted to appropriate the regime and its legacy on 18 July.[6]

The 1960s witnessed enormous economic growth in the country, thus ending the backward, hungry and destitute Spain, but also filling it with territorial and social imbalance, and deficits in community services and benefits that fanned the flames of social turmoil. It was a period of expectation and planning for the future of the regime given Franco's inexorable aging. In this context, certain sectors coming out of the Falange try to drive a new project for the future of the regime without Franco taking

[5] The Opus Dei, currently a *personal prelature* of the Catholic Church, was founded by father José María Escrivá de Balaguer, later canonized by the Vatican, who created a priestly society in 1928 aiming to recruit the *finest*. About Catholicism and Spanish Church in public life see Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy. The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1975*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

[6] Àlex Amaya Quer, *El acelerón sindicalista. El aparato de propaganda de la Organización Sindical Española entre 1957 y 1969*, (Madrid: Asociación de Historia Contemporánea/Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2013).

advantage of the new 1966 press law by Minister Fraga Iribarne[7]. These groups launched initiatives such as 'Conversations on the Future of Spain' in 1966,[8] in which they voiced their concern about the regime's exhausted approach and sought their own social base with Falangist leanings as opposed to sectors identifying with Opus Dei. Groups such as the Association of the Former Members of the Youth Front (Asociación de Antiguos Miembros del Frente de Juventudes) fostered the introduction of mechanisms for social participation. Manuel Cantarero del Castillo, a Falangist lawyer, was its leader and later opted for a peculiar formula of Falangist-rooted socialism in the 1970s. This entire open yet interconnected universe can be summarised in expressions like 'blue [for the blue shirt of the Falangists] reformism',[9] 'national left', 'independent Falange' and 'left-wing Falange', all in use in media discourses. This feeling is particularly embodied in figures like Rodrigo Royo, founder of the magazine *SP* (in print from 1957 to 1972) and whose success led to the founding of a short-life daily, *Diario SP*, from 1967 to 1969.[10] Other publications that were part of this project included *Índice*, another personal project of an independent Falangist journalist, Juan Fernández Figueroa, and other minor figures appearing in several conferences, circles and initiatives.

These publications and public events were not dependent on the powerful apparatus of the Movement nor did they receive any direct financing from it; however, individuals on the editorial board or in management were from the Falange or had a career loyal to the regime. At heart, these publications led political renewal, asked for increased participation and reported on the injustices of an unequal world and on the shortcomings of the regime's daily operations. They were also keenly interested in foreign policy, an open discourse for well-educated and informed readers, and they had

[7] The New Ley de Prensa e Imprenta provided an opportunity for the appearance of a bunch of new newspapers and editorial initiatives, but the elimination of prior but not later censorship resulted in innumerable fines against magazines and in entire books being pulled from shelves. See Richard Gunther; José Ramón Montero and José Ignacio Wert, "The Media and Politics in Spain: From Dictatorship to Democracy" (Barcelona: Institut de Ciencies Politiques I Socials, 1999).

[8] José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, 'El reformismo azul en el tardofranquismo. Las "Conversaciones sobre el futuro político de España", la "carta de los 39" y el Grupo Parlamentario Independiente,' in Javier Tusell and Álvaro Soto, eds., *Historia de la transición y consolidación democrática en España (1975-1986)*, (Madrid: UNED, 1995), pp. 253-267.

[9] Julio Gil Pecharromán, *El Movimiento Nacional (1937-1977)*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 2013), pp. 265-270.

[10] The magazine *SP* distributed 21,000 copies a week in such years as 1966, 1967, and 1969 with an impressive 24,000 in 1968. In comparison, an influential magazine of the period like *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* distributed 30,000 copies, and the progressive *Triunfo* 60,000 in 1968. The figures are found in Javier Sánchez Aranda and Carlos Barrera del Barrio, *Historia del periodismo español. Desde sus orígenes hasta 1975*, (Pamplona: EUNSA, 1992), p. 495 and pp. 453-454. *Diario SP* did not last long enough to gain reliable distribution but its influence can be confirmed in the 'Letters to the Editor' section, one of the most dynamic of the press at the time.

their eyes on the future development of a regime they always felt fully connected with since they were the product of the spirit of the uprising on 18 July. These were men trained emotionally and politically in the regime who understood that society needed to move past the Civil War, but that any modification of the regime's work had to be based on it. They rejected a return to the situation before the Civil War close to the Western liberal-democratic model, although they had a wider and more flexible view of the world of culture and the press. But they also saw in Franco and in his continuity an inescapable reference. For some authors, these sectors embodied a third generation of Falangists, born in the years around the Civil War and trained in the heart of the SEU and in Youth Front workshops. These organisations were highly influenced by the 1956 student crisis and, therefore, developed a nonconformist and critical potential within the dictatorship, which, however, did not stop them from holding positions in the regime. The youngest of these men went on to launch the Union of the Democratic Centre (Unión de Centro Democrático) after Franco's death and they supported the reformist policies of President Adolfo Suárez in the democratic transition,[11] while others were eventually involved in anti-Francoist opposition.[12]

This attitude did not come out of nowhere; it developed in Spanish University Unions' magazines as early as the late 1940s, with publications like *Alférez* and *La Hora*, but especially in the 1950s with *Alcalá* and *La Hora,* and at the end of that decade and early into the next with *Nosotros* and in particular *Acento Cultural*, which managed to attract the most talented youth of their generation, resulting in high-quality cultural contributions that also expressed a desire for change. They made it possible to go beyond the regime's short-sightedness and open up a world of creative, literary, social and cultural innovations to Spanish youth.[13] We cannot understand the political maturation process that the Francoist society experienced without the role these publications played, the new environment in universities, which had become safe

[11] A classical view of the democratization process in Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain, Dictatorship to Democracy* (London: Allen &Unwin, 1979). See too Paul Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain 1969-1982* (London: Routledge, 1987) and Víctor Pérez Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society: The Emergence of Democratic Spain* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998). About the end of francoism from inside, see Ignacio Sánchez Cuenca, *Atado y mal atado, El suicidio institucional del franquismo y el surgimiento de la democracia*, (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2014), p. 15ff.

[12] Alfonso Lazo, *Historias falangistas del sur de España. Una teoría sobre vasos comunicantes*, (Sevilla: Espuela de Plata, 2015), p. 355.

[13] On the SEU's magazines, see the important book by Jordi Gracia, *Estado y cultura. El despertar de una conciencia crítica bajo el franquismo, 1940-1962*, (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2006) and Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer 'La voz de la juventud. Prensa universitaria del SEU en el franquismo', in *Bulletin Hispanique*, Tome 98, nº 1, January-June 1996, pp. 175-199.

havens of freedom, and the more open international context, now removed from the dark world of the seamless polarisation of the early cold war and the 1950s,. The readership these publications addressed was a youth socialised in the myths of Falangism before the war, which, although faithful to Franco, had not renounced some of the ideals characteristic of 1930s fascism and yet had adapted to a new international context and the period's changed sensibilities.

These relevant, albeit minority, groups within the political culture of 1960s Falangism paid close attention to the projects and initiatives that could be an alternative road to the consequences of the Second World War, which they actually rejected. This is where the special case of the 1959 Cuban revolution and guerrilla warfare in Latin America, and also the reformist movements in the Eastern European Bloc, which sought nationalist affirmation in the face of Moscow's imposition, came into play. The interest of part of the Francoist political class in these experiences is a way to better understand the dynamics of the Spanish regime and its complex political evolution.[14] The case of Falange, as a remnant of defeated fascisms, focuses our attention on the evolution of an organisation that can help us better clarify the world of post-war neo-fascisms and post-fascisms and their contradictions[15].

A World in Turmoil

Starting in the mid-1950s, those most closely observing social context could see that Spanish society was in turmoil. There was the newly emerging student movement which, starting with the events of February 1956, demonstrated that youth's socialisation in the values of fascism had failed;[16] the university and other cultural platforms, which underwent a process of review and paradigm change that grew

[14] A relevant –and controversial- contribution about the reformism inside the francoism is the book of Cristina Palomares, *The Quest for Survival after Franco. Moderate Francoism nd the Slow Journey to the Polls, 1964-1977 (Brighton-Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2006).*

[15] Although beyond the scope of this paper, it would be interesting to comparatively gauge the movements linked in someway to the fascisms defeated after 1945. There is a clear difference between hardy Francoism, with its monopoly in power for many decades, and the marginal neo-fascist movements going through a different evolutionary process although there may be contacts and points in common. On the subject see Luciano Cheles, Ronnie Ferguson and Michalina Vaugham, *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe*, (London: Longman, 1995), Giuseppe Parlato, *Fascisti senza Mussolini. Le origini del neofascismo in Italia 1943-1948* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006) and Ferrán Gallego, *Neofascistas. Democracia y extrema derecha en Francia e Italia*, Barcelona: Plaza&Janés, 2004).

[16] An overview of the Francoist university and the student movement can be found in Miguel Angel Ruiz Carnicer 'Spanish Universities under Franco', in John Connelly and Michael Grüttner, eds., *Universities under Dictatorship*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University State University Press, 2005). See also Elena Hernández Sandoica, Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer and Marc Baldó, *Estudiantes contra Franco (1939-1975). Oposición política y movilización juvenil*, (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2007).

throughout the 1960s and that eventually generated ideas of political freedom on college campuses; a young workers' movement, which emerged in the early 1960s and challenged the regime from Asturian mines and created the first 'workers' commissions'; and the country's developmentalism and economic transformation, which fostered the appearance of social movements at the end of the 1960s and 1970s, the neighbourhood movement being one good example.[17]

In social issues, the old-fashioned, stale Spain clutching at National Catholicism and fascist dreams from the 1930s and 1940s was being left behind, subsumed in the emerging consumerism: access to a modest first SEAT car; a small house on the outskirts of the city that was owned rather than rented; paid holidays; and the progressive entry of tourism with new customs that pushed aside the old.[18]

The part of the opposition that was most conscious of this situation started to implement formulae for national reconciliation and overcoming the Civil War, as demonstrated by the strategy of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) designed by Javier Pradera and Jorge Semprún.[19] Unlike these centres of outside opposition, the regime as a whole was never able to flesh out either a plan for reconciliation or an exciting proposal for a common future. Any attempt always faced the roadblock of what the regime considered to be its foundation: triumph in the Civil War and the values embodied by the uprising of 18 July 1936. This date, marking the start of the rebellion against the Second Republic, became a symbol of the victors and identified with the same regime.

The year 1956 was not only important in the case of Spain, but also worldwide, and it is increasingly valued by historiography.[20] In particular, the major impact the events in Hungary had on the world cannot be ignored. They are essential to explain the

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[17] Pamela Radcliff**,** *Making Democratic Citizens in Spain. Civil Society and the Popular Origins of the Transition, 1960-78*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011); Tamar Groves; Nigel Townson, Inbal Ofer and Antonio Herrera, *Social Movements and the Spanish Transition. Building Citizenship in Parishes, Neighbourhoods, Schools and the Countryside*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[18] Nigel Townson, ed., *Spain Transformed, The Franco Dictatorship 1959-1975*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[19] Jorge Semprún (1923-2011) was a writer, politician and scriptwriter who was a militant Spanish communist until his expulsion in 1964. He was the main contact with the inner new opposition to the dictatorship. He was Ministry of Culture between 1988 and 1991 in the government of Felipe González. Javier Pradera (1934-2011) was a writer, journalist, political analyst and editor, who was also a communist militant in close contact with Semprún. Grandson of a well-known carlist linked to the regime, he soon became a driving force of the PCE in the 50s in the University Madrid. See Felipe Nieto, *La aventura comunista de Jorge Semprún. Exilio, clandestinidad y ruptura* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2014), p. 289. Santos Juliá, *Camarada Javier Pradera* (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutemberg/Círculo de Lectores, 2012).

[20] See the work by Simon Hall, *1956. The World in Revolt*, (London: Faber&Faber, 2016).

wake-up call society received at the time. As Jorge Semprún, a man who truly understood his age, said: "[t]he epicentre of the 1956 movement, the beginning of this almost seismic landslide, lies in the Soviet world, although there were repercussions in the capitalist world.'[21] This is unlike what occurred in another key year, 1968, when it was American capitalism and the West's liberal system that descended into crisis, although, as the Prague Spring showed, it also had consequences in the East.

The Hungary of the reformist communist leader Imre Nagy, and his challenge to a still lukewarm-Stalinist Moscow, was the basis for a series of movements that affected the entire world, although their epicentre lay in the Europe under Soviet influence. Without Hungary's reformism, itself the product of the de-Stalinisation begun by Khrushchev in the Soviet party's famous secret session that denounced Stalin's crimes and his system of terror, we cannot fully understand the change in the PCE's attitude and the start of the reconciliation policy. It was also a consequence of the influence of a handful of young people affiliated with communism, descendants of families from both sides with no direct experience of the Civil War, who worked underground inside the country.[22]

Nevertheless, according to Semprún again, the changes related to 1956 were 'comprehensive and start[ed] to have repercussions in the context of a world condemned to fight among itself for supremacy'.[23] The practice of international relations seemed to be more open and the mutual interaction between blocs much more evident than was admitted at the time. Real and apparent liberalisation, which came about in the communist world during the period and throughout the 1950s, and whose influence stretches into the 1960s, also touched a regime like Spain's, which had survived with no changes because the starting of the cold war secured General Franco's position. Reports of Stalin's crimes fed tensions and gave wings to those who defended the margins of freedom, even—although it sounds paradoxical—in Spain. When students rejected police action in the first clashes before the crisis of 1956 and wanted to attack the police chief, they called him 'the Spanish Beria', referring to the notorious Soviet secret police chief. Spanish students, in some ways, were comparing the oppression of the Francoist regime to that of Stalinist Russia.

[21] Jorge Semprún, 'Memorias de nuestros personajes', en Antonio López Pina (ed.), *La generación del 56* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2010),169.
[22] Juliá, *Camarada*, 53ff.
[23] Semprún, 'Memorias', 169.

The metaphorical Iron Curtain did not prevent events on one side from having repercussions on the other. These repercussions were not a mere reaction of the governing elites, but rather the reaction of a society that was paying closer attention to the realities that undermined the dominant discourse on each side. Media directly linked to the regime, such as the *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, the publication of the regime's think tank, the Institute of Political Studies (*Instituto de Estudios Políticos*), and the main newspaper for the Movement's press, *Arriba*, closely monitored the atmosphere in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death and were attentive to the new scene personified by Khrushchev. At that time, the *Revista de Estudios Políticos* had a column on international politics which reviewed the main international discussions, including an analysis of changes in the USSR and their influence on Eastern Europe.[24] *Arriba* covered the shifting international situation starting in the mid-1950s in some detail: the Bandung Conference,[25] the episodes of Hungary's political evolution,[26] and the 20th Soviet Communist Party Congress, which contained some surprises.[27] This monitoring was always combined with an attitude of distrust of any initiative coming out of Moscow, to be expected in the publication that embodied the regime's official position. This did not prevent scrutiny of the political future of countries like Poland or Hungary when riots broke out in Budapest and mass movements mobilised in Warsaw. The invasion of Hungary would become a symbol of the 'invariability' of communist conduct and pitted the traditional Catholic Hungary against Soviet terror. The Hungarian flag flew at the headquarters of the Falange in Madrid and exiles disembarking in Franco's Spain were offered politically exploited support.

We had to wait until the new media, closer to what was called the Falangist 'national left in the 1960s', tried to formulate a new view of what was happening behind the Iron Curtain to go beyond this handbook anti-communism that the regime continued

[24] A couple of examples in Camilo Barcia Trelles, 'El ayer, el hoy y el mañana internacionales', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 86-87 (March-June 1956), pp. 200ff, and Camilo Barcia Trelles, 'El ayer, el hoy y el mañana internacionales', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 94 (July-August 1957), pp. 230ff. I would like to thank Professor Nicolás Sesma at the Université Grenoble-Alpes, an expert on the Instituto de Estudios Políticos, for his help finding some of these texts.

[25] 'Ha comenzado la conferencia de Bandung', *Arriba*, 19 april 1955, p. 1. The Bandung Conference, in April 1955, was the first attempt to organize in the international arena a lobby of the strong states with a colonial past (Egypt, India, Indonesia, among others). This lobby tried to establish a platform to leave behind colonialism and its consequences, overcoming the dialectics of the Cold War.

[26] 'Imre Nagy y Rakosi', *Arriba*, 20 May 1955, p. 13.

[27] José Ignacio Gómez Tello, 'Nota internacional. Krustchev inaugura el Congreso', *Arriba*, 15 Feb. 1956, p. 9

to stand by. Before 1956, diplomatically Spanish relations with Eastern Europe had very limited content and were defined by the regime's declared anti-communist hostility.[28]

A New International Context: Anti-Americanism and Awareness of the *Third World*

After 1956, we find a context of peaceful coexistence and the emergence of the Non-Aligned spirit in accord with the Bandung ideas in the rapidly expanding national revolutions in the Arab world, like the Egypt case with Nasser. These political phenomena would open a rift in the cold war division in blocs in which the Falangists, aligned with the defeated factions in 1945, could never feel quite at ease.

The 'middle road' was not followed by these groups alone; it was part of the regime's political culture.[29] Franco's Spain, despite being aligned with the West and hosting American bases on its soil after the 1953 accord, felt part of the Europe that had lost in the Second World War. In a constant stream of articles coming out of the regime's press, and in particular out of the Movement press related to it, statements can be found expressing a more or less melancholy proximity to the defeated fascist powers expressed in savage attacks against materialism and the liberal American-style model: 'By definition, the name for any position that condemns the capitalist structure and the communist dictatorship, defending the most advanced social justice and respect for the eternal values of the human spirit, is fascism although it may bother those who let their brains be washed by the rapacious victors of World War II'.[30] The fascist soul of many journalists, writers and men of the regime, even if they sided with the West against an Asian communism that for them was the incarnation of evil (meaning it was identifiable with the losing side in the Civil War), did not align with the political-economic conclusions of the victors of the Second World War.

Capitalism and the materialistic values that Falangist rhetoric rejected were embodied by the US and prompted memories of the war in Cuba in 1898 when the Spanish press compared the Spanish *lion*, noble and devoted to a lost cause, to the

[28] One of the few works to discuss the relationship between Spain and Eastern Europe before 1956 is by Matilde Eiroa, *Las relaciones de Franco con Europa Centro-oriental (1939-1955)*, (Ariel: Barcelona, 2001).
[29] As described by Lazo, *Historias*. 440ff.
[30] Rodrigo Royo, 'Nuevo fascismo', *Diario SP*, 30 May 1968.

American *pig*, shamelessly seeking profit. All of these values continued to be associated with the image of the US in Falangist discourse.[31]

This anti-Americanism is perceived with disgust by some of the readers of the press like the magazine *SP* and *Diario SP*, and we often find letters to the editor criticising the 'anti-American' tone of the publications, while they bemoan the excessive attention paid to the evolution of socialist countries or Marxist regimes. A reader today still has this impression when browsing their pages. The critical tone towards the US, the economic power of their multinationals, and especially the imposition of their desires in Central and South America is a constant, although always expressed carefully and with discretion. The editor-in-chief of *SP*, who took over from founder Rodrigo Royo, affirmed that anti-Americanism was one of the core themes of the magazine, which explains many of its aspects.[32] Significantly, in 1969, *SP* positioned itself against the agreement on the Spanish-North American bases up for renewal while avoiding direct confrontation.[33]

Searching for models in this new international context caused journalists affiliated with this independent Falangism to become fascinated by new phenomena like the Non-Aligned Movement and—despite their occasional proximity to Marxist ideology—to dedicate more and more space to them. This is the case of an Arab world fully immersed in the process of becoming independent and of accelerated political change with the creation of the United Arab Republic by Nasser and the growing tensions with Israel.[34] The hostility they aroused in the West only increased Francoist interest in the movements, often expressing active criticism of North American intervention, especially in Latin America and other hot zones in the world, like Vietnam.

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[31] Sebastian Balfour, "'The Lion and the Pig': Nationalism and National Identity in Fin-de Siécle Spain", in Claire Mar-Molinero and Angelo Smith (eds.), *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberium Peninsula* (Oxford: Berg, 1996). A wide angle in Rusell A. Berman, *Anti-Americanism in Europe. A Cultural Problem* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004); a focused one in Daniel Fernández de Miguel, *El enemigo yanqui. Las raíces conservadoras del antiamericanismo español*, (Zaragoza: Genueve Ediciones, 2012), and Alessandro Seregni, *El antiamericanismo español*, (Madrid: Síntesis, 2007).

[32] Interview recorded with Luis Ángel de la Viuda, 27 May 2015. Luis Ángel de la Viuda was the director of the magazine *SP* from September 1967 to November 1968 after taking over from founder Rodrigo Royo, and was then director from 1968 to 1972 of News for *Radio Nacional de España*, the only Spanish radio authorized to broadcast news. Luis Ángel de la Viuda was later appointed as assistant director and then director of Televisión Española (TVE), the Spanish national public television

[33] 'USA, sí. Bases, no', *SP* nº458, 29 June 1969.

[34] They regularly follow the evolution of these areas of the globe and adopt nuanced supporting positions of the actions of some of the leaders. See, for example, 'Egipto+Siria+Yemen: Nueva nación árabe', *SP* nº 40 9 Feb. 1958.

Some of the regimes emerging from the Third World were a good example of middle roads. This rapprochement with the Third World was also linked to the type of regimes they embodied. They were modern regimes, 'new kinds of regimes' in the terminology of Cominform leader Zhdanov, arising from independent or nationalist socialist revolutions with charismatic unelected figures that embodied the essence of the regime (i.e. Tito in Yugoslavia, also a military man, President Nasser in Egypt, Fidel Castro in Cuba, Ben Bella in Algeria, among other leaders of the time). These regimes had a national discourse and often a single-party structure, or at least they did not hold periodic elections and, therefore, wanted to have their own voice within the cold war context. In other words, their situations were not that different from Spain's, in the Francoist view. This interest in the Non-Aligned and the Third World was a sound model to use to trace a trajectory veering away from the regime's old rhetoric. It also gave it a 'revolutionary' identification and arguments for this 'middle-road' vision that was seeking an intermediary path between capitalism and communism and that was nothing more than the expression of the persistence of fascist hypotheses adapted to a very different international context.

This evident dislike of the American model, combined with a natural rejection of the Soviets, explains the fascination with political initiatives that ignored the two major models to seek a middle road that did not limit itself to the Third World. Consequently, General de Gaulle's France was also looked towards as a result of its independent and defiant stance in the international arena, although no one questioned the anti-communist character of the venerable former leader of Free France. The two generals, De Gaulle and Franco, were compared in this period and the question was even raised of whether the Falange might be the inspiration for some of the French government's measures,[35] disregarding the fact that the Frenchman had fought fascism from the start and had been put in power through electoral means, while General Franco had risen to power hoisted up by European fascisms and held onto his post through a fierce dictatorship.

None of this detracted from the fact that the Spanish regime did not think twice about aligning with the West in its anti-communism, as shown by its desire to belong to NATO when it was created in 1949.[36] Nevertheless, its discomfort with the victors'

[35] 'De Gaulle descubre la Falange', *Diario SP*, 9 june 1968, 1.

[36] On Spanish foreign policy in its relations with the U.S. as the leader of the West, see the book by Ángel Viñas, *En las garras del águila. Los pactos con Estados Unidos, de Francisco Franco a Felipe González (1945-1995)*, (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003).

democratic model was undeniable and would continue. The rejection of liberal democracy, however, one based on the dictatorship's political practice, became more nuanced, especially throughout the 1960s when the noun 'democracy' lost its negative connotation and the adjective 'democratic' became more important. Democracy is 'organic' or 'real' and this was when the idea of citizen participation and involvement in the state's decisions was gradually assumed to be inevitable.[37] This new language produced 'participation', 'coinciding opinions', 'association' and 'organic' democracy alternatives working towards a new non-American model that was a better Western fit for a Spain that in 1962 expressed its desire to form part of the European Common Market. Some of the regime's subsequent measures, for example starting to directly elect representatives by families in 1967 after the Organic Law of the State of January 1967 was passed, were a demonstration of the need to find a model that made participation and 'democracy' compatible with the reality of a dictatorial regime whose doctrinal roots could be found in fascism.[38]

A Changing World: The Case of the Cuban Revolution

In the case of Cuba, the independent Falangist media saw the same *élan* of the original Falange in the guerrillas and their leaders. While in Sierra Maestra, Fidel Castro allegedly carried the complete works of José Antonio Primo de Rivera in his pack.[39] It was obvious to *SP* readers that the magazine was sympathetic to the revolution, appointing a journalist, Cotón Bustamante, who defined himself as a Falangist-Castrist,

[37] How the notion of democracy was relativized is demonstrated in texts that aim for a certain theoretical relevance like François Gaucher, 'La crisis de la democracia en un mundo en mutación', *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, nº106, pp. 167-185; also Jorge Xifra Heras, 'Democracia, despolitización y partido único', en *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 122 (1962), pp. 63-84. In some way, these texts assume that the inter-war period's notion of liberal democracy has been left behind and point to how open and varied the term was then, encompassing regimes with very different practices, even being compatible with the existence of a single party.

[38] On the Francoist regime's definition of itself and its visions of 'democracy', see Nicolás Sesma Landrín, 'Un alineamiento para el Movimiento. Rodrigo Fernández-Carvajal y la redefinición del sistema político franquista', in *Rúbrica Contemporánea* Vol. 3 nº 5 (2014), pp. 89-108.

[39] Carlos Franqui, a key figure in initial propaganda work for Castro's regime, told the story that Castro had the complete works of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the historical leader of Spanish fascism, as his bedside reading in Sierra Maestra in Santiago Pérez Díaz, 'Un amor tormentoso', *El País*, 2 Dec. 1996.

as its correspondent . The paper supported the revolution until the first diplomatic crises between Franco's Spain and Castro's Cuba once it clearly aligned with Moscow.[40]

At the beginning, the legendary aura of the figure of Fidel Castro was promoted. He was introduced as 'half intellectual, half warrior', a leader of a war 'that has ended with the victory of tenacity and faith in pure ideals [...]. He has the combination of prestige and the halo of the hero and the victor. He is the myth of the people. [...] He wants to leave his rifle behind and return to his books but perhaps it is not yet time.'[41] The references to the Galician background of this new strongman in Cuba, his popularity, and the enthralled descriptions of his contact with the people are the result of the fascination of *SP*'s Falangist correspondent, who believed the revolution José Antonio dreamed of was materialising in this ambitious university graduate.

Ernesto Guevara, *Che*, was another object of fascination, the embodiment of the spirit of adventure and courage for the American continent.[42] Media like *SP* collaborated in mythicising him and Fidel in the first months of the revolution despite his proclaimed communist militancy, which was rendered a minor or circumstantial piece of information ('a Marxist Ernesto—what can I say—who was never active in the party and who orthodox communists accused of being a Trotskyist').[43] His true consecration came with his death in Bolivia; Che Guevara became a model for those who said they felt they were independent and social Falangists. In the words of the editor-in-chief of *Diario SP*, Rodrigo Royo, founder of the magazine of the same name and the heart and soul of these Falange left sectors:

> I'm not right or left-wing. I'm for Franco, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, and José Antonio Girón. In fourth place, I'm for Che Guevara and I think that we have to fight as a guerrilla, a gigantic guerrilla the whole of Spain participates in as a mass [...]

[40] Interest in the development of the guerrilla in Sierra Maestra began early on, just like how immediately Fidel Castro stood out, for example in 'Cuba. Batista vs. Castro', *SP* nº 5, 9 june 1957), 13. Although the tone on the revolution in its first stages is descriptive but not enthusiastic, a half grin can be made out when triumph finally arrives. See, for example, 'Triunfó en Cuba el Movimiento "26 de julio" acaudillado por Fidel Castro', *SP* nº 88, 11 Jan. 1959, 13. The cover title of this issue is 'Cuba: Fidel Castro Victorioso.'

[41] 'El vencedor: Fidel Castro', *SP* nº88, 11 jan. 1959, 19.

[42] 'Che Guevara...soldado... de fortuna', *SP* nº93, 15 feb. 1959, 14-16. The correspondent Cotón Bustamante interviewed Che and they went over the revolution's next steps and summarized his biography and career. In the interview Che defines himself politically as 'a left-wing nationalist, maybe ever far-left' (p. 15) although the interviewer does not take into consideration the accusation that Che is 'one of the infiltrated communist agents in the Revolution.'

[43] Manuel Cabrera, '¡Patria o muerte!', *SP* nº 369, 22 Oct. 1967,11.

> to take on the problem of education, the problem of housing, the problem of electronics, the challenge of conquering space.[44]

The hazardous life of the guerrilla, the man who reacts when faced with injustice, becomes a heroic deed that turns him into an exceptional man and a model that should be imitated, a copy of Jesus Christ and of José Antonio Primo de Rivera and the embodiment of Hispanic values: 'At the very end of the day, this famous "Che" had become—and would be from now on and every day hereafter—a perfect example of the Hispanic race, a fabulous interpreter of Spanishness.'[45]

It is worth noting that this high praise of Che and his mythologization assumed the way to revolution was through armed struggle. This was combined with a relative defence of the Cuban revolution, which reaffirmed itself with his less than solemn attitude when he was minister, his stepping down from his post, disagreeing with Fidel, and his devotion until the end to the cause he believed in. For that reason he was chosen by *SP* magazine as 1967 man of the year together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fernando Mª Castiella. *Diario SP* even published *The Bolivian Diary* in full and in serial form, with a prologue by Fidel Castro on the cover of the copy that began the series,[46] quite surprising from today's perspective.

The intensity of the praise for *Che* was not matched by that for Castro, nor for the Cuban revolution after the first excitement had worn off. But over time, and after the missile crisis in October 1962, the tendency was to justify the Cuban situation due to Castro's need to latch onto the Soviets, given how dangerous his US neighbour was. As in the case of the East, the heterodoxy of their positions and the rebellion against Moscow was highlighted repeatedly in this independent Falangist press. In this view, Fidel, apparently fighting the apparatchiks of Moscow, incited sympathy in so far as he was made out to be an independent, a reformist who was accused by orthodox communists of being 'anarchising, [an] exhibitionist and petit bourgeois but that did much damage to the main adversary in the cold war.'[47] Fidel also benefited from his closeness to the much-admired *Che* and when he died *Diario SP* dedicated four pages to reproduce the long speech in which Castro announced the death of the legend.[48] This

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[44] 'Carta del Presidente-fundador. Más dinero', *SP* nº 411, 4 Aug. 1968, 17.

[45] Rodrigo Royo, 'Buenos días. La muerte del "Che"', *Diario SP*, 17 Oct. 1967, 1.

[46] 'Diario del Che en Bolivia', *Diario SP*, 12 July 1968, 1 and supplement.

[47] 'Soviéticos contra castristas', *SP* nº 372, 12 Nov. 1967), 23-26.

[48] 'Fidel Castro afirma que el "Che" fue rematado después del combate. Texto íntegro del discurso del primer ministro cubano', *Diario SP*, 20 Oct. 1967, 9-12.

vision of *Che* and Fidel as 'anti-Soviet' continued and only when Castro aligned with the military intervention that cut down the Prague Spring in 1968 did enthusiasm finally cool and this Falangist media become fully aware of how influenced the Cuban model was by Moscow.[49]

The relations between revolutionary Cuba and Franco's Spain were always stable despite the vicissitudes and moments of crisis. Cuba and the figure of *Che* would be a paradigmatic case of this immediate affection and of the new Falangist generation's interest in the development of political experiments that were again seen as a middle road between capitalism and communism. For the editor-in-chief of the publications *SP* and *Diario SP* and the heart of the theses we are discussing, Rodrigo Royo, Latin America was the epicentre of the world's renewal cast as an opportunity to overcome the democratic model of the West:

> In this Continent a revolution of incalculable power and transcendence is being forged [...] something very big is going to happen there, in the immensity that is Spanish America [...] an underground flood that will wash all away. Wash away democracy, as a theatre show to lull people to sleep and neutralise the proletarian masses: we know what it is up to, shamelessly, in all the countries in America.[50]

From a Spanish perspective the nationalist factor plays an important role, especially in the case of Spanish America where US meddling was rejected and there was an almost instinctive sympathy for any liberation movement or claim to sovereignty. This approach to the Latin American revolutionary road—valued for its anti-American aspect and its break with cold war dynamics—reassert the search for an international middle way and led them to show interest in reformist movements coming from Eastern Europe.

Peering Over the Iron Curtain

Beginning at the end of the 1950s and continuing throughout the 1960s, the evolution of Eastern European countries[51] after the tragedy of Hungary grabbed the attention of specialised media like *Revista de Estudios Políticos* and *Revista de Política Internacional*, both published by the Institute of Political Studies. From the mid to late

[49] 'Cuba. Diez años de soledad', *SP* nº446, 13 April 1969, 38-42.

[50] Rodrigo Royo, 'Carta de Bogotá. Ya viene la revolución', *SP* nº89, 18 Jan. 1959), 5-7.

[51] Two good references about the birth and first years of Communist Eastern Europe are, Thomas W.Simons, Jr., *Eastern Europe in the Postwar World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), and Anna Applebaum, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Easterm Europe, 1945-1956* (New York: Doubleday, 2012). About the evolution of the region, see George Schöpflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe 1945-1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

1960s, these included a series of articles on how its parliamentary regime operated and on its internal evolution, going beyond the anti-communist tropes of the regime's usual propaganda. Attempts were made to learn more about the political-legal dynamics of these regimes, such as the case of the new Czechoslovakian constitution,[52] the Polish five-year plans[53] or how its parliamentary regime worked,[54] the structure of government and lobbies in China,[55] the operation of the Soviet representative system,[56] and the influence of the agreements of Soviet Communist Party congresses.[57] Cuba was also present,especially in the initial stages of the revolution.[58] A relatively solid knowledge of the details of the workings of the socialist regimes that goes beyond clichés can be identified in these pieces as well as a certain ability to observe their evolution and their problems. Beyond the political-legal issues, the *Revista de Estudios Políticos* also raised more probing questions about the Eastern bloc, including the nature of communism,[59] the move from a socialist to a communist society,[60] the role of a single party in these societies[61] (of special interest for the Francoist regime) and the new meaning of democracy in Central Europe.[62] The single party, a common theme in fascist as well as communist regimes, was still seen as a modern and potentially active element for society's democratic transformation:

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[52] Stefan Glejdura, 'La nueva constitución de Checo-Eslovaquia', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 117-118 (1961).
[53] Leandro Rubio García, 'Polonia ante el plan Quinquenal 1961-1965', *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, nº 116 (1961).
[54] Manuel D. Aranegui, 'El régimen parlamentario en Polonia,' in *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 169-170 (1970), pp. 163-171.
[55] Jürgen Domes, 'La estructura del Gobierno y de los grupos de mando en la China comunista', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 128 (1963) or Juan C.L. Lu, 'El sistema de gobierno Chino', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 149 (1966).
[56] Manuel de Aranegui, 'El régimen parlamentario en la URSS', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 176-177 (1971).
[57] Luis Santiago de Pablo, "El XXII Congreso del PC de la URSS", *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº122 (1962).
[58] Antonio Lázaro, 'Cuba: las leyes constitucionales de la revolución', *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, nº 119 (1961) or Emilio Maza Rodríguez, 'Castro, la revolución cubana y la autodeterminación de los pueblos',*Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 124 (July-August 1962). These articles, critical with the conversion of the revolution into a communist regime aligned with Moscow, also underline the North American government's responsibility and the intervention of fundamentalist circles in Miami, while paying attention to the Caribbean peculiarities of the political system.
[59] George Uscatescu, 'Tres meditaciones sobre el comunismo', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 119 (1961).
[60] Luis Santiago de Pablo, 'El tránsito del socialismo al comunismo en la ideología soviética actual', in *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 121 (1962).
[61] Jorge Xifra Heras, 'Democracia, despolitización y partido único', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº 122 (1962).
[62] Joseph M.K. Kirschbaum, 'Hacia una nueva democracia para la Europa central', *Revista de Estudios Políticos* nº125 (September-October 1962).

> If the single party can be identified as the defender of a potential democracy in backwards countries, it can also appear as the consequence of the disintegration of democracy itself, when social equalisation and material prosperity consume the process of society's de-politicisation as a consequence of the law we might call the *inverse proportion of the effectiveness of parties and the masses' standard of living.*[63]

In the de-politicised society of developed countries, 'politics has been reduced to a mere hobby to fill leisure time, like bridge, or stamp collecting' and the tendency towards a single party would no longer be the stuff of old fascism or post-war communism. Single-partyism is presented as a modern alternative compatible with democracy, a mechanism used by regimes like Kemal Ataturk's Turkey, the India of the National Congress Party and the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico, saving the Spanish case and the cases of Eastern Europe as modern channels for political representation not any less democratic than those in the Anglo-Saxon model.

Given the journal's reiteration of its interest in the internal evolution of these countries and of the wider area in the early 1960s, it seems clear that this was not a mere intellectual or academic exercise. It was instead a declaration of intent on the part of those Falangist sectors included in the Institute of Political Studies that operated as an intellectual laboratory for the regime's policies and the main site for the preparation of drafts of laws for the Francoist dictatorship.[64]

At a less academic and more journalistic level, the pages of magazines like *SP*, starting in 1957, and of *Diario SP*, from 1967 to 1969, devoted ample space to international politics and especially to the situation in Eastern Europe, supplying not only news bites, but on occasion long reports. These reports did not reaffirm the anti-communist diatribes that other purely propagandistic publications like *El Español* or *Arriba* had provided in the past. In the case of Cuba and the Latin American guerrillas, they showed a genuine interest in studying the internal movements of the local communist parties and how they differentiated themselves from the Russians, in a generally neutral and informative tone. This had already occurred in the past in the case of Yugoslavia and the personality of Tito and went one step further in the case of Ceausescu's Romania.[65] We have already seen the impact of the Hungarian rebellion

[63] Xifra Heras, 'Democracia', p. 68-69.
[64] Nicolás Sesma Landrín, *Antología de la Revista de Estudios Políticos*, (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2009), introduction.
[65] Not all of the mentions of the evolution of Eastern Europe are here included, since they constantly appeared in most weekly editions. For example, 'Rumanía. Presidente a la medida', en *SP* nº377, 17 dec. 1967), 33. An extensive report on the topic of reformism, qualified as "revisionism" in Soviet terminology, is found in 'Europa del Este. La epidemia del revisionismo', *SP* nº 381, 14 Jan. 1968, 26-32,

and the attitude towards the new USSR of Khrushchev. In cases like those cited, attention was drawn to the significance of the national factor, introducing the evolution of a part of the Eastern bloc as national reaffirmation in confrontation with Moscow. Since these reformist movements are shown as nationalist movements, they connected with other regimes, as in Latin America, where even Francoism might be included. Readers were given detailed information delivered with a certain capacity to dig deeper into internal tensions in local communist parties and the fine distinctions between political personalities' positions. When they spoke of the background of Czechoslovakia's political evolution—*the* current event at the end of the 1960s—they spoke in terms of the 'liberal communists and Stalinists at odds with each other', the influence of the Yugoslavian experience in planning, the investment in transforming economic structures, and intellectuals' criticism. Special relevance was given to the national question and especially the independence of the East's leader, who at that time appeared to be Nicolae Ceausescu, and who they introduced as late as January 1968 as the 'De Gaulle of communism' in so far as the French president also aspired to distance himself from the closed Atlanticism of his bloc. Ceausescu represented Romania's 'recovered destiny', building bridges with the West and especially the US, and as such was positively assessed as 'number one rebel' and the best example of the crisis of Soviet influence in the East.

The role of Janos Kadar, the administrator of the difficult lesson of 1956, was positively assessed as he attempted to tread a slow and cautious path through the spirit of the defeated 1956 revolution to achieve a certain independence from Moscow. The blood drawn had been fertile and in Hungary we also saw the defence of a middle road with respect to Moscow, especially in economics. Only Bulgaria and Eastern Germany would remain on the side-lines of the process. In Bulgaria, loyalty to Moscow was embodied by its leader, Zhivkov, in the orthodox line he towed compared to the Chinese and the 'new softer and liberal communists'. And in the German case, although there were newer and more sensitive responses to the population's needs, its president, Walter Ulbricht, stayed firm—they said—and there was no room to include East Germany among the revisionists of the Soviet bloc.

These symptoms of change and reaffirmation of specifically socialist paths, in addition to the 'liberal' tendencies of economic reforms in those countries, meant that

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which reviews the topic of economic and political "liberalization" in all of the countries in the Eastern bloc.

little remained 'of the monolithic system, of the brotherhood at any cost, of the incorruptible unity of the countries in Eastern Europe' and that 'the satellites are definitively out of orbit'.[66] The reasons for this were not to be found inside the bloc alone:

> The new realities that framed Europe at all levels made most of those ex-satellites. Besides interior independence processes—almost always arising from economic reform, the work of intellectuals, important in countries with a considerable cultural level—and the entente that, in many senses, the USSR and the US experienced, there were other factors of note: the arrogance of de Gaulle's policies in Europe, which created a whole school, a rejuvenation of national feeling, and the mentality of the new technocrats of communism, focusing more on production than on doctrinal intransigence.[67]

It was the period's international relaxation and the softening of the trenches of the cold war that made these unique paths surface due to historical and national peculiarities and variations. In some ways, through the biased prism used by parts of Francoist Falangism to analyse international policy, this meant the middle road was a fact in the crumbling blocs, where the national factor, the need to open up economically, and the advance of democratisation was actually happening, without the need for a multi-party system or periodic elections as in the West and with a clear personal leadership, which made them very similar in form to Franco's regime. This explains their interest.

It is evident that this expectancy and interest in what happened in Eastern Europe exploded with the transformations of Czechoslovakia under Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek.[68] And for many, the Prague Spring was the palpable demonstration of the progressive dissolution of the rigidity of Stalinism's Soviet bloc and the possibility of a middle road actually materialising. Hungary seemed to have been forgotten. Socialist attachment, at least in name, to these sensibilities of the Falangist left meant that even more attention was paid to other cases within the bloc, such as Yugoslavia and Romania, and there was talk of an 'important experiment' and 'free socialism'.[69] The events in Czechoslovakia after the substitution of the former Stalinist

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[66] Ibid., 32.

[67] Ibid., 32.

[68] Kieran Williams, *The Prague Spring and its aftermath. Czechoslovak politics, 1968-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jaromír Navrátil (ed.), *The Prague Spring'68*. ((Budapest: CEU Press, 1998). Dubcek was elected by *SP* readers as man of the year 1968 after Soviet intervention in the unlikely company of the Minister of Public Works, Federico Silva Muñoz. *SP* nº 431, 29 dec. 1968). The election followed the American magazine*Time*'s formula.

[69] 586847, 'Atención a Praga', in *Diario SP* , 9 April 1968

leader Novotny at the head of the party in January 1968 and his stepping down in March from the country's presidency were monitored closely, with periodicals dedicating covers to what they in all seriousness called 'a test run in democratic communism'.[70] The magazine *SP* called critical sectors of the party 'Czech liberals' and pointed out how old dogmas were now being questioned. This magazine was sure that socialism was under review, although formally it went unrecognised ("[b]ut really, aren't the latest events in Prague a new road at all levels?'). Many pages were dedicated to informing interested readers in great detail about the economic proposals of the Minister of the Economy, Ota Sik, the rehabilitation of persecuted people in the times of Premier Klement Gottwald after the Prague coup, the apparent flexibility that the Soviets would demonstrate, how the change process was irreversible, and so on. It is hard not to notice the excitement with which these Spanish journalists received the political experiment of Prague.

When, in May, the wind started to blow in the other direction due to pressure from hardliners in the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, journalists began to tell the story of deterioration until the 'Soviet sledgehammer' fell on Prague. The invasion of the country and the pulling up short of liberalising processes were described with utmost precision. For the reporters of independent Falangist media it was clear that the neutralised leaders not yet pushed out of power 'had decided to liberalise the country [and] build democratic communism without stopping to think about the consequences.'[71] The Soviet reaction had squashed not only this specific experiment but also the chance to change and dissolve the blocs' rigid division, frustrating any attempt at middle roads. This reaffirmation of the cold war would mean 'the triumph of the injustice of a world of inflexible and signed-and-sealed imperialism'.[72] Given this point of view, there was no question that the vision of a world in which the non-aligned powers and specific and national roads had a place was crumbling. Everything was turning grey and disheartening.[73] This is the main reading, more than the criticism—a given—of the brutality of Soviet action. One of the issues assessed negatively was that this intervention strengthened the position of the Spanish anti-communists who refused

[70] *SP* nº393, 7 April 1968, cover. Six dense pages were dedicated to analyze the fall of the Czech leader and how the country was opening up. 'Checoslovaquia. Cierto viento del Oeste', pp. 34-39.
[71] 'Checoslovaquia, vuelta al redil', *SP* nº 414, 1 Sept. 1968, 31.
[72] 'Carta del director. Ottobre ruggente', *SP* nº 418, 29 Oct. 1968, 18.
[73] 'Informe. Siete días en Praga', *SP* nº 434, 19 Jan. 1969, 40-41

to engage in dialogue,[74] as opposed to what these Spanish stakeholders wanted. In some ways, the hopes placed on the Czechoslovakian example reflected the desire for change in Spain in response to reactionary or conservative sectors that were pleased by the news of the reaffirmed condemnation of communism and the traditional frontiers of the cold war. For this Falangist circles, in the Spain of 1968 there was a convergence to human socialism from Falangist positions,,the same than the Czechoslovakian case, but from the other side: 'A more energetic socialism would have to be applied in Spain than the socialism in developed countries, and far less authoritarian than the socialism on the other side of the Iron Curtain'.[75]

In 1969, after verifying the strength of the traditional positions of the major powers on the international playing field, and domestically, with the naming of Juan Carlos as Franco's successor, part of the plans of this *national left* was cut short. Consequently, the latter then set up a regent to continue Francoism as an alternative to a monarchy that it presupposed to be aligned with the most 'right-wing' sectors.

Conclusion: a Contradictory Post-fascist Spain in a Changing World

Francoism, a regime based initially on a fascist doctrine, was forced to adapt to changing times and requirements in the 1960s. Although the plan was not to renounce its origin and nature, it needed to connect with the new generations, new languages and new political situations of the period. This is especially true in the independent Falangist sector I have described above, a characterisation I have termed 'post-fascism' elsewhere in other articles.[76]

The sectors of the so-called 'national left' that identified themselves with the publications cited in this article also looked for a way for the regime to be included internationally that would support their domestic objectives over those aligned with

[73] Manuel Cantarero del Castillo, 'Enhorabuena por la mala hora de Praga', *SP* nº 415, 8 sept. 1968, p. 12. The 'anthropological pessimism professionals' rubbed their hands together hoping for this coercive intervention 'precisely to give themselves with the right to future coercive measures of the same kind and to actively exercise their discredited and clichéd communism'.

[75] 'Entrevista con Manuel Cantarero. Among the political trends of the future, I foresee a wide socialist sector which left-wing Falangists should appear in', *SP* nº 262, 7 June 1968.

[76] See a reference to the use of the concept of post-fascism in Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, 'Fascismo, posfascismo y transición a la democracia. La evolución política y cultural del franquismo en relación al "modelo" italiano', in *Itinerari di recerca storica*, anno XXVIII- 1, 2014, pp. 67-88. See too for the italian case, Luca La Rovere, *L'eredità del fascismo. Gli intellettuali, i giiovani e la transizione al postfascismo 1943-1948* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2008)

conservative and Catholic positions, or those that were merely inert and uncritical and did not share the social agenda of this renewed Falangism.

Cuban revolutionary anti-imperialism helped shape this new Falangist left. Throughout the 1960s, they opened up the world, as did many groups from a new generation across Europe both on the right and left. Their leanings were internationalist, with sympathies for anti-imperialism and a positive attitude towards Third-Worldism. They felt a deep-rooted anti-Americanism that was in part the result of their own socialisation under Francoism.

There was an almost instinctive empathy for any liberation movement or claim to sovereignty, understood as new possibilities for a third way. What this third way should look like, however, was kept purposefully vague, because they had no concrete image of it beyond the reform of the Francoist system. But this search led them to show interest in reformist movements coming from Eastern Europe.

The influence of the Czechoslovakian case and the East's reformism is relevant. Despite their frustration resulting from Russian communist imperialism, lessons could be learned from the reformist formulation and the search for this middle road that aligned so well with the peculiar socialism these leaders said they were seeking. Hence the special attention some sectors of the dictatorship paid to what happened on the other side of the Curtain in the 1960s.

The most vocal defender of bridging the gap between the Falange and socialism, Manuel Cantarero del Castillo, author of a moderately influential book during his time, *Falange y Socialismo,* ran an enthusiastic political campaign arguing that the current reading of José Antonio's thesis led to a socialism that went beyond the Eastern European version and the parties of the Second International.[77] He also championed the need to increase political participation and democratisation without that meaning a search for a political system on Anglo-Saxon lines, which they continued to reject as a

[77] One of many examples, an extensive essay by Manuel Cantarero del Castillo, "La Falange y el socialismo", *SP* nº 445, 6 April 1969, 36-46.

historic relic.[78] Some writers speak of 'socialism with a human face' to refer to what they were attempting to do in Spain as a future projection of the regime of 18 July.[79]

The *raison d'être* for these 'left-wing' Falangist groups was to reaffirm the need to finish the economic and social aspects of the *revolution* born inconclusively on 18 July. The task at hand had not been finished and the new generations of Falangists had to be the ones to provide the regime with the social justice that had not yet been fully achieved. Once more, like in fascist Italy but in a very different context, a second revolution was necessary to make the revolutionary thrust of 18 July effective. And it was the young generations who were to take on the responsibility of going beyond their parents' limitations.[80]

Can these sectors be qualified as *reformist*, like the sectors in Eastern communist regimes that defended the need to include greater representativeness and participation, a break with the duality of the cold war, and that affirmed their national characteristics?[81] The traits that authors like Kusin apply to Eastern Europe would clearly be difficult to specifically apply to Spain, but they do share the desire to go beyond the dialectic of the cold war, reopen economic discussions and extend political participation, although from the other end of the political spectrum.

Certainly, it is also difficult to measure the effectiveness of these groups when politically understanding the exit from the dictatorship or confrontation with entrenched Opus Dei elites in the government. But the reconstruction of their actions and their public discourse does recreate the environment that influenced citizens that read their newspapers, participated in their activities and joined their initiatives, like the different kinds of associations and the platforms of old activists. This influence could hardly be

[78] The subject of the relationship between Falangist doctrine and socialism has a continuous presence in the magazine *SP* and in *Diario SP* and *Índice*. Reports, copies of speeches, and the defense of the need to move towards a socialism unrelated to the Second International, the socialism of the defeated parties in the Civil War, was a constant. It should be noted the existence of reports in the magazine *Indice* throughout 1969, where the topic of the definition of the left and of socialism and its relationship with the Falange are the focus of articles, collaborations, and debates in the magazine.

[79] Carlos Iglesias Selgas, 'Un socialismo de semblante humano', *Diario SP,* 20 June 1969., p.5; Rodrigo Royo, 'La Falange es socialista y democrática', *SP* nº 416, 15 sept. 1968, central supplement.

[80] 'Buenos días. El abuelo Franco', *Diario SP*, 1Oct. 1967, 1. About this "second revolution" in Italy, see Giuseppe Parlato, *La sinistra fascista. Storia dia un progetto mancato* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000)

[81] Vladimir.V. Kusin, 'An Overview of East European Reformism', in *Soviet Studies*, Vol. XXVIII, nº 3 (July 1976).. The disappointment of some of these countries in terms of the expectations created was not unlike what happened in Spain and helps to understand how many people moved away from the regime.

traced, except in the first Sociological Reports[82] or in the political surveys of some of the media or through letters to the editor.[83]

The key question is to see how it was possible for these sectors to take a step not only towards acceptance, but also towards active collaboration in the construction of a liberal-democratic regime, such as the one Spain ended up having after the dictator's death, considering that these sectors stemmed from and had been shaped by the fascist tradition, that they were, by sentiment and family, linked to the winners of the Civil War, and that they had been assimilated and integrated professionally and socially in the regime. The answer is not unequivocal as we cannot speak either of a cohesive group of 'national left' or of 'blue reformers' that can be organically grouped. A part of these reformist sectors, those who fought harder to make the 18 July regime evolve from the inside, eventually assumed that the regime was incapable of evolving minimally, and that there was no other way than to converge with the political systems of the surrounding context, that is, liberal democracy. Others continued to be linked to the regime's discipline but were already pessimistic about any future commitment to it. Others continued in their posts until the end but adapted to the new democratic regime seeking personal survival. Finally, a small group held the 'socialist–Falangist' position until the end of the regime. It was this complex and diverse group of blue reformers, many of them notorious enthusiasts of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, that led to the context that enabled the 1976 Law for Political Reform to be passed, which, in turn, made the 1977 general elections and the end of the Francoist Cortes possible. They also facilitated the rapid implementation of the Union of the Democratic Centre, the party formed around Suárez, which counted on the support of these sectors throughout the administration.

Finally, the truth is that Francoism was unable to evolve as a system and the project to reconcile Spaniards for a shared future life never took root. The major difference between these independent Falangist sectors and those who led reformist projects in Eastern Europe or Latin America was the inclusive and constructive

[82] In the early seventies, the first volumes on sociological studies carried out by professionals were published. They were the reports FOESSA.The first volume was *Informe sociológico sobre la situación social de España 1970*, (Madrid: Suramérica, 1970).

[83] This is the case in the survey which indexed the ideological profile of readers. The majority were social democrats (16%) and then Falangists (11%) and liberals (11%), demonstrating a diverse reader base far from the closed ideological parameters of the Movement's media or newspapers. *Índice* nº 324, 15 feb. 1973. The 'Cartas del pueblo español' '['Letters from the Spanish People'] section in *Diario SP* is a useful sample of public opinion and shows the great ability to mobilize and of identification with non-conformist Falangist theories during the two years the paper was printed.

enthusiasm of the latter versus the maintenance of the civil division of the former. In all likelihood it was the mark of the Civil War and how it was perpetuated by the regime that made it impossible for these groups to take the leap and move from a peculiar, innovative and abstract socialism, the bastard son of fascism, to a democratic socialism or a participative platform able to make a political and social transformation to overcoming that old hatres of the past. The Francoist regime continued to repress and kill to the very end, locking itself in a bunker opposed to any kind of openness or liberalisation.

In the end, all these people were, in practice, far more conservative than the Cuban or Third-World influence they experienced suggested. In fact, the wave of change personified in 1968 came to Spain at a time when the regime was facing its final decline and many of these sectors saw their projection limited and lost their capacity for political experimentation in the face of fear of the future and the rise of repression in the dictatorship. Pragmatism prevailed because it was clear from the final years of the dictatorship that there could not be another project in Spain than convergence with the country's European surroundings at all levels, and that the hopes about the third way were but a strange result of the crossover between the old fascist indoctrination and the changing and suggestive international society of the 1960s. Reforma Social Española, a party for which the aforementioned Cantarero del Castillo was a candidate for the 1977 elections with the ideas of a democratic Falangist socialism, did not get any seats and disappeared immediately. There were elements that remained, such as the foreign policy of President Suárez, who established relations with the PLO of Yasir Arafat and interviewed Fidel Castro. He also resisted entry into NATO, as requested by sectors of his government. A nonconformist and open spirit remained too, but it ended up converging with the Western model. In any case, it was the political class that dismantled the Movement, despite stemming from it, and that assumed the reconciliation as the PCE had begun to do in early 1956, making the reality of democratic coexistence possible.

However, this end should not make us forget the importance of a political culture forged by conceptions that, as a result of a post-war Falangism uncomfortable with a monolithic Francoism incapable of broadening its bases, put significant sectors of the population in touch with ideas far removed from closed Francoist Spain. Not only did they facilitate an unstoppable social and political evolution, they also help to at least partially explain how an isolated and closed society was able to favour a process of

socio-political change within a much richer and contradictory European history than the rigid borders of the cold war have previously allowed us to see.