From the fringes to the State.

The transformation of the Falange into a state-party

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Having chosen the Falange, and more precisely, the General Secretariat of the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS (FET), as the topic of my dissertation, I spent countless hours trying to decide if Francoism was a fascist regime, immersing myself in one of the key debates coursing through Spanish historiography at the time. Of course, this inevitably led to another conundrum, what was indeed fascism? It was then that I came across two historians that would influence me greatly, Robert Paxton and Roger Griffin. While I heartedly welcomed Paxton's emphasis on the political practice of fascism, and still consider his theory of the five stages methodologically useful, it was Griffin's definition of fascism as "palingenetic ultranationalism" that truly helped me understand the most modern and attractive aspects of fascism in the interwar period. It did not only helped me articulate and fully comprehend the fascist nature of the Falange Española, but eventually distinguish between the functional fascist mimicry of some of Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorial measures, and the ideologically driven borrowing practiced by the Falange, who, during the 1930s - early 1940s, could at the same time, and in an obvious exercise of hypocrisy, copy policies and even institutions from Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany and proclaim its total independence from foreign ideas. In this vein, many Falangists tried to succeed in marrying the tried and tested practice of fascism with the key principles that defined the essence of Spain, built upon the nostalgia of a harmonic, unified and imperial medieval society that had, in their minds, characterized the reign of the Catholic Kings. The problem, however, with Griffin's definition was that even when it was expanded to cover other movements, apart from Italian fascism and National socialism, through the notion of para-fascism, it still gravitated around two ideal models that all others aimed to imitate. This inevitably led to sometimes circular debates around the nature of these parafascist movements, which all too often obscured our understanding of them, as the centrality of Nazi-fascism as an ideal model implied treating every parafascist mainly as a failure, assuming a quasi-teleological nature to any political approach to fascism. Moreover, making Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy into ideal benchmarks of fascism seemed to imply that at some point these regimes had become a finished product ready for export. It was the work of Ismael Saz that would help me overcome some of these problems. He introduced the concept of fascistization into the debate, not as a teleological or interrupted process, but as one that could be stopped, adjusted or even reversed, which explained how the radical right could assume key elements of fascism, yet not become fascist.[1] In so doing, he highlighted the lability of the border between fascists and non-fascists.

It was the combination of these three contributions that shaped my research on the Falange and Francoism. This has allowed me to focus more on what the Falange was and achieved instead of what it could have been. In this sense, I fully subscribe to a recent trend in fascist studies, which considers the study of hybrid or fascisticised political movements in their own context; avoiding treating them as mere copies of two allegedly perfect models: Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.[2]

[1] Saz, Ismael. 2004. Fascism, Fascistization and Developmentalism in Franco's Dictatorship. *Social History* 29 (3):342-357; Saz, Ismael. 2012. ¿Dónde está el otro? O sobre qué eran los que no eran fascistas. In *El fascismo clásico (1919-1945) y sus epígonos*, ed. Joan Antonio Mellón. Madrid: Tecnos, 166.

[2] Iordachi, Constantin. 2010. Fascism in Interwar East Central and Southeastern Europe: Toward a New Transnational Research Agenda. *East Central Europe* (37):161-213; Kallis, Aristotle. 2014. The 'Fascist Effect': On the Dynamics of

While it is evident that Nazi-fascism exerted a critical influence over the European political spectrum of the 1930s, it is essential to acknowledge that it did not always entail the perfect reproduction of those models. And it is in this spirit that I have tackled the study of the transformation of the Falange into a state-party, which I will explain over the following pages.

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The early years of the Francoist regime saw the rise to power of the Falange Española. This fascist, and minority party in the times of the Second Republic, grew exponentially after the outbreak of the war, attracting many among the youth and rural workers, and providing the rebel army with a sizeable militia. The military support from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany further increased the popularity of the Falange, seen as the harbinger of a new era.[3] The pre-eminence of the Army and the undisciplined and unruly character of the party, now deprived by the war of its original leaders, prevented its complete imposition over the other members of the rebel coalition and allowed its co-option by Francisco Franco. This phenomenon led some, most prominently Juan Linz, to define Francoist Spain as an authoritarian regime, which in its development had fallen short of the fascist model.[4] However, this view seemed to dismiss the fact that the Falange had no chance of conquering power on its own, having failed to achieve the necessary military support it needed for a coup d'état during the last years of the Republic. Moreover, neither Fascism nor Nazism were static codified systems of rule, ready for import. While the palingenetic nationalism key to fascism made national movements differ from each other, their dynamism made them highly adaptative to circumstance. It was in this context, as Aristotle Kallis has pointed out, that different actors interacted with fascism, borrowing from it different political lessons from it.[5] This became even clearer during the Second World War. As Benjamin Martin has recently demonstrated, the New Order sparked genuine interest because it seemed to address real issues.[6] While engagement with it was marked by an asymmetrical power dynamic, it did not entail directly copying Nazi-fascist ideas and methods. Rather, the creation of a milieu in which different political movements pursued their own agendas, accepting, in the case of non-belligerent nations such as Spain, the Nazi-fascist hegemony insofar as it aided them in achieving their own aims and projects. In this vein, and as I will explore in this chapter, the Falange's importance to the construction of the Francoist regime cannot be dismissed simply as a failed attempt to instate a fascist dictatorship in Spain. In fact, its evolution owed as much to the civil war and Spanish peculiarities, as to the interactions with and between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Moreover, if, as Glenda Sluga has argued, the Spanish Civil War was one of 'the most obvious examples of transnational links in the history of interwar fascism and anti-fascism',[7] it seems necessary to explore the Spanish case within a broader European context, if we want to properly understand the post-liberal departure of the 1930-40s.

The Falange's bid for power

Political Hybridization in Inter-War Europe. In *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, eds. Antonio Costa Pinto, and Aristotle Kallis. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

[3] See: Payne, Stanley G. 1961. *Falange. A History of Spanish Fascism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press; Ruhl, Klaus-Jörg. 1986. *Franco, Falange y "Tercer Reich" : España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial.* Madrid: Akal; Ellwood, Sheelagh M. 1987. *Spanish fascism in the Franco era : Falange Española de las Jons, 1936-76*. New York; Thomàs, Joan Maria. 2001. *La Falange de Franco : Fascismo y Fascistización en el Régimen Franquista (1937-1945)*, Barcelona: Plaza y Janés.

[4] Linz, Juan J. 1964. El Régimen Autoritario: España. In *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems: Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology.* Helsinki: The Academi Bookstore.

[5] Kallis, Aristotle. 2014. The 'Fascist Effect', 20–23.

[6] Martin, Benjamin George. 2016. *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture.* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 277.

[7] Sluga, Glenda. 2009. Fascism and Anti-Fascism. In *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, eds. Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 382.

The Falange certainly failed in its attempt to fully fascisticize the Spanish state, clashing with the Army, the Church, and existing traditional structures in its attempts to consolidate its influence over the new state. Francoism, in the end, rested "on an informal authoritarian compromise, made up of clearly recognizable actors: the army, the church, the business community and a single party" united around their rejection of the anti-Spain, and their loyalty to Franco.[8] However, it still achieved a central position within the state party, otherwise imposed from above through the Unification Decree in April 1937.[9] The new organization resulted mainly from the combined forces of the Falange and Carlism, whose unparalleled growth, constituting around the 90% of all rebel militias[10] propelled them to the forefront of the emergent state. The civil conflict, the spirit of the times, and the differing characters of both movements made it easier for the Falange to impose its will within the new organisation, engrossing its own numbers through both proselytism and conscription, and using that growth to justify its ascendance over the Carlist organisation. The precedence given by the rank-and-file Carlists to combat, and the division at the top of the traditionalist organisation were also key to the Falange's success in this process.[11] Placed at the core of the Francoist regime, the party came to play a key role in the application of social policies and the regulation of the access to benefits, to the job market and positions of power, while attempting a political mobilisation and a re-education of society according to its fascist project that would, however, fall short of what was originally planned. Although the Falange's power was curtailed by the cabinet and other institutions, and its development as state party became constrained by what Robert Paxton has called the "the four-way struggle for dominance",[12] it nevertheless acquired a political and social influence that she had never enjoyed before.

The transformation of the Falange into a state party began in the midst of the civil conflict, and while the disappearance of its leaders facilitated the process, it needed the cooperation of the subsequent general secretaries. Similar to the general secretaries of the National Fascist Party in Italy, their mission was to control and organize the party, to act as a middleman between the leader and the provinces, and between the party and the State. Every single Secretary General in the history of the regime put their loyalty to Franco over their plans to broaden the political influence of the party, an attitude that has led Aristotle Kallis to characterize the Falange as an example of "fascist pragmatism".[13] In fact, as we will see, the general secretaries effectively moderated the most radical falangist initiatives and made a conscious effort to tame the rebellious character of many of its members, and secure their loyalty to Franco. It was also the general secretaries' mission to transform the single party into a transmission belt between state and society, which up until 1945 would serve as the only channel for the participation of the people in the construction and development of the New State.[14] Tasked with the creation of a harmonic society, based on a strong adhesion of the people to the state, that could deactivate the class struggle and social conflict through the nationalisation of the masses, it soon became a key pillar of the emergent regime. A phenomenon that owed, not little, to the presence of fascist and Nazi advisors in Spain during the civil war. It had been, in fact, Guglielmo Danzi, head of the propaganda office of the Italian military mission in Spain, who had successfully advised Franco on the need to merge all political

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[8] Saz, Ismael. 2004. Fascism, Fascistization and Developmentalism, 356; Sanz Hoya, Julián. 2011. Falangismo y dictadura. Una revisión de la historiografía sobre el fascismo español. In *Falange. Las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936-1975)*, ed. Miguel A. Ruiz Carnicer. Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 46-7.
[9] *Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE)*, n.182, 20/4/1937.
[10] Reig Tapia, Alberto. 1996. Falangistas y Requetés en guerra. In *La guerra civil española*, ed. Manuel Tuñón de Lara. Folio, 85.
[11] See Peñalba Sotorrío, Mercedes. 2019. Red Berets, Blue Shirts: Nationalist Militia Forces in the Spanish Civil War. In *Spain at War. Society, Culture and Mobilization, 1936-44*, ed. James Matthews. Bloomsbury.
[12] Paxton, Robert O. 2010. The Five Stages of Fascism. In *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Constantin Iordachi, 165-186. New York: Routledge, 177.
[13] Kallis, Aristotle. 2003. 'Fascism', 'Para-fascism' and 'Fascistization': On the Similarities of Three Conceptual Categories. *European History Quarterly* 33 (2):240.
[14] *BOE*, n.182, 20/4/1937.

organizations into a single party that he should rule over.[15] The influence of Italian fascism would also become highly noticeable in the genesis of what would, many years later, become the first of the Fundamental Laws of the Realm: the Labour *Fuero* of 1938.

With the war still raging on the frontlines, and in an attempt to legitimize the emergent regime, Franco, encouraged by the Germans and assisted by the Italians, entrusted the party with devising the labour legislation of the new state. The project incorporated the basic tenets of the fascist Labour Charter, mainly, the authoritarian regulation of labour relations through the abolition of the right to strike and lockout and the creation of the labour courts (*Magistratura del Lavoro*), as well as the establishment of a monopoly of corporations or trade unions. It also incorporated elements such as the recognition of the subsidiary role of the state economic interventionism, the re-educational character of the trade unions, and the establishment of basic welfare provisions.[16] This cannot come as a surprise given that, alongside prominent members of the Falange, both Ernesto Marchiandi, labour attaché of the Italian embassy,[17] and Eduardo Aunós, who had led the importation of some key aspects of fascist corporatism into the labour legislation of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship,[18] had participated in the drafting of the text. A text, however, which draw not only upon the fascist corporatist model but also the long-standing Catholic corporatism, codified in the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. The *Fuero* shared with them a strong nostalgia of the medieval guilds, which had produced a harmonic society in which the production system relied on the strength of the civil community. Equally, the Spanish legislation directly incorporated *Quadragesimo Anno*'s definitions of minimum wage and corporatism.[19] A brand of corporatism which aimed to provide a "third way solution to the twin excesses of liberalism and communism"[20] by encouraging, among other things, a close collaboration between employers and employees through guilds and associations. In fact, the influence of catholic corporatism became stronger precisely because these aspects were favoured over one of the key tenets of the fascist charter which was finally disregarded, despite the protest of several Falangists: the political representation of economic interests, in a way which led to their participation in policy-making and economic planning. Not only that, the falangist attempt to surpass the limits of the corporative model and guarantee through the *Fuero* the national-syndicalist organization of the State, transforming Spain into a "gigantic union of producers"[21] was immediately halted. Any reference to it was removed from the final draft. Moreover, while, at least on paper, Italian corporations could assist in the regulation and coordination of the national economy, the Spanish legislation made sure any regulation remained tightly in the hands of the state. This made the vertical unions primarily into organizations that socialized, controlled and, more importantly, re-educated the workers. This revealed not just a general wariness of the Falange's potential power, but also a profound mistrust on part of both the cabinet and the single party's elite towards the working class. As Raimundo Fernández-Cuesta, Secretary General of FET, would put it: "until the old mentality of the working masses has not disappeared, these Unions must be placed under surveillance […] for a true and authentic vertical unionism to be possible, it's first necessary to

[15] Saz, Ismael, and Javier Tusell. 1981. *Fascistas en España: la intervención italiana en la Guerra Civil a través de los telegramas de la "Missione militare italiana in Spagna": 15 diciembre 1936-31 marzo 1937*. Madrid: CSIC, 88.

[16] *Carta del Lavoro*, 1927; Archivo General de la Administración (AGA) 9 (17.04) 52/19174.

[17] Payne, Stanley G. 1997. *Franco y José Antonio, el extraño caso del fascismo español: historia de la Falange y del Movimiento Nacional (1923-1977)*. Barcelona: Planeta, 457-458; Álvarez Puga, Eduardo. 1969. *Historia de la Falange*. Barcelona: Dopesa, 184; Tusell, Javier, and Genoveva Queipo de Llano. 1997. El Fuero del Trabajo: origen y contenido. In *La guerra civil española*. Historia 16, 82.

[18] Pasetti, Matteo. 2017. Corporatist Connections. The Transnational Rise of the Fascist Model in Interwar Europe. In *Fascism without borders*. eds. Arnd Bauerkämper, and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe. Berghahn Books, 74-5.

[19] Fuero del Trabajo, BOE, n.505, Burgos, 10/3/1938; Pío XI. 1931. Quadragesimo Anno. http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html. Accessed 17 January 2020.

[20] Chamedes, Giuliana. 2013. The Vatican and the Making of the Atlantic Order, 1920-1960. Columbia University, 5.

[21] AGA 9 (17.04) 52/19174.

have a strong, powerful, and single party, which can place them tightly under its control".[22] While the control of the economy remained outside the remit of FET, it is important to note that the single party still achieved key shares of power, particularly those related to social control and provision of welfare support, the only aspect in which the party had total freedom of action.

It would be tempting to simply evaluate if fascist or catholic corporatism were the main influence behind the genesis of the *Fuero*. However, doing so would not only make us fall into several misleading assumptions, more noticeably ignoring the many ways in which corporatism acted, during the interwar period, as a "travelling theory" and point of contact between fascism and catholic circles.[23] In the 1930s many state corporatists adopted *Quadragesimo Anno* as the flag for their cause, particularly in Austria, Portugal, and, of course, Italy. We can't forget that even the Vatican had applauded, precisely in the encyclic *Quadragessimo Anno*, fascist Italy's implementation of some of their recommendations. While it had also issued a warning against the statist character of Italian corporatism,[24] it allowed many Catholics to interpret the encyclic as the Church's embrace of Italian-style corporatism. This was even more noticeable in rebel Spain, where communism was the main enemy and fascism the main ally against it. However, it was precisely on the tenth anniversary of the fascist Labour Charter that the popularity of fascist corporatism seemed to peak, being threatened by the emergence of another model which did not care for corporatism at all: Nazi Germany.[25] Within this context, Marchiandi could at the same time be somewhat satisfied with the stronger influence of catholic corporatism over the *Fuero*, hoping this would prevent a stronger German influence, potentially harmful to Italy,[26] and later criticise the shortcomings of the *Fuero* and the influence of social Catholicism and aspects of Nazism over the subsequent labour regulations. In his view, the Spanish legislation emphasized its own revolutionary character without explaining what this exactly meant.[27] In this sense, it was the interaction between external – the influence of fascist and catholic corporatism as well as Italo-German rivalry - and internal factors – mistrust of the working-class, debates among Francoist elites and wariness of the falangist push for power - , that helped shape one of the key pieces of early Francoist legislation, and in so doing Francoism as a whole.

The Falange's bid for power had clashed against the interests of the traditional elites, however, while the party might have lost one battle, it was not willing to lose the war. Soon after, the group of radical Falangists who had coalesced around Ramón Serrano Suñer devised a new way to consolidate their power: the complete reorganization of the single party, largely inspired by the Nazi regime. The project attempted a complete re-structuration of the party with the aim of placing it "above any political hierarchy", making it into the "single instrument for the education and orientation of the people, and the inspiration and appointment of the cabinets".[28] In order to achieve such transformation, they proposed the establishment of an elite within the party, the creation of a network of political schools, the re-structuration of the single party around three key vice-secretaries, the recognition of the Falange's Foreign Service as a parallel diplomacy, the establishment of a National Service for Public Education and Political Culture, and, more importantly, full jurisdiction over the militias, which had been placed under military control in December 1936. The whole project emphasized the role of the party in the re-education of the

[22] Speech Notes, Archivo Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, Doc. 25915.
[23] Pasetti, Matteo. 2017. The Fascist Labour Charter and its transnational spread. In *Corporatism and Fascism*. ed. Antonio Costa Pinto, 60-77. Routledge; Pasetti, Matteo. 2017. Corporatist Connections, 82.
[24] Chamedes, Giuliana. 2013. The Vatican and the Making of the Atlantic Order, 128-9.
[25] Pasetti, Matteo. 2017. Corporatist Connections, 80-1.
[26] Casali, Luciano. 2005. *Franchismo. Sui caratteri del fascismo spagnolo*. Bologna: CLUEB, 104.
[27] Parlato, Giuseppe. 2000. *La sinistra fascista : storia di un progetto mancato*. Bologna: Il mulino, 155-7.
[28] Reorganization of FET y de las JONS, Draft Bill, AGA 9 (17.02) 51/18956.

people through the vertical unions, the Youth Front and the proposed cultural service, which seemed quite close in aims and denomination to Goebbles' propaganda ministry. However, the proposal that provoked Franco's rageful reaction was the one pertaining to the militias. The Falange's desire not only to reclaim control over them, but to ensure their independence from the Army through the creation of their own military academies could not sit well with the dictator. It is unsurprising that he was to react by highlighting the Falange's mistrust of his leadership and pulling the project altogether.[29] The Secretary General supported Franco's rejection of the plan. Eventually, the militia ceased to exist as a combat unit and was transformed into a channel for the recruitment, within University, of new blood into the Army. In this instance, as in many others, the Secretary General was key to the consolidation of Franco's authority over the party.

This incident could easily highlight not only the interaction between the Nazi-fascist models and the Falange's own agenda, but the general idea of falangism as a failed and poor version of fascism. However, if we take a closer look at the policies carried out by FET's general secretaries, it is easy to pinpoint how most proposals survived and were eventually implemented, albeit in a moderate form. That was the case of the network of political schools, the re-structuration of the single party around key vice-secretaries - one of them precisely the Vicesecretariat for Public Education, which oversaw all aspects of Spanish culture -, and the centrality of the party to the re-education of the people through the unions and the youth organizations.[30] No measure aimed to place the party above the state could ever be implemented under Franco's leadership, but this didn't mean that the party did not manage to preserve key elements of fascism. Later on, and under the leadership of a trustworthy elite, these same elements could be properly defascisticized in order to make Francoist Spain palatable in the post-war international order.

Falangist hopes for the New Order

In the meantime, however, it was precisely the interaction between the developing international situation, general fascination with Nazi Germany, and the falangist desire to find in the German and Italian models new tools to further its own agenda and consolidate its gains that increased contacts between the Spanish elites and said countries. These contacts had begun already in the 1920s, allowing for the interaction, in Spain, of fascist and non-fascist ideas in many different ways.[31] Now transformed into a state party, the so-called falangist *pilgrimage* to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany acquired at times the character of a parallel diplomacy. In this vein, *Sección Femenina*'s passionate engagement with the New Order project illustrated clearly how Nazi Germany had replaced Fascist Italy as the preferred model in the minds of many among the political elites of Francoist Spain, precisely during the period (1941–3) during which the New Order project gained more traction. Moreover, it demonstrates not just how the Falange's engagement with the Nazi-fascist project stemmed from a blend of ideological affinity and political opportunism.[32] As Pilar Primo de Rivera, head of *Sección Femenina*, would put it: "our trip to Germany has served, particularly, for us to realize the potential of the Falange".[33] Spanish engagement with the New Order stemmed from different motivations. Some, most notably Spanish Falangists and Blue Division volunteers, committed to the project because they identified with or admired the Nazi ideology. That was the case of a fervent member of FET who demanded a central role for the militias:

[29] Merino, Ignacio. 2004. *Serrano Suñer: conciencia y poder.* Madrid: Algaba, 253.

[30] See Peñalba Sotorrío, Mercedes. 2015. *La Secretaría General del Movimiento : construcción, coordinación y estabilización del régimen franquista.* Madrid: CEPC.

[31] Bowen, Wayne H. 2009. Spanish pilgrimages to Hitler's Germany: emissaries of the New Order. *The Historian* 71 (2):258-279.

[32] Morant i Ariño, Toni. 2019. Spanish Fascist Women's Transnational Relations during the Second World War: Between Ideology and Realpolitik. *Journal of Contemporary History* 54 (4):834-857.

[33] *Fotos*, 18/12/1937.

It is important to remember that in Italy and Germany, the members of the fascist party or the SA, armed to the teeth, were feared as one fears fire, because they represented more than an authority figure, while here people cheekily mock us and we, the party members, do not even have the recourse of slapping their tooth out of their mouth because we would be arrested and taken in front of the judge as the average Joe.[34]

Others looked at Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy because they saw their future success – be that in imperial, professional or political terms – in the Axis' eventual victory. At the same time, many among the Spanish radical right, not necessarily Falangists, projected on Nazi Germany some of their most pressing concerns. For them, Hitler became a crusader, the gatekeeper of Christian European civilisation, even the avenger of Spain, who would settle the score with the nation's traditional enemies, most prominently Britain.[35] Spanish–German collaboration, however, was not exclusively rooted in an admiration for the new Nazi-fascist order, fear or political and strategic opportunism, but in a highly positive and lasting image of Germany that stoked Spaniards' fascination with National Socialism.

The period of 1937 to 1943 marked the highpoint of Nazi-fascist influence in Spain, but fascination with Nazi Germany died slowly, particularly among Falangists. Here, falangist reticence to let go of the idea of the New Order was marked both by an ideological kinship and political opportunism, as letting go of the German ally meant acknowledging that the best moment for the falangist project had passed. However, the party's survival depended on it. For this reason, from 1943 onwards, the then Secretary General of FET, José Luis de Arrese, initiated the rhetoric and, in many ways, practical defascistization of the Franco regime. Under the shock of the Italian defeat, Arrese begun to highlight the centrality of Catholicism and the development of an organic democracy, in order to free the regime from its totalitarian stigma. He even went as far as to deny the totalitarian aspects of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, characterizing them simply as "political systems of rule led by two extraordinary men".[36] However, Arrese's continuous and concealed support of Nazi officials in Spain, as I've studied elsewhere,[37] was perfectly compatible with a pragmatic and open renunciation of those influences when the situation called for it. In so doing, he became a perfect example of that blend of opportunism and ideology that characterized FET's approach to the Axis.

Bureaucracy and social control

This fascination with the New Order, as well as the necessary transformation of the Falange into a state party led to the establishment of organisations that competed with the state. The party's desire to fascisticize the public administration and complete the conquest of the state resulted on tensions with the state. While the general secretaries remained loyal to Franco, they did try to broaden the party's reach as much as possible. Therefore, FET proceeded to equate party and state functionaries and even suggested to make adhesion to the party mandatory for anyone who aspired to become a state functionary,[38] a measure that seems copied from the Italian model. Equally, the party counted on different channels to influence policy, namely the inclusion of the Secretary

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[34] Report on the current situation in Catalonia, Barcelona, August 1940. Archivo General Universidad de Navarra / Gregorio Marañón y Moya.

[35] Núñez Seixas, Xosé M. 2019. Spanish Views of Nazi Germany, 1933-45: A Fascist Hybridization? *Journal of Contemporary History* 54 (4):858-879.

[36] Diego González, Álvaro de. 2001. *José Luis Arrese o La Falange de Franco*. Madrid: Actas, 192-4; Peñalba Sotorrío, Mercedes. 2015. *La Secretaría General del Movimiento*, 368-77.

[37] Peñalba Sotorrío, Mercedes. 2019. Beyond the War: Nazi Propaganda Aims in Spain during the Second World War. *Journal of Contemporary History* 54 (4):902-926.

[38] Report of the National Council, *Boletín del Consejo Nacional de FET y de las JONS*, n.8, 17/7/1943.

General in the cabinet and the establishment of the National Council, a deliberative organ, such as the Italian Great Fascist Council,[39] that would be incorporated into the new *Cortes* in the early 40s.[40] These channels, however, did not guarantee the party's influence over the cabinet. In fact, the whole process, led by the general secretaries, gave way to FET's necessary bureaucratization, which, according to Rodríguez Barreira, deprived the Falange of any dynamism within the regime.[41] In this regard, some authors like Aquarone and De Felice have stated, for the Italian case, that the bureaucratization of the party necessarily led to its de-politicization.[42] And yet, I would argue that, in the case of the Falange, it was only after this bureaucratization that the National Council began to function properly, aiding in the preparation of laws and regulations,[43] which at least brings into question such an assumption. Moreover, it is important to note that political power is exerted not just through the cabinet and the legislation, but through social control.

While I have already provided some key examples in which the interaction and exchange of ideas with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany did not grant the Falange the influence she aimed for, it is important to look at what FET did achieve through its allegiance to Franco. It was the establishment of a network of capillary organisations that regulated the population's relations with the state that was key for increasing the Falange's presence among the people, and for the construction of consent, both active and passive.[44] These organisations aimed at the construction of a solid national community and the social policies they served to implement represented, at times, the kind face of a regime, otherwise repressive. It is not surprising that one of the first laws passed by the rebel government was the Labour Charter, as the regime looked for different avenues towards political legitimation.[45] It also served to rhetorically affirm the influence of the Falange, as all social policy came to be portrayed not as a right of the population, but as a gracious concession of power, that is, of Franco and its party: "no group of Spaniards has sufficient strength to decide anything on its own, […] Do not flatter yourselves; be sure that you, on your own, do not have enough strength to achieve any revolutionary change, and that, if there is today so much tolerance for social advances, it is not due to people fearing you or liking you but due to their fear to confront the Falange and the *Caudillo*".[46]

The Falange participated in the direct elaboration of all laws concerning the development of these policies, and even when it had to renounce certain initiatives, it retained the power to practically apply said policies,[47] falangist organisations like Winter Relief – clearly inspired by the Nazi *Winterhilfe* -, the Women Section, the Vertical Unions, and the Youth Front, among others, served this purpose and, in doing so, they provoked popular reactions. It was common, for example, for

[39] Decree approving FET y de las JONS' modified statute, *Boletín del Movimiento Nacional (BMN)*, n.63, 10/8/1939. "Ordinamento e attribuzioni del Gran Consiglio del Fascismo", Casali, Luciano. 1996. *Fascismi: partito, società e stato nei documenti del fascismo, del nazionalsocialismo e del franchismo*. Bologna: CLUEB, 142-3; Gentile, Emilio. 2005. *La vía italiana al totalitarismo: partido y estado en el régimen fascista*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 245.

[40] Bill creating the Cortes Españolas, *BOE*, n.200, 19/7/1942.

[41] Rodríguez Barreira, Óscar. 2014. The Many Heads of the Hydra: Local Parafascism in Spain and Europe, 1936-50. *Journal of Contemporary History* 49 (4):717-718.

[42] De Felice, Renzo. 1974. *Mussolini il duce. Vol. 1, Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936*. Turín: Giulio Einaudi, 225; Aquarone, Alberto. 2003. *L'organizzazione dello Stato totalitario*. Torino: Einaudi, 175. Gentile, however, considers that the PNF's subordination to the state did not make it into a pure bureaucratic institution, Gentile, Emilio. 2005. *La vía italiana al totalitarismo*, 167.

[43] Peñalba Sotorrío, Mercedes. 2015. *La Secretaría General del Movimiento*, 366-7.

[44] Saz, Ismael. 1999. Introducción: entre la hostilidad y el consentimiento. Valencia en la posguerra. In *El franquismo en Valencia : formas de vida y actitudes sociales en la posguerra*, eds. Ismael Saz, and J. Alberto Gómez Roda. Valencia: Episteme, 9-35.

[45] Molinero, Carmé. 2013. Falange y la construcción del régimen, 1939-1945. La búsqueda de unas bases sociales. In *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936-1975)*, ed. Miguel A. Ruiz Carnicer. Zaragoza: Instituto "Fernando El Católico", 189.

[46] Girón de Velasco, José Antonio. 1943. *Escritos y discursos*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 178.

[47] Peñalba Sotorrío, Mercedes. 2015. *La Secretaría General del Movimiento*.

women to find inventive ways to avoid the social service, or for rural workers to refuse handing over their grain to the National Service of Wheat.[48] The welfare measures and social benefits managed by the *Obras Sindicales*[49] were particularly significant but they often led to an instrumental use of Francoist legislation. These organisations contributed to the creation of a welfare system, managing the access to and distribution of national subsidies and national insurance schemes, social housing, etc. This favoured the creation of a patronage network controlled and administered by the single party. Many of these subsidies were in fact minimal but it is important not to discount the relief that they could bring to many who were living in terrible conditions. While this did not serve to effectively integrate the workers within the fascist project, it could attract the favour of less politicised sectors of the population.[50] However, it also meant that many made an instrumental use of their adhesion to the party to obtain access to the welfare benefits the state had put in place. In the early 40s the regime proceeded to unify the Falange and government representation in cities and provinces, refashioning a new model of state clientelism,[51] which combined the patronage networks of the old elites and the falangist newcomers. The administration of subsidies and the creation of new networks of patronage provided the Falange with a channel to influence society and, eventually, try to (unsuccessfully) re-educate it. As Gentile would say, it became a Great Pedagogue.[52]

The Falange had indeed become a parallel bureaucracy, but one that remained in direct contact with the people. The party served as well as a channel to access the job market, particularly in the case of the ex-combatants. The state reserved 80% of all new positions in public administration for former combatants, those who had been imprisoned by the Republic and those who had become disabled as a result of the confrontation. This consideration expanded to women.[53] At the same time, any ex-combatant who applied for membership was automatically accepted into the party.[54] This established war experience as a necessary merit to integrate the bureaucratic apparatus of the single party and guaranteed combatants an improvement of their living conditions.[55] Additionally, many positions, not only in the public service, required a certificate of adhesion to the new regime, one that could be extended by the party, although this was not the only institution capable of doing so.[56] War experience was also the key factor that determined someone's suitability to serve in the town halls. In this sense, falangist membership could open the doors of power.[57] Furthermore, in May 1944, the single party created the National Education Junta, in charge of

[48] Rebollo Mesas, Pilar. 2001. El Servicio Social de la mujer de Sección Femenina de Falange. Su implantación en el medio rural. In *Nuevas tendencias historiográficas e historia local en España : actas del II Congreso de Historia Local de Aragón (Huesca, 7 al 9 de julio de 1999)* eds. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, and Carmen Frías Corredor, 297-316. Zaragoza, 297-316; Cabana, Ana. 2013. *La derrota de lo épico*. Valencia: Universitat de València, 226, 294, 298.

[49] *BOE*, n.334, 30/11/1941.

[50] Molinero, Carmé. 2013. Falange y la construcción del régimen, 1939-1945; Cenarro Lagunas, Ángela. 2013. Encuadramiento y consenso en la obra del Movimiento: mujeres, jóvenes, obreros. In *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936-1975)*, ed. Miguel A. Ruiz Carnicer, 99-216. Zaragoza: Instituto "Fernando El Católico"; Lanero Táboas, Daniel. 2014. Las «políticas sociales» del franquismo: las obras sindicales. In *No solo miedo. Actitudes políticas y opinión popular bajo la dictadura franquista (1936-1977)*, eds. Arco Blanco, Fuertes Muñoz, Hernández Burgos y Marco. Granada: Comares, 127-142.

[51] Rodríguez Barreira, Óscar. 2014. The Many Heads of the Hydra, 717-718.

[52] Gentile, Emilio. 2005. *La vía italiana al totalitarismo*, 83.

[53] Memo n.81, 11/10/1939, AGA 9 (17.12) 51/21102; Telegram 146, 27/12/1939, *BMN*, n.77, 1/1/1940.

[54] Memo n.89, 4/12/1939, *BMN*, n.75, 10/12/1939.

[55] Alcalde Fernández, Ángel. 2017. War Veterans and Fascism during the Franco Dictatorship in Spain (1936–1959). *European History Quarterly* 47 (1):92; Alcalde Fernández, Ángel. 2011. Excombatientes en los poderes locales del primer franquismo (Zaragoza, 1939-1945). Experiencia de guerra e interpretación del apoyo social a la dictadura. In *Nuevos horizontes del pasado: culturas políticas, identidades y formas de representación*, eds. Barrio Alonso, Ángeles; Hoyos Puente, Jorge de; Saavedra Arias, Rebeca.

[56] Gelonch, Josep. 2012. El Poder franquista a Lleida, 1938-1951. Universitat de Lleida, Lleida, 140.

[57] Sanz Hoya, Julián. 2011. El partido fascista y la conformación del personal político local al servicio de las dictaduras de Mussolini y Franco. *Historia social* (71):107-123; Cenarro Lagunas, Ángela. 1997. *Cruzados y camisas azules : los orígenes del franquismo en Aragón, 1936-1945*. Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 150.

extending certificates of adhesion to those who prepared the exams to acquire a professorship in the University.[58] These measures aimed to increase the Falange's support among the population, however they benefited the regime as a whole more than the Falange as a party.

Conclusions

Within a system of rule in which the party could never place itself above the state, Spain's contact with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, FET's push for power, which came to be counterbalanced by the Army and the Church, and the evolution of the international situation produced the emergence of a francoist Falange. One which did not represent the heartfelt ambitions of the Falange *serranista*, but which adapted to the circumstances, acquiring any pocket of political influence available and guaranteeing its own survival, awaiting its opportunity to reactivate its bid for power. The Falange underwent a process of bureaucratization because it was a necessary step for its complex transformation from a combative party, created for the conquest of the State, into a state party, destined to contribute to the control and re-education of society under new political parameters. This phenomenon, along with a theoretical model that presumes the finished nature of the Nazi-fascit models has led more often than not to dismiss FET as a failure, minimizing, not always intentionally, what it actually achieved. However, equating bureaucratization and de-politicization ignores the fact that the bureaucratic apparatus "controls to a variable degree the decision-making processes of the state", thanks to which it can effectively curb "the aims of the organization it serves".[59] Even more so in the case of a bureaucracy based on ideological, not professional, criteria, a politicized bureaucracy that controlled key mechanisms in the state machinery, as well as the distribution of resources and favours.

The Spanish Civil War came to transform a small combative fascist party into a state-party, a conduit between state and society, and the only channel for the participation of the people in the construction of the New State until 1945. This transformation, which owed as much to the civil war and Spanish peculiarities, as to the interactions between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and the construction of the New Order, entailed its necessary bureaucratization but it did not imply its complete de-politicisation. Therefore, the party's importance to the construction of the regime cannot be dismissed simply as a failed attempt to instate a fascist dictatorship in Spain. As mentioned in the introductory section, fascistization was a process that could be stopped and even reversed, as proven by the Spanish case. However, it is important to avoid dismissing the falangist experience simply as a failure to meet the benchmark of an ideal fascist model. The Falange never completed the conquest of the state or controlled the cabinet, but the conflict allowed it to obtain ample political power, and to expand its reach over society through the control of instruments and spaces of socialization, in a way that would not have otherwise been possible.

Only by focusing on what parafascist or fascisticized movements really achieved, instead of looking at what they didn't, can we truly evaluate not only their importance within their own national boundaries, but also as actors within an illiberal political milieu in which their interactions with other fascist and parafascist movements came to be shaped both by a general belief in the emergence of a new political paradigm that could replace democracy, and by their own political agendas and circumstances, in ways that often fluctuated between opportunism and *realpolitilk*.

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[58] *BMN*, n.216, 1/5/1944.

[59] Olmeda Gómez, José Antonio. 1988. *Las Fuerzas Armadas en el estado franquista : participación política, influencia presupuestaria y profesionalización, 1939-1975*. Madrid: El Arquero, 32.