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Vincent, M.M. (2015) Ungodly Citizens: Protestants in National-Catholic Spain, 1939-53. *European History Quarterly*, 45 (1). ISSN: 0265-6914

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265691414552782>

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Ungodly Subjects: Protestants in National-Catholic Spain, 1939-53

Keywords: Spain, National-Catholicism, Protestantism, Francoism

Abstract

This article examines the little-known history of the protestant minority in Spain in the years after Franco's victory in 1939, looking at the reality of Catholic 'unity' and the position of the internal 'other' under National-Catholicism—the hegemonic ideological expression of Franco's Spain. Arguing that, rather than substituting for fascism, National-Catholicism in fact served as a transitional rhetoric, the article examines the anti-Protestant campaigns of the late 1940s, illuminating the position of religious minorities and their paradoxical position in post-Civil War Spain.

Excoriated as a 'foreign' enemy, Protestantism was discriminated against but its adherents were never treated with the savagery meted out the political opposition and, in some cases, they received legal and police support. The ecclesiastical authorities promulgated the language of anti-Protestantism but there is little evidence that they convinced the public that Protestants were a real and immediate danger, even before the move towards toleration and religious freedom in the 1960s.

Notes on the author

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The history of the protestant minority in Spain is not well known, either in or outside the country. Protestantism was only re-established in Spain after the loosening of religious restrictions from 1868—hyperbolically referred to as the ‘Second Reform’—remaining small and, in some respects, fragile. No trace remained of the original Reformation save the Reina-Valera Bible (1569): the Inquisition had seen to that. New confessions were dependent on foreign, mainly British, mission societies, a situation that ostensibly confirmed the ‘natural’ association of Catholicism and Spanishness. The ubiquity of sacramental baptism also meant that the Spanish Catholic nation could be proclaimed even when it was far from universally observed. National identities were confessional identities: even histories of Protestantism framed their narratives in terms of the ‘Catholic unity’ of Spain.ⁱ

This article examines the years between Franco’s victory in 1939 and Spain’s Concordat with the Vatican in 1953, and looks not only to recuperate the history of Spanish Protestantism but also to illuminate the reality of Catholic ‘unity’ and the position of the internal ‘other’ in a time of apparent ideological hegemony. National-Catholicism—the defining ideological expression of Franco’s Spain—had deep cultural roots, derived in part from an unusually bifurcated nationalist imaginary. The ‘culture wars’ of the nineteenth century pitted Catholic Spain against the liberal nation, with each developing its own, competing image of the nation.ⁱⁱ The right’s conviction that nation and religion were coterminous, at least south of the Pyrenees, sharpened in an age of mass politics. The political arena became defined by opposing camps of right and left, which pitted religion against secularism, most dramatically under the Second Republic.ⁱⁱⁱ The perceived threat from the left would be countered by violence to defend ‘the rights of God’, a call that was answered on the outbreak of

a Civil War that seemed to provide providential proof of the assumptions that underlay National-Catholicism.^{iv}

National Catholicism discourse antedated the Civil War, but the conflict transformed it into an ideology.^v After July 1936, the idea of ‘Catholic unity’—heightened by the hyper-nationalism of fascism— was reworked through a process of spiritual cleansing and redemption, which itself depended on the physical repression and excision of the anti-Spain.^{vi} The National-Catholic ‘Crusade’ shared its origins with the mass Spanish fascist movement and continued to have much in common with it.^{vii} Both owed their official presence to the experience of Civil War and defined themselves against an internal ‘other’. This combined notions of dissidence and violence in the blanket term, ‘Reds’, within which a variety of creeds—communism, socialism, republicanism, Protestantism, masonry—were equally anathematised. The armed struggle demonstrated that the ‘culture wars’ had only been a rehearsal; in battle, the left was utterly defeated. After April 1939, National Catholicism was hegemonic, the cementing ideology of a victorious Crusade.

This profound change in an ideology that no longer had to share political space with the left goes largely unobserved in the historiography. Within the regime, religion provided the common currency between the varying groups that made up Francoism’s social base. There were far more Catholics in post-Civil War Spain than there were fascists, not least because virtually all the Falangists were Catholics too. Yet, following Juan Linz’s classic typography of the regime, the Church’s privileged position is used to make an argument for its *non*-fascism, or ‘limited pluralism’.^{viii} As a result, the historiographical emphasis shifts to power struggles within the regime—

often misleadingly depicted as Catholics versus fascists—with the ‘National-Catholic’ phase succeeding the fascist period of the ‘first Francoism’.^{ix} Here, National-Catholicism becomes a substitute for fascism, redefining the regime after the Axis defeat in the Second World War. The aspiration to be ‘the spiritual reserve of the West’ replaced fascist dreams of imperial glory and so epitomises the *post*-fascist phase of Franco’s Spain, a period when the erstwhile Axis associate redefined itself along ideological lines acceptable to the Western powers.

Yet, rather than substituting for fascism, after 1939 National-Catholicism served as a transitional rhetoric. Even as it moved the Francoist regime away from fascism, National-Catholicism retained its violent mobilising dynamic, identifying internal enemies of its own. During the Civil War, an animus against Protestantism that surely owed more to Catholicism than it did to fascism was immediately apparent in the Nationalist zone. Protestantism had benefitted from the introduction of religious freedom under the Second Republic and its adherents were thus by definition seen as republicans. After 18 July, some were killed in the Nationalist zones, more were imprisoned, and all were subject to restriction and suspicion.^x During the post-war, a panoply of pilgrimages and other spectacular public liturgies coincided with the anti-protestant campaigns of the late 1940s. An investigation into these ‘ungodly citizens’ will thus illuminate the position of religious minorities and their uneasy position in Franco’s Spain and provide a sharper focus on the dominant politico-religious culture.

Protestants and the Anti-Spain

The persecution of Protestantism in Nationalist Spain demonstrates its position as an internal other in the discourse of the Spanish right. But it should not be conflated

with the exponentially more severe and systemic persecution of the Republican left, particularly the anarchist and communist movements. Within Francoism's list of baddies, Protestantism stands out as being neither revolutionary nor subversive. Nor was it a *political* creed. The position of protestant congregations in the Republican zone during the Civil War was not always comfortable, as violent anticlericalism led to the virtual cessation of public cult, even among Protestants, and assaults were not unknown, particularly during the first year of war. In Republican-held Catalonia, for example, the chapel in Rubí (Barcelona) was subject to an attack by 'groups of "uncontrollables" who tried to loot and burn our church'.^{xi} Protestants were no friends to popery but neither were they sympathetic to anti-religious violence and many were personally conservative. In Lorca (Murcia), for example, the Baptist minister Bautista García Arcos stayed overnight with the Servants of Mary sisters at the hospital in order to protect them from Republican militias; as the sister superior testified, his help demonstrated his 'faith and love in Our Lord Jesus Christ'.^{xii}

Their ambivalent position meant that Protestants could be a target for both sides, a position they shared with Catholic Republicans, who were also both religious dissidents and politically centrist.^{xiii} To the new regime, and perhaps in particular to the ecclesiastical authorities, the failings of these dissidents were primarily wilful. Catholic Republicans were accused of making common cause with communists; Protestants were deaf to the truth of God's Church. But they still did not fit easily into the regime's favoured category of 'Reds' or pose any serious threat to the governing powers. The putative solution for disobedient Catholics, most notably the Basques, was a return to the fold, shepherded along by clerical authority. Protestants,

however, were perceived in more complex terms, in part because of a widespread association between evangelical Christianity and freemasonry.

Four Protestant pastors were executed by Nationalist authorities during the civil war, Miguel Blanco (Seville), Salvador Iñiguez and José García Fernández (Granada), and Atilano Coco Martín (Salamanca). Two of these men were killed as masons, most famously Coco Martín, who was shot on 8 October 1936.^{xiv} In his case, the charge was accurate: according to his wife, he had become a mason in England in 1920 or 21.^{xv} Often, however, the accusation was bogus, used to conjure up a shadowy conspiracy of occult forces, bound together by secrecy, Satanism, and bloody rituals.^{xvi} During the post-Civil War period, this ‘Jewish-Masonic-communist’ conspiracy took shape as a composite bogeyman that refined the general, and much more widely used term, ‘Reds’. It created a fictitious and therefore invisible enemy, mobilising a generic image of dissent, which gained force after the 1940 Law of Freemasonry and Communism. References to ‘the joint action of Masonry and anarchising forces controlled in turn by hidden international resources’ both politicised and externalised Spanish Freemasonry and, by implication, Spanish Protestantism.^{xvii}

This was nothing new. It had long been the case that the terms and images that came together in the conspiracy could serve both as compendiums of evils and as proxies for them. For example, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo’s *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles (1880-2)*—which had near-canonical status to the political right and was republished in 1947—depicted Protestantism in terms of fanatics and apostates.^{xviii}

Foreign propaganda ‘has infested and continues to infest Spain’ yet, despite the

efforts of ‘fanatical’ evangelists, only the credulous or unprincipled succumbed. Protestantism was thus both sacrilegious and futile, a foreign import whose efforts fell on the stony ground of Spain’s natural association with Catholicism. Non-Catholic Spaniards were only capable of ‘coarse indifference’. Even apparent success such as in the mining zone around Linares only actually meant ‘opening a chapel and buying a few apostacies’.^{xix}

Menéndez y Pelayo’s account moves seamlessly from evangelicals to republicans and anti-clericals, associating ‘political heterodoxy’ (liberalism), ‘philosophical heterodoxy’ (rationalism) and ‘sectarian heterodoxy’ (Protestantism).^{xx} A Vatican survey conducted in Catholic dioceses in 1930 showed a similar tendency with, for example, Bishop Mateo Múgica’s claim that the forty children who attended the Protestant school in Bilbao were all ‘children of communists’, a comment that may reflect the status of its most famous alumnus, the Socialist leader Indalecio Prieto. Secrecy and hidden rituals were other tropes, as in the archbishop of Granada’s claim that ‘cults, which they keep secret’ took place in Asquerosa (today Valderrubio). The veiled reference to Masonry was extended by the archbishop of Zaragoza’s depiction of a group of Protestants in Villanueva del Gallego as crypto-Jews: ‘they do not eat pork or the blood of animals that have had their throats cut’. Meanwhile, those in Marín (Pontevedra)—which had the highest concentration of Protestants anywhere in Spain—were all ‘of deplorable moral conduct’.^{xxi}

After 1936, this composite image of non-Catholics was mapped onto the ‘anti-Spain’. Protestantism was not only inimical to Spanishness but also failed to thrive there. The point that ‘in Spain, Protestantism finds no fertile ground’—first made by the theocratic thinker, Jaime Balmes (1810-48), and reworked by Menéndez y Pelayo—

echoed through the twentieth century, reverberating in, for example, the repeated claims of the episcopacy that ‘in Spain whoever is not Catholic has no religion at all’.^{xxii} Catholicism was simply innate, *the* religious identity of Spaniards and victory in the Civil War confirmed National-Catholicism as the natural expression of national character.

The Protestant Presence in Spain

Despite the depredations of the Civil War, protestant Christianity had a small but tenacious presence in Spain, which the Catholic hierarchy consistently underplayed. Thus, the archbishop of Santiago claimed ‘a single Englishman’, presumably the noted Brethren missionary Sidney (Enrique) Turrall, as the entire Protestant ministry in the locality, with Marín as the only chapel; the existence of protestant congregations in Valdepeñas was admitted, but of the two chapels, one was ‘very small, where they hold poorly attended services’.^{xxiii} In reality, Valdepeñas was the site of a thriving independent Baptist congregation, the Spanish Gospel Mission, established by Percy Buffard in 1917, while the Brethren missions in Galicia were the most successful in Spain.^{xxiv} Few Catholics had much interest in denominational differences: the bishop of Oviedo referred to a ‘an English Anglican pastor’ in Toral de los Guzmanes, who was, in fact, Thornton (Eduardo) Turrall, who would have firmly rejected any idea of ordained ministry.^{xxv} Like other Brethren, the Turrall brothers held a strong belief in the priesthood of all believers. Their churches were independent, open to all believers and stressed the authority of scripture, with an emphasis on biblical simplicity that fostered conservative social views around, for example, the position of women.

‘Gathered’ or non-conformist churches dominated Spanish Protestantism, with the Brethren and the Baptists as the two largest denominations though Anglicanism was also a presence.^{xxvi} The dominant Protestant ecclesiology was therefore that of sects, despite the scorn with which Catholic apologists—who spoke just as readily of the Masonic or communist ‘sect’—applied the term. Confident in their own Godliness, members of these churches saw themselves as ‘saved’, ‘elect’ or ‘born again’. Appropriately in a mission field, their theology was that of conversion with both Brethren and Baptists rejecting the practice of infant christening. For these Protestants, the acceptance of Christ was a rational, adult decision, but, in the face-to-face-society of the pueblo, ‘believers’ baptism’ or conversion meant abandoning the communal festivities and rites of passage that had marked these rural communities for centuries.

Protestant congregations were very small minorities within the wider community, and had their own, distinct, spiritual landscape. Even in large cities, protestant chapels were found away from the most affluent areas—in Madrid they clustered in Chamberí, in Barcelona around the fishing port—and, outside the cities, non-conformity made most inroads in costal areas and the copper mining zones of the south.^{xxvii} Before the rise of Pentecostalism in the 1960s, there was some correlation between Protestantism and both fishing ports and mineral towns. Galicia had an unusually high number of Brethren missions, particularly around A Coruña and the *rías* of Marín and Pontevedra. Seamen, whether from A Coruña or Cádiz, visited foreign ports, worked with foreign crews, and may have encountered maritime charitable and missionary organisations on their travels. Similarly, the mineral wealth of Murcia, Jaén, and Huelva attracted British mining companies to towns such as

Cartagena and Linares, acting as vectors for new cultures and influences, not least those of the missionaries and chaplains who followed them.^{xxviii} In Linares, for example, Methodism arrived with Cornish tanners in the nineteenth century and by 1900 several Protestant denominations, including Anglicans, Baptists, and Brethren had become a familiar minority presence in the town. Miners and seafarers could thus escape Spain's hermetic Catholic culture through contact with the outside world. As occupational groups, miners and fishermen lived within defined communities and their patterns of social life often varied from those of wider society, not least because of the danger they faced in their working life. These distinctive groups thus faced a double marginality, on grounds of class and status as well as religion. Indeed, it may have been their social position that made these congregations receptive to Protestantism in the first place.

Though denominational rivalries existed, there was a strong degree of fellow-feeling and some permeability between congregations.^{xxix} The chapel in Rubí, for example, provided common worship for Methodists, Baptists and Brethren, and despite producing a noted Baptist minister in Samuel Vila, was officially Methodist until 1955, when Spanish Methodism affiliated to the Iglesia Evangélica Española (IEE).^{xxx} Considerable effort went into maintaining links between congregations. In Marín, for example, an 'annual meeting' was held every 31 January, attracting 'believers' from all over Galicia and ending with the 'usual tea party' on New Year's Day.^{xxxi} The fundamental importance of scripture to all protestant communities meant that links were also forged through the colporteurs and distributors of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which managed to remain active after the Civil War.^{xxxii} When Sidney

Turrall died in Marín in 1953, he was succeeded as pastor by the former colporteur, Isaac Campelo, who led the congregation until the 1980s.

In both city and pueblo, attendance at meetings, particularly if they involved music, was considerably more common than conversion. Sunday schools seem to have been more popular still, not least because they provided educational opportunities in areas where these were still relatively scarce. Although attendants outnumbered adherents, and support from foreign missions remained crucial, the example of Campelo shows how Protestantism was now an indigenous phenomenon, with local congregations and Spanish-born pastors. Bautista García Arcos is an interesting—though untypical—example, credited with reviving the congregation at Aguilas, baptising 39 people between 1950 and 1953. He was a ‘hard-working, eloquent preacher’, with real organising ability, particularly among the young, and an active presence in several pueblos in the region.^{xxxiii} However, García Arcos had begun his career in Valdepeñas, and testimony in mission archives gives a different picture of the man. The founder of the Spanish Gospel Mission referred cryptically to ‘one other Spanish Baptist independent’ whose ‘work is not worth taking into account’ while the Brethren’s John Biffen saw García Arcos as a danger ‘as his popularity would make for dissatisfaction among many’. More troubling was his personal morality as he had ‘been living in sin for X years and denying it all this time’.^{xxxiv}

Biffen’s view that such conduct could only be rectified by repentance and a period of private reflection incompatible with public ministry is likely to have been shared by most Spanish pastors, few of whom were well known. This eschewing of the limelight reflected the delicacy of their position; they worked quietly and discreetly.

Those marginalised within society—sometimes in several ways as the example of García Arcos suggests—operated most effectively away from official gaze. Paradoxically, however, such discretion could increase suspicion of ‘heretics’ or others who worked quietly and unobtrusively. The silence and social conformity impelled by the brutal processes of repression made Protestantism’s very survival uncertain. The depredations of the war years were presented as fortifying, and even cleansing—a typical Brethren statement claims that ‘[t]he “remnant” in 1939 was very much reduced but the spirit was healthier than in pre-war years’^{xxxv}—but ministers noted how hymns and ‘gospel portions’ had been forgotten while the number of evangelical affiliates appears to have halved from c.20,000 to an estimated 10,000 in the 1940s.^{xxxvi}

Even with these reduced numbers, the evangelicals still had an active and committed presence among some of those working class communities the established Church had long found it very hard to reach. This may be one reason why, even in the harsh conditions of the post-war, numbers rose, with c.20,000 received into non-Catholic churches by 1950.^{xxxvii} But this may also be connected to a rise in religious practice more generally, and the heavy pressure to social and religious conformity exerted by the Franco regime. Protestantism may have been suspect but it was demonstrably not atheist. There was an element of religious revival to post-war Spain, and a patent fervour to many of the devotional practices of the 1940s. Secularism came late to Spain, with churchgoing remaining high by European standards from the 1940s to the 1970s, although it was always fragmented by region, sex, and, especially, class. As the religious sociologists of the 1960s would show, significant swathes of the

population, particularly working-class men, appeared to have been lost to Christianity well before the Civil War.^{xxxviii}

Despite its small numbers, then, evangelical Christianity challenged the Spanish Church through its ability to reach at least some of those lost to Catholicism. Such a penetration undermined the rhetorical certainties of National-Catholicism to reveal the more diverse social reality of early Franco Spain. For example, Thornton Turrall wrote on his return to Spain of the ‘incredible hostility’ the missionaries experienced in Jiménez de Jamuz (León) where ‘the “Movement” executed 17 one night’.^{xxxix} In this village that ‘suffered so cruelly during the reign of terror’, the experience of violent repression resulted in lasting alienation from religion.^{xl} More generally, despite a definite recuperation, and perhaps even a rise, in levels of religious practice, it was clear that many among the impoverished never found solace in Catholicism. This, however, was only referred to in ecclesiastical circles and then only in terms of the Church’s pastoral task and its success in addressing, for example, the shortfall in urban parishes. Suggestions of cultural pluralism found no space in official discourse although some protestant clergy used Catholicism’s failure to suggest a common project of conversion. Samuel Vila, for example, wrote to the civil governor of Barcelona in 1948, explaining that their proselytising was directed, not at ‘convinced Catholics’ but ‘those who have abandoned all religion’. Such people, he claimed, usually listened more easily to a Protestant pastor than to a Catholic priest, so raising the possibility of freeing them ‘from the fatal unbelief that is, as Your Excellency knows, fertile ground for all extremisms’.^{xli} The same point was made in the Spanish Baptist Convention’s appeal to general Franco in the same year.^{xlii}

Appeals to social order and the need to guard against political extremism (that is, communism) did not always fall on stony ground in Franco's Spain. But Vila's timing was not auspicious. Episcopal concern at protestant evangelism—always represented as 'propaganda'—was increasing and the bishops were unlikely to view any reminder of their pastoral failings with equanimity. These were not invisible to those who ministered in Spain's parishes, even if they looked for a solution in formal adherence and conformity to a Church protected by law. Indeed, the ubiquitous notion of 'Protestant propaganda' alluded to the existence of religious pluralism in Spain while simultaneously denying its reality. Reference to this 'non-Spanish' form of cultural dissent was far easier than admitting the failure to evangelise the working classes or the persistence of non-Catholic modes of thought, particularly when these were being pointed out both by protestant ministers within Spain and liberal Catholics abroad. The certainties of National-Catholicism made it impossible to admit the superficial nature of much religious practice or the pastoral shortcomings of the established Church. Protestantism, however, could be alluded to, simply because it was easily externalised. As Balmes had demonstrated, Protestantism was foreign to both the historical reality and the *nature* of Spain; its association with 'England' led to its depiction as an external current of 'propaganda', both dangerous and, at the same time, doomed to failure.

The Anti-Protestant Campaigns

This insistence on the external nature of Protestantism suited the diplomatic mood. Isolated since 1945, Spain assumed the role of international pariah as the post-war system solidified, a position enhanced by the regime's autarky. Even as the Allied victory ensured that Franco's Spain definitively disentangled itself from fascism, the

hunger and privation suffered by its people were blamed on the machinations of foreign ‘blockades’. In this context, anti-protestant feeling was reactivated, reaching a groundswell in 1948, the year in which Marshall Aid began pouring into the rest of Europe, a Southern Baptist was re-elected to the White House, and the World Council of Churches (WCC) held its inaugural congress in Amsterdam. In the same year, the Catholic bishops of Spain produced their first collective pastoral letter since the Civil War, strikingly dedicated to ‘Protestant propaganda’.^{xliii}

Given the scale of the social and religious problems that afflicted Spain in the late 1940s—and the small size of the protestant minority—the choice of topic is surprising. Yet, the archbishops of Seville and Zaragoza had each published similar letters the previous year. Archbishop Segura’s letter invoked the ‘martyrs of the Crusade’ as the reason why ‘the heresy spread by Protestants’ should not be tolerated, particularly as they targeted ‘people of modest means, through seductive literature’.^{xliv} The same themes—of ‘error’, seduction, not least through external funding, and the susceptibility of the poor and ignorant—were repeated by the archbishop of Zaragoza, who emphasised Protestantism’s predatory nature, with its search for ‘ignorant and uneducated people’ and its desire to increase the number, not of believers, but of ‘unbelievers, bad Spaniards and the internal enemies of the nation’. The Acción Católica (AC: Catholic Action) bulletin, *Ecclesia*, reproduced and circulated these episcopal pronouncements, again playing on the reality of Spanish Protestants’ marginality to conflate it with an internal enemy. In October 1947, less than a month after Segura’s pastoral, the national AC chaplain spoke of how ‘Marxism, masonry and amoralism’ had been joined by a ‘new enemy’, Protestantism, which had launched ‘a worrying offensive against the Catholic Church and the religious and

social peace of our Fatherland’, richly funded by agencies outside Spain ‘with ends whose ambition we do not know’.^{xlv}

The language of the Catholic Action press demonstrates how this ‘protestant offensive’ was in fact a clerical—or at least clerically inspired—campaign that reworked the tropes of anti-Spain within a developing Cold War rhetoric. The imagined enemies identified by Catholic Action reflected a common concern with communist conspiracies but added an emphasis on Protestantism that was an essentially ecclesiastical preoccupation. The Falange seemed not to share it; the fascist party was conspicuous by its absence during the 1948 campaign. Indeed, there was no more immediate flashpoint than the inaugural congress of the WCC, which makes it hard to believe the insistence of prelates and Catholic Action chaplains that their actions were reactive and defensive. Rather, an awareness of the protestant ‘threat’ was orchestrated from the pages of *Ecclesia*, which even before the 1948 collective pastoral, was insisting on ‘the right to stop the heretical contagion, prohibiting its propaganda.’^{xlvi}

These words revealed how, in the ecclesiastical imagination of the 1940s, ‘propaganda’ served symbolically as a vector of infection that, if left unchecked, could threaten a newly purified Spain. The 1948 collective pastoral was published amidst a crescendo of articles on the Protestant danger in the Catholic Action press, whose starting point was always the impossibility of tolerating error, as affirmed in Leo XIII’s 1888 encyclical *Libertas*.^{xlvii} Of course, all religious beliefs have their own certain conviction of truth. This is as much the case in small Protestant sects as it is in the Catholic church, yet only a church-type institution—to use the terminology of

Weber and Troeltsch—can aspire to dominate an entire society. Such an aspiration, expressed primarily in terms of ‘religious unity’, has been seen as explaining the Spanish Church’s intolerant and intransigent attitude towards Protestants, a position that itself relates to the explicit rejection of pluralism by the Spanish Church.^{xlviii}

There was, as the Spanish episcopacy constantly reminded the faithful, only one truth and only one church. The path to salvation lay with Rome; other Christian options, including the Orthodox churches, were merely ‘sects’, erroneous in their beliefs and wayward in their practice. Their existence might be tolerated but their claims could never be admitted, a position that was forcibly restated in the 1948 pastoral. This expressed the pious hope that all separated churches would soon return to the fold of Rome, but only after citing Balmes that the Reformation was a deviation from the path of progress and civilisation. The world wars would never have occurred had Europe maintained ‘the unity of Christianity, Catholic unity’.^{xlix}

This blunt assertion of Spain’s Catholic unity paradoxically had the effect of denying the significance of Protestantism, and certainly of a protestant ‘problem’ at the very time that the pastoral letter drew attention to exactly that. The rhetorical position—inherited from Balmes and Menéndez y Pelayo and reiterated through innumerable pastoral letters, ecclesiastical pronouncements, and AC bulletins—was both that Spain was defined by religious unity and that this enviable position was the result of intransigence, retrenchment, and exclusion. One effect was a conflation of national body and mystical body: the idea of Catholic unity was embedded in the Franco regime’s mythic notion of time: ‘Spain was, is, and will be immortal’ as one famous poster put it. Indeed, the idea of immanence linked fascist and Christian conceptions of time, underlining the transitional nature of National Catholic discourse, which was,

as its name suggests, both religious and political. Such plasticity meant that, under National Catholicism, religious positions were easily converted into political action. Perceptions of Protestants as foreign and/or 'unSpanish' were reactivated in a political atmosphere that had seen foreign words banned from the names given to hotels and hostile demonstrations against representatives of foreign powers.¹ These were most striking, and are most well-known, during the first, most fascist phase of the Franco regime, when, in Madrid alone, anti-British demonstrations greeted the new ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare, on his arrival in 1940, the British and Foreign Bible Society's (BFBS) Madrid depot had its entire stock confiscated in July of the same year, and the British embassy was attacked on 24 June 1941.ⁱⁱ

Outside the capital, the assault on the BFBS was mirrored by visceral attacks on small local churches unprotected by foreign consulates. In Aguilas (Murcia) in 1940, 'a group of individuals, communicants in the established Church, active in ultra-rightist political and religious associations, then the only ones permitted' launched a violent assault on the local protestant chapel, which was already closed. Acting as a mob, this group of apparently respectable individuals broke in and 'threw bibles, gospels, and hymnals to the floor, shooting them and urinating on them'.ⁱⁱⁱ Such behaviour must have been deliberately shocking, offending against both religion and accepted social standards. Clearly, the normal rules did not apply: Protestant Christians were a legitimate object of attack. The Francoist context is clearly crucial, not only in revealing how, under National-Catholicism, mob violence could be an acceptable solution to politico-religious problems but also in changing accepted understandings of legitimate action. After the Aguilas assault, furniture, including the organ, was redistributed between the parish church and hospital chapel, reflecting the regime's

redefinition of property rights along ideological lines. The introduction of ‘fitness’ as a criterion for property-holding in the 1939 Law of Political Responsibilities meant that the violent seizure of Protestant goods could be justified by the understandings of confiscation and compensation embedded in the legislative practice of the early Franco regime.

The established chronology of the ‘first Francoism’, which has a fascist phase succeeded by a National-Catholic one, would suggest a decline in this kind of violence after the immediate post-Civil War period. In fact, however, assaults on Protestant chapels recurred in the late 1940s, as is shown by the case of Linares, a lead-mining town in Jaén, which had a well-established Protestant community and, until 1948, a British vice-consulate, testimony to the commercial and industrial links that characterised many mineral towns in southern Spain.^{liii} Protestant worship had continued in private houses through the Civil War and the Brethren Hall reopened in 1945. Life appeared to be returning to normal: when the local missionary, Rachel Chesterman, returned to the town in May 1946, she found that ‘all know about me, and many remember and are glad to see me; a peeler [sic] touched his hat as I passed and ladies moved off the narrow pavement to allow me to pass’.^{liv} The evangelical presence was thus remembered, and accepted back even in the harsh conditions of the post-war. When Grace Turrall returned to León with her father and sister in the famine-stricken 40s, they found a cooked chicken from the local schoolmaster waiting for them. Like many from the Brethren mission families, these women had been born in Spain and raised locally.^{lv} The missionaries’ status was thus ambivalent: they were both local and non-local; they belonged but were also outsiders.^{lvi}

On 24 June 1948, the Hall in Linares was attacked, precisely during the period that the vice-consulate was being closed. '[A]bout 30 young fellows, some of them powerfully built' 'trooped in' to an evening meeting and, with a cry of 'Viva la Virgen María Santísima', set about breaking the lights with 'rubber sticks', destroying seats, and smashing the organ, which was Miss Chesterman's personal property: 'oh how it hurt to see this strong man throw over my organ'. Although the furniture took the brunt of the attack, '[t]here were two or three pistols but they were not fired' and fourteen worshippers were hurt 'among them women [though] the Lord in His tenderness preserved me'.^{lvii} The police were summoned and the out-going consul, Mr Holberton, made a point of attending worship in the Hall the following Sunday, when the meeting was 'almost full and great quiet as the Gospel was told out with power. There were some new ones [ie attenders] [...] It was impressive ... to see 2 of our fellows with their heads swathed in bandages!' There was also a police guard, recalled by Miss Chesterman as 'all so friendly'. Indeed, she regretted that they were withdrawn the next day 'as the enemy has threatened a further attack'. She may not, though, have regretted the absence of the secret police who came to the door during the breaking of bread but left before the end of the meeting.^{lviii}

Her initial response was that neither the regime nor the townsfolk were responsible, though the assault had come as no surprise 'as bitter attacks have been made against us by the Catholic paper'. She reinforced the point: '[u]nsaved people in the street stop us and express deep sympathy. It is not the ordinary people who are against us but the R.C. clergy'. Indeed, the unprovoked attack on what was by any standards a soft target met with some opposition. Despite the risk of public protest, 'A crowd of men, women and children got outside the "Acción Católica" and [...] yelled "shame"

and terrible words’, protesting at ‘the way we have been treated’. ‘[A]ll these’ Miss Chesterman noted, were ‘non-believers’, a clear indication that ordinary townsfolk were rallying to the defence of their protestant neighbours.^{lix} The incident was, after all, unusual in that the evangelical community was long established and relations with other townsfolk had always been peaceful. The account also shows how the perpetrators were immediately identified with AC and not the Falange. Again religious positions had political manifestations: the events in Linares cannot be understood outside a political context but they were ostensibly carried out by non-political forces.

The events in Linares formed part of a wave of anti-protestant violence that began in autumn 1947, when the Baptist chapel in Granollers was attacked and the preacher hit ‘until his face was black with the blows’. Shortly thereafter the Methodist chapel in c/Ripoll, Barcelona, was attacked, then the Brethren Hall in c/Trafalgar, Madrid and, in December, the Baptist church in Valencia.^{lx} In the following year, the Linares Brethren were attacked in June, with other assaults in Sevilla, Albacete and smaller towns such as Infesta (Ourense) and Figueres (Girona) following in a pattern reminiscent of the earlier violence of 1940-1. In Figueres, again, the attack was carried out by ‘young men of Catholic Action’ who, on 6 March 1948, daubed phrases such as ‘Down with Luther and his family’, ‘war on England’ and ‘We don’t want you’ on the chapel walls. These showed how the identification of Protestants as an object of national deprecation—an internal ‘other’—was repeatedly externalised through ubiquitous references to ‘England’. This persistent—and highly misleading—depiction of protestant congregations as non-Spanish had been reiterated in the collective pastoral of May 1948.^{lxi} As if to make the point, posters appeared

around the town, declaring ‘Protestantism is the enemy of Spain’, testifying to the mobilisation of a pre-existing, anti-outsider discourse that was itself a constituent of National-Catholicism.^{lxii}

The nature of the 1947-8 violence suggested that, despite Miss Chesterman’s insistence that ‘The general public is all in our favour’, opinions were divided and, at least among some, feelings were running high. The association with AC—which at the time this recruited almost exclusively among the middle and upper classes—was well known. In Figueres, the police noted that the graffiti were ‘well written and without spelling mistakes, which suggests they were written by people of a certain education’ while in Linares, Miss Chesterman recounted how ‘as I walked along, some well-dressed youths laughed and looked at me. Two so-called ladies with their mantillas on, on their way to the R.C. Church, as they drew near to me, one of them made a mocking kind of sound and looked at me with scorn, I walked along as if I had not seen it for it is an honour to suffer in the smallest way for the Lord.’^{lxiii}

Opportunities to suffer in this ‘smallest way’ persisted for some time. As late as February 1955 Miss Chesterman wrote that ‘since the attack on our Hall S[unday S[chool] went down greatly from over 100 children, as the RC mothers feared to let their children attend any more, so now nearly all the children are the children of believers.’^{lxiv} The effects of the violence had been profound.

The situation was particularly serious, given the class position of most Spanish Protestants, who had a conspicuous confessional identity compounded by weak economic resources. Miners and fishermen were not rich and opportunities for employment were few. Ministers all over Spain reported believers leaving for South

America, attracted by greater religious freedom but impelled by economic need. Poverty made people more vulnerable to social stigma and in areas of economic decline, such as Linares, protestant congregations shrank as the lead mines closed and local people left to seek work in Madrid or Barcelona. The exodus of British companies left local Protestants dependent on other employers, who were exactly those property-owning middle-classes most likely to be involved in Catholic Action and, of course, its anti-protestant campaigns. As Sidney Turrall observed from Marín:

‘Rome has succeeded in producing a strange kind of “fear” as to breaking away to the Gospel—though there is no real faith in their own “faith”—The political intrigue and pressure of Acción Católica ... and influences brought to bear in their homes. Business relationships, marriages, military service especially, with the powerful support of the Franco regime—holds them in these small towns as in a vice though they think they are free.’^{lxv}

The liturgies of victory

The overbearing presence of the Catholic Church was a social reality in Franco’s Spain, and owed much to a liturgical style that emphasised the open-air performance of collective belief. Public cult was emblematic of National-Catholicism, encouraged not only as testimony to individual faith but also as expressions of strength, loyalty, and submission. The emphasis was on display, which, as the exiled Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer lamented to Pius XII, reflected the Spanish Church’s deep-seated preference for official protection over any more troubling, and potentially divisive, strategy of internal renewal.^{lxvi} Spain, true Spain, was Catholic; it did not have to

become so. Demonstrating this fact was all that was required. In the aftermath of the Civil War, public liturgies were used not only to reclaim the national landscape but also to allow the citizenry to display their fidelity to the true faith and the true Spain. The early Franco regime legitimised itself through public acclamation and mass spectacle just as Mussolini's Italy had done.^{lxvii}

Such rituals continued to characterise official life under the 'National-Catholic' phase of the regime. Alongside the liturgically celebrated commemorations of regime successes—which included the Civil War—people were brought back to the churches by ecclesiastically sponsored local events, particularly pilgrimages and 'holy missions', which systematically visited towns and villages across Spain. These missions became vehicles for 'massive evangelising campaigns' that united and displayed the national-Catholic nation.^{lxviii} In 1942, for example, it was claimed that 15,000 people attended the Stations of the Cross during the Malaga mission, while 45,000 joined the opening procession in the Galician city of Vigo.^{lxix} Small wonder that Protestants—who also dreaded Holy Week and other periods of public devotional fervour—found the missions intimidating. It was reported from Linares in 1948 that 'following the "Holy Mission" to the town ... our difficulties have increased' ... 'Soon two Jesuits are returning to Linares so that bodes no good'.^{lxx} The emphasis on fervour, conformity, and public adherence to church and state intimidated all dissident groups, and always left some physical memorial, even if the spiritual effects were fleeting. The 1947 mission in Jiménez de Jamuz was commemorated, as was usual, by a cross in the village church that, in the context of the local experience, was clearly a symbol of repression as well as of religiosity. Small wonder that Thornton Turrall

noted that, here, even those who attended ‘the preaching of the gospel’ ‘also go to the Church of Rome! which is a strange procedure.’^{lxxi}

Pilgrimage was an essential component of the missions, not least in the symbolism of the pilgrim mission priests, often Jesuits or Claretines. Throughout the 1940s, local, national, and international pilgrimages resacralised the landscape, rediscovering the territory that provided National-Catholicism’s geographical boundaries. AC developed a campaign of pilgrimage that enveloped all of Spain, orchestrating a rhetoric of devotion that was simultaneously both triumphant and submissive.

Pilgrimage was presented as a manifestation of the national community, a profound renewal of individual faith and, increasingly, as a test, particularly of young men. The great youth pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, announced for September 1948, was to prove their mettle, not least through difficulties caused by shortages of vehicles, petrol, food and lodging. Through these penitential conditions—‘little sleep, sparse food, much prayer and no complaining’—the young pilgrims would manifest their faith, in both God and state. Indeed, the fidelity of ‘a generation disposed to sacrifice’ was never in doubt.^{lxxii} As one diocesan bulletin put it, they represented ‘the most select ... youth, made holocaust’, a generation already tested in civil war.^{lxxiii}

It was in this febrile atmosphere, with its deliberate evocation of the wartime ethos of the Crusade, that attacks on Protestant chapels took place, carried out by precisely those young AC enthusiasts who were caught up in the rhetoric—and reality—of pilgrimage.

The Catholic culture of pilgrimage had changed profoundly during the nineteenth century with a series of apparitions of the Virgin Mary, notably in La Salette, Lourdes, and Fatima.^{lxxiv} The healing shrine of Lourdes was particularly important in developing this modern cult of pilgrimage, which recreated the spiritual geography of Europe within a context of defending religion against an impious world.^{lxxv} The understanding of impiety crystallised after the Fatima apparitions, which ended in October 1917, became inextricably associated with anticommunism. The struggle against an atheistic Left provided a common theme of mid-twentieth century Marian apparitions. The proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931, for example, provoked a flurry of reported visions—most notoriously at Ezquioga—in northern Spain.^{lxxvi} Political meanings varied, however, even within this anti-secular context. During the early years of the Cold War, the Fatima story was reworked within a public, penitential, and even apocalyptic context that found an international resonance. Between 1947-54, apparitions of the Virgin took place at the rate of over 14 per year, in contrast to an average of 4.5 per year between 1930-44.^{lxxvii} Many of these post-1945 apparitions followed the Fatima pattern of apocalyptic messages and revealed ‘secrets’ while its emphasis on the reparation of an unfaithful world struck a chord in National-Catholic Spain, now styled as the ‘spiritual reserve of the West’.

A key stage in the post-war development of pilgrimage came with the globalisation of the Fatima cult. In 1947, the Virgin herself became a pilgrim, setting out on a ‘world tour’ that took her overland from Cova da Iria through Spain and France to the Low Countries. This ‘International Pilgrim Virgin Statue’ had been created on the instructions of the Fatima seer, Sister Lucia, so that it might act as a vehicle for divine power. The travelling image was blessed by the bishop of Leiria, who had prayed

that, ‘wherever the statue goes, may Mary herself always accompany it’.^{lxxviii} This interplay of the human and the heavenly was commonly described as miraculous, a term that appears frequently in relation to the Pilgrim Statue’s journey through Spain and, unsurprisingly, the tour led to pastoral letters on Marian devotion in almost every Spanish diocese, particularly those through which the image passed. This proclamation of a Marian age gave the image’s journey a triumphal edge, which was reinforced by the extraordinary enthusiasm that marked its reception.

This enthusiasm was, of course, carefully cultivated. In a series of liturgical practices already familiar from diocesan missions, instructions were given that the image was never to be left alone, an adaptation of the familiar Eucharistic practice of ‘watching’. Confessions would be heard, a Holy Hour held, and on the following day the entire parish consecrated to her Immaculate Heart—a derivative devotional practice encouraged by Pius XII, who was to crown the Pilgrim Statue in 1951—before a formal farewell asking for the Virgin’s protection and the re-establishment of the Reign of Christ in the world.^{lxxix} Nearly everywhere, the celebrations exceeded what was required. As the image travelled north from Cáceres, it was met by ‘fervent and improvised ceremonies’: 1,000 communions were distributed in the small—and formerly Republican—textile town of Béjar. In the city of Salamanca, young men from Acción Católica carried the Virgin past an estimated 50,000 people; over the next two days, ‘the procession of faithful past the image was constant’.^{lxxx} Many were attracted by Fatima’s power to work miracles, most famously the ‘dancing sun’ seen at Cova da Ira in 1917.^{lxxxi} But news was spreading of the 1946 ‘miracle of the doves’ as these birds, which were taken as a sign of divine presence and of divine favour, never left the travelling image unaccompanied.^{lxxxii} When the Virgin of

Fatima reached Madrid in spring 1948, observers saw ‘the sick rising from their beds, the doves forming a guard of honour and faithfully accompanying the image, sinners confessing’.^{lxxxiii} It was not, of course, the case that, as AC claimed, the devotion to the Virgin displayed in Madrid had been ‘unanimous’. It was rather a performance of Catholic unanimity but one within which numerous individuals could inscribe themselves in the National-Catholic project within a context of repentance, conformity, and conversion. Others, of course, could not.

Catholics versus Protestants in Franco’s Spain

The choice of Mary as the divine instrument chosen to achieve the reaffirmation of Christian fidelity in the early Cold War accentuated the sharpest point of difference between Protestantism and Catholicism. Spain had no equivalent to the apparition of Tre Fontane (Rome) when, in April 1947, a local protestant was converted after seeing the Virgin, but the claim that Protestants ‘do not believe in the Virgin’ was heard time and time again in local anti-evangelical agitation. Visits of the Fatima image seem to have been associated in some places with attacks on protestant chapels and it is hard to see AC’s announcement of the discovery of a ‘protestant offensive against Spain’ during the Fatima tour as entirely coincidental.^{lxxxiv} When the Virgin of Fatima visited Sevilla in January 1948—to a level of popular enthusiasm described as ‘*apotético*’—Cardinal Segura preached a sermon explaining how ‘She is the one who will defeat the new seven-headed hydra that threatens civilisation’.^{lxxxv} Given the pastoral letter he had published on the dangers of Protestant ‘heresy’ the previous September, it was not hard to deduce that evangelical Christianity was one of the hydra’s heads.

Ecclesia had been suggesting an association between Protestantism and communism for some months, building on long-established associations between evangelism and masonry. During 1947, pastoral letters from bishops in Argentina and Poland were reproduced, the first claiming that ‘the communists have come to join the Protestants’, the second that ‘the Polish Catholic faith is being attacked from within by exotic sects’. The conclusion was, according to the AC chaplains who produced *Ecclesia*, that ‘Protestant sects ... are an invaluable sword to wield cunningly in Catholic countries’.^{lxxxvi} Small wonder that those cities and towns that experienced the ‘apotheosis’ of missions or Fatima pilgrimages saw protestant congregations lock their doors. Yet, even the concerted National-Catholic campaigns of the late 1940s—which produced extraordinary and spectacular demonstrations of Catholic devotion and adherence to the New State—led to incidents of anti-protestant violence rather than any systematic extirpation. A rhetoric—both verbal and somatic—of anti-Protestantism was clearly in place but it did not necessarily coincide with official or legislative attitudes.

Indeed, there is a sense in which the campaigns show the limits of National Catholicism as well as its mobilising capacity. Despite the rhetoric and the privileged position of Acción Católica—which allowed it to mount the anti-protestant offensive—the regime’s attitude was more ambiguous. Article 6 of the 1945 Fuero de los Españoles asserted that the state ‘assumes the protection of religious liberty, which will be guaranteed’ even as Catholicism, defined as the religion of the Spanish state, was given ‘official protection’. The everyday practice of civic life did suggest a de facto distinction between ‘true’ and ‘other’ Spaniards, with requests to open protestant

chapels declined for no legal reason and the rights of conscience of, for example, national servicemen persistently denied. However, the Fuero had, in effect, decriminalised Protestantism and, despite the ferocious campaign against ‘protestant propaganda’, evangelicals were now permitted to worship in private, which essentially meant behind closed doors. Protestant activities were highly circumscribed, but they were still protected by the law.

The chapel in Linares, for example, benefitted from police protection after the assault in 1948. Similarly, after an outbreak of violence in Málaga in 1954, and at the request of the local pastors, two policemen were stationed at the entrance to the chapel so the faithful could attend divine service unmolested.^{lxxxvii} In both cases, an acknowledgement of the local Protestants’ legal rights was granted simply in assigning police protection to the chapel, which also tacitly recognized the faithful’s Spanish nationality. Many pastors energetically proclaimed their status as law-abiding Spanish citizens entitled to the protection of the law, a tactic that would have been simply impossible for members of the political opposition. Ministers seeking to reopen their chapels, for example, were scrupulous in their respect for legality.^{lxxxviii} In Girona in 1958, when the diocesan Catholic Action complained about the Baptist minister’s ‘illegal’ ‘anti-Catholic and consequently anti-Spanish’ activities, a subsequent police investigation found Samuel Vila to be ‘of good moral conduct, both private and public’ with no political affiliations.

These conclusions suggest an accommodation and acceptance that was entirely absent from public discourse. The cultural tropes of National-Catholicism ran very deep in confessional Spain, but they existed and were interpreted only in interaction with

community mores and accepted social practice. Vila was able to play on this tension between the rhetoric of National-Catholicism and everyday practice, precisely because of his embedded position within local society. Described by the veteran Baptist minister Percy Buffard as the ‘best’ of his fellow clergy struggling in Spain, Samuel Vila was the son of a wealthy commercial family in Rubí, which had converted two generations earlier. He worked throughout the difficult conditions of the 1940s helped by both his colleagues’ ‘fullest confidence in his integrity’ and his status and connections. Buffard defended him against accusations of an ‘ostentatious parade of friendship’ with the authorities but commented on how his father was ‘very friendly with a number of pro-Franco people’, which Buffard believed accounted for ‘his immunity from prosecution’.^{lxxxix}

Other ministers were, however, notably less successful. In Elche, for example, a young pastor, José Bonifacio, found a co-operative local police chief when he arrived in the town in 1950, who ‘more than once in the immediate future ... scattered a group of young men who planned to stop our services’. Pressure from the local Catholic clergy continued, however, and faced with increasing restrictions, Bonifacio visited the Civil Governor, again coming away with the promise of protection. ‘As long as that Governor was in power we had peace and growth; but when he left our troubles began again’.^{xc} The saga of Elche’s Baptist chapel continued through the 1950s as a cat and mouse game of permissions, refusals, delaying tactics, supposed hygiene infringements and, eventually, the closure and sealing of the chapel. Permission to reopen was refused as late as 1961. As well as a change of Civil Governor, the Elche congregation had to contend with clerical denunciations, petitions for the Protestants’ removal, and pressure on the local authorities. As

Bonifacio remarked, ‘Even the small children felt that they had a right to bother us’.^{xci}

The contrast with Bonifacio’s initial treatment meant that it was with some justification that foreign commentaries spoke of ‘the capricious nature of the “persecution” under which one chapel may be closed while in another suburb of Madrid ... a new one has just been opened’.^{xcii}

This is, in fact, an accurate summary of the position in which Spain’s Protestants found themselves after the consolidation of the Franco regime during the 1940s.^{xciii}

All operated under restrictions and there is no doubt that evangelical worship—and on occasion the private expression of faith—was constrained by both official regulation and social pressure. Some communities, such as Elche’s, were subject to significant harassment but not all. Indeed, in some ways the unsystematic nature of action taken against protestant churches was its only systematic feature. This patchy and episodic, if deeply patterned, discrimination against evangelicals bore a direct relation to both the silence of the national government and the considerable discretion that was left to local authorities.^{xciv} However, whether refusing permits and permissions, as in Elche, or sending police protection to safeguard worshippers, as in Malaga or Linares, it was quite clear that the treatment meted out to protestant congregations was categorically different from that given to communist or anarchist cells or, indeed, other forms of political dissent.

Conclusion

The position of Protestant Christians in early Franco Spain is thus a paradoxical one. On the one hand, they were excoriated in various forms of National-Catholic discourse as an enemy that was at once both foreign and indigenous. At least in

rhetorical terms, Protestantism was beyond the pale of Francoist Spain, its adherents discriminated against and its public expression suppressed. Yet, the recognition in several cases that the individuals concerned were law-abiding, respectable, ‘apolitical’ people suggests an accommodation with non-Catholic Spaniards that was clearly in tension with the official discourse of the National-Catholic regime. The street protests that followed the attack on the chapel in Linares were also proof of this. The pressure of the times—including the campaigns conducted by members of the clergy—led to small groups of committed individuals taking violent action against Protestants but not to any sustained social exclusion or legal repression.

Even so, it is not immediately clear why Protestantism should have continued as such a concern for the Spanish Church. The resurgent position of Catholicism after the Civil War makes it hard to see how the small numbers and limited presence of Spanish Protestantism posed any serious threat to either church or state. As much was admitted by Jesús Iribarren, editor of *Ecclesia*, when, some time after the Second Vatican Council, he wrote that the 1948 collective pastoral ‘read today ... sounds odd’, explaining it in the context of an international press campaign—‘in which there was more fantasy than genuine religiosity’—mounted amid Spain’s diplomatic isolation of the late 1940s.^{xcv} The pastoral letter and AC campaign were thus simply responses to an unfair political campaign mounted from outside Spain.

That the international context was significant is not in doubt, but Iribarren’s explanation is as unconvincing as the distinction between the religious and the political is disingenuous. An essential characteristic of National Catholicism was that it combined both elements, subsuming the confessional within civic life. Ultimately,

the lack of success in branding scrupulously law-abiding pastors as ‘Reds’ demonstrated the essentially empty nature of the National-Catholic project. It succeeded in continuing a fascist-style mobilisation—principally among the young—but only in a devotional and liturgical context. The ecclesiastical authorities promulgated the language of anti-Protestantism but there is little evidence that they convinced the public that Protestants were a real and immediate danger, in contrast to genuine social fears around ‘communists’ and ‘bandits’. And, after the signing of the concordat in 1953, evangelicals became less prominent in the imagined ‘anti-Spain’, though their presence in Spain had actually increased. But the limits of National Catholicism were now clearer and the regime had settled into a conservative, hierarchical orthodoxy.

The position of Protestant Christians in early Franco Spain is thus a paradoxical one. On the one hand, they were excoriated in various forms of National-Catholic discourse as an enemy that was at once both foreign and indigenous. At least in rhetorical terms, Protestantism was beyond the pale of Francoist Spain, its adherents discriminated against and its public expression suppressed. Yet, the recognition in several cases that the individuals concerned were law-abiding, respectable, ‘apolitical’ people suggests an accommodation with non-Catholic Spaniards that was clearly in tension with the official discourse of the National-Catholic regime. The street protests that followed the attack on the chapel in Linares were also proof of this. The pressure of the times—including the campaigns conducted by members of the clergy—led to small groups of committed individuals taking violent action against Protestants but not to any sustained social exclusion or legal repression.

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Catholicism were now clearer and the regime had settled into a conservative, hierarchical orthodoxy.

Life did, though, improve for Spanish Protestants during the 1960s, with the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom (1965) and, consequently, Spain's Law of Religious Liberty (1967).^{xcvii} New forms of evangelism flourished with Pentecostalism making inroads into urban areas, the Jehovah's Witnesses increasing in number, and northern European tourists bringing Protestantism to the coasts. Mission activity continued and the established confessions could now work with more freedom and security than ever before. The Protestant churches remained very small, but they were growing and, most significantly, the shifts in the conciliar Church meant that they could no longer be presented as an internal enemy. The Catholic Spain that once prayed for the extirpation of all heresies now talked of 'separated brethren' and ecumenism. The events and attitudes discussed in this article did not survive as mainstream opinions but they illuminate a particular period of Francoism, and the vexed position of the internal other, which was itself always in flux.

ⁱ John David Hughey Jnr, *Religious Freedom in Spain: Its Ebb and Flow* (Nashville, 1955)

ⁱⁱ José Alvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid, 2001); Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (eds), *Culture Wars: Secular Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2009).

ⁱⁱⁱ See e.g. Julio de la Cueva, *Clericales y anticlericales: el conflicto entre confesionalidad y secularización en Cantabria, 1875-1923* (Santander, 1994); Mary

Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic: Religion and Politics in Salamanca, 1930-6* (Oxford, 1996).

^{iv} Alfonso Botti, *Cielo y Dinero: El nacionalcatolicismo en España (1881-1975)* (Madrid, 1992), 90.

^v Botti, *Cielo y Dinero*, 89-100; Michael Richards, *A Time of Silence: Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain, 1936-45* (Cambridge, 1998), 16-19; Carolyn Boyd (ed), *Religión y Política en la España contemporánea* (Madrid, 2007), 33-105; Mary Vincent, 'La Guerra Civil como guerra de religión', *Alcores* 4 (2007), 57-73.

^{vi} See Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London, 2012); Santos Juliá (ed.), *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil* (Madrid, 1999).

^{vii} See Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923-77* (Wisconsin, 1999); Ismael Saz Campos, *España contra España: Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid, 2003); Sid Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism: The Juventud de Acción Popular in Spain, 1931-1939* (Brighton, 2010).

^{viii} Juan J. Linz, 'An Authoritarian Regime: Spain,' in Stanley G. Payne (ed.), *Politics and Society in Twentieth Century Spain* (New York and London: 1976), 160-208.

^{ix} The classic statement is Javier Tusell, *Franco y los católicos: La política interior española entre 1945 y 1957* (Madrid, 1984)

^x Juan Bautista Vila, 'Los protestantes españoles ante la guerra civil (1936-1939)', *Cuenta y Razón*, 21 (1985).

^{xi} Samuel Cortés. *Cien años de historia en Rubí, 1881-1981* (Terrassa, 1981) @ <http://www.esglesiarubi.org/esglesia/edicion-cien-anos-de-historia/>, consulted 13 Sept 2013. Protestants in Malaga were circumscribed by anticlericalism from 1931 (Elías

de Mateo Avilés, 'Entre la repression y la tolerancia: El protestantismo y las sectas en Málaga durante la época de Franco, 1937-67', *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, 17 (2001), 330) while the chapel in Marín had been attacked by 'Communist' arsonists in Oct. 1932, when local 'Roman Catholics ... flew to our assistance' (C. Araujo García y Kenneth G. Grubb, *Religion in the Republic of Spain* (London, New York & Toronto, 1933), 46).

^{xii} Documents dated 28 Sept. 1939, 14 Feb. 1940, 15 Feb. 1940 @ <http://www.forocristianoevangelico.com/showthread.php?t=3318> consulted 20 Nov 2009.

^{xiii} Javier Tusell y José Calvo, *Giménez Fernández: Precursor de la democracia española* (Sevilla: Mondadori, 1990), Hilari Ragner, *Carrasco i Formiguera: Un cristiano nacionalista, 1890-1938*. (Madrid, 2002).

^{xiv} García Fernández's wife and two teachers, Germán Araujo (Teruel) and Carmen Hombre Ponzoa (Jerez), were also executed: both teachers were active in the socialist movement; Ponzoa was pregnant when she died. Marta Velasco, *Los otros mártires: Las religiones minoritarias en España desde la Segunda República hasta nuestros días* (Madrid, 2012) includes documentary appendices on Coco Martín.

^{xv} Letter reproduced in Luciano González Egido, *Agonizar en Salamanca Unamuno: Julio-diciembre 1936* (Madrid, 1986), 109-10. Jean-Pierre Bastian identifies 43 leading Protestants as members of Masonic lodges 1868-1939: 'Los dirigentes protestantes españoles y su vínculo masónico, 1868-1939: hacia la elaboración de un corpus', *Anales de Historia Contemporánea* 21 (2005), 414-16

^{xvi} See José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, *El contubernio judeo-masónico-comunista: del satanismo al escándalo de la P-2* (Madrid, 1982)

^{xvii} *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 62 (1940), 1537.

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- ^{xviii} Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles* (Madrid, 1992), Vol. 2, 1217-55.
- ^{xix} *Ibid* at 1224, 1370.
- ^{xx} *Ibid*, 1132; see also the discussion of anticlerical violence, 1137-42.
- ^{xxi} Cited José Ramón Hernández Figueiredo, ‘El protestantismo en España de la II República a la luz de los informes del Archivo Secreto Vaticano’, *Hispania Sacra* No. 127 (2011), 329, 343, 345, 326. The Valderrubio chapel was run by the Lutheran Fliedner mission.
- ^{xxii} Jaime Balmes, *El protstantismo comparado con el catolicismo* in *Obras completas* (Barcelona: Biblioteca Balmes, 1925); quote at Hernández Figueiredo, ‘El protestantismo’, 338.
- ^{xxiii} Hernández Figueiredo, ‘El protestantismo’, 326, 348,
- ^{xxiv} Benito González Raposo, *O protestantismo a Galicia* (Vigo, 1999); Neil Dickson and Tim Grass (eds), *The Growth of the Brethren Movement: National and International Experiences* (Milton Keynes, 2006); Percy Buffard, *Spain and the Gospel: A Brief History of the SGM* (Valdepeñas, 1935).
- ^{xxv} Hernández Figueiredo, ‘El protestantismo’, 346.
- ^{xxvi} Henry Chadwick, *The Anglican Communion: The Iberian Churches* (n. p., 1980).
- ^{xxvii} Araujo García and Grubb, *Religion in the Republic of Spain*, statistical appendices 94-102 and maps facing contents and 86.
- ^{xxviii} Robert Vernon, ‘The Linares Lead Mining District: the English Connection’, *De Re Metallica* 13, julio-diciembre 2009, 1-10.
- ^{xxix} For tussles between Baptists and Brethren over property and membership, see Juan Bautista Vilar, *Un siglo de protestantismo en España: Aguilas-Murcia, 1893-*

1979 (Murcia, 1979) and *Echoes of Service Papers* (henceforth EOS), EOS/Mr John Biffin's correspondence John Rylands University Library, University of Manchester.

^{xxx} Established in 1865, predominantly by Lutheran congregations.

^{xxxi} EOS/Mrs A. Turrall to Mr Stunt 8 Jan. 1957, 11 Jan. 1960.

^{xxxii} James Moulton Roe, *A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1905-1954* (London, 1965), 283-4.

^{xxxiii} This rather hagiographic depiction in Vilar, *Un siglo de protestantismo*; quotes at 134, 139. See also pp. 228-50.

^{xxxiv} Correspondence: Percy Buffard to John Rushbrook, 4 Dec. 1944 Baptist Archives (henceforth BA), Regent's Park College, Oxford, Baptist World Alliance (henceforth BWA) 1C 14(A) Spain (1936-55), folder 1; EOS/Mr J. Biffen to Mr Stunt 2 June 1950

^{xxxv} E. H. Trenchard, *Spain: Land of Light and Shade* (Bath, n.d.)

^{xxxvi} Vilar, 'Los protestantes españoles', 257-8; under the Second Republic, the 'evangelical community' numbered 21,900, Araujo García and Grubb, *Religion in the Republic of Spain*, 92.

^{xxxvii} According to the Spanish Evangelical Defence Committee, 30,000 Protestants in 1961 included 6,000 Brethren, 5,400 Baptists, 3,800 affiliated to the IEE, 1,000 Anglicans (IERE), and a further 5,100 'independent', Dale G. Vought, *Protestants in Modern Spain* (Pasadena, 1973), 15.

^{xxxviii} Rogelio Duocastella, 'Géographie de la Pratique Religieuse en Espagne', *Social Compass* 12:3 (1965), 253-302; William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1998* (Washington, 2000), 463-78.

^{xxxix} EOS/Mr T. Turrall to Mr Lewis and editors, 29 April 1949; to Messrs Vine and Lewis 22 November 1948; to Mr Vine 19 April 1948. Details of the 17 executions @ <http://www.jiminiegos36.com>

^{xl} In Salamanca, the actions of ‘so-called Catholics’ in the repression also caused a lasting ‘excision’ from the Church in some pueblos, Instituto de Sociología y Pastoral Aplicadas, *Sociología Religiosa y Pastoral de Conjunto de la Diócesis de Salamanca* (Barcelona, 1968).

^{xli} Letter dated 23 Feb 1948, reproduced Josep Clara, ‘Represión, intolerancia y consolidación de los protestantes catalanes en la postguerra. El ejemplo de Girona’, *Anales de Historia Contemporánea* 17 (2001), 312-13.

^{xlii} Typescript, ‘Spanish Evangelical Christians appeal to General Franco and to the Civilised World’, June 1948, BA, BWA 1C 14(B) Folder 5.

^{xliii} ‘Sobre la propaganda protestante en España’ in Jesús Iribarren (ed.), *Documentos colectivos del episcopado español, 1870-1974* (Madrid, 1974), 242-9.

^{xliv} BEAS September 1947, cited Ramón Garriga, *El Cardenal Segura y el nacional-catolicismo* (Barcelona, 1977), 294. References to Protestants ‘buying’ allegiance were commonplace.

^{xlv} *Ecclesia* 4 Jan., 21 June 18, 25 Oct. 1947; 17 Jan. 1948

^{xlvi} Bishop Zacarias de Vizcarra, ‘El problema de la propaganda disidente’, *Ecclesia* 31 Jan. 1948

^{xlvii} Available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/index_sp.htm

^{xlviii} See further, Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1975* (Oxford, 1987).

^{xlix} ‘Sobre la propaganda protestante’, § 14, 249; 242-9 at §11, 248.

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- ¹ In April 1939, Pedro Montoliú, *Madrid en la posguerra 1939-1946: Los años de la represión* (Madrid, 2005), 80.
- ^{li} Sir Samuel Hoare, *Ambassador on Special Mission* (London,1946), 21-2, 114-15, 244-5; Paul Preston, *Franco; A Biography* (London,1993), 355-8, 438.
- ^{lii} As reconstructed by Juan Bautista Vilar, presumably from oral sources: *Un siglo de protestantismo*, 121-2.
- ^{liii} See María Dolores Muñoz Dueñas, ‘El cierre del viceconsulado británico de Linares y la intolerancia religiosa durante el primer franquismo’, *Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Giennenses* 172 (1999), 503-222.
- ^{liv} EOS/Miss R. Chesterman to the editors, 6 May 1946.
- ^{lv} EOS/ Miss G. Turrall to the editors, 18 Sept. 1948.
- ^{lvi} In 1957 Rachel Chesterman lamented that she had no one left to speak English with, except God and perhaps her sister Jessie, who was buried in the British graveyard, EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Stunt, 31 Jan. 1957, 18 Feb. 1958.
- ^{lvii} EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Biffen 25 June 1948; to Mr Vine and the Editors 25 June 1948.
- ^{lviii} EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Biffen 28 June 1948.
- ^{lix} EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Vine, 25 June 1948, 28 June 1948.
- ^{lx} ‘Spanish Evangelical Christians appeal to General Franco’.
- ^{lxi} ‘Sobre la propaganda protestante’, 242-9.
- ^{lxii} Clara, ‘Represión, intolerancia y consolidación’, 305-6.
- ^{lxiii} *Ibid*; EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Vine, 5 July 1948.
- ^{lxiv} EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Lewis, 14 Feb. 1955. She gave the number as ‘from 40 to 45 boys and girls’, almost the same as in 1949. The week after the assault, 30 children attended Sunday School with ‘about 25’ staying away. As she remarked, ‘one

is not surprised'. EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Biffen, 28 June 1948; to Mr Lewis 15 Feb. 1949.

^{lxv} EOS/Mr S. Turrall to Mr Stunt 12 June 1947

^{lxvi} Hilari Ragner, *La pólvora y el incienso: La Iglesia y la Guerra Civil española (1936-1939)* (Barcelona, 2001), 401.

^{lxvii} Zira Box, *España, año zero: La constucción simbólica del franquismo* (Madrid, 2010); Mary Vincent, 'Expiation as Performative Rhetoric in National-Catholicism: the Politics of Gesture in Post-civil War Spain' in Michael J. Braddick (ed.), 'The Politics of Gesture: Historical Perspectives', *Past and Present*, Supplement 4, 2009, 235-56; Giuliana di Febo, *Ritos de Guerra y de Victoria en la España franquista* (Bilbao, 2002).

^{lxviii} Callahan, *Catholic Church*, 456; Aurelio Orensanz, *Religiosidad popular española, 1940-65* (Madrid, 1974), 9-21.

^{lxix} *Ecclesia* Organo de la Dirección Central de la Acción Católica Española, 18 April 1942; Callahan, *Catholic Church* 456-7.

^{lxx} EOS/Miss Chesterman to Mr Biffen, 29 November 1948

^{lxxi} EOS/Mr T. Turrall to Mr Vine, 19 April 1948

^{lxxii} *Ecclesia* 21 Aug. 1948

^{lxxiii} *Almas* 29 Aug. 1948

^{lxxiv} Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: Visions of Mary from La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton, 1991); Thomas Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, 1983); David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford, 1993); Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in a Secular Age* (New York, 1999).

^{lxxv} Harris, *Lourdes*, 246-65.

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- ^{lxxvi} William A. Christian Jr, *Visionaries* (Berkeley, 1996); Joseba Louzao Villar, ‘La Virgen y la salvación de España: un ensayo en la historia cultural durante la Segunda República’, *Ayer* 82:2 (2011), 187-210.
- ^{lxxvii} William A. Christian Jr, ‘Religious apparitions and the Cold War in Southern Europe’, *Zainak* 18 (1999), 65-86 esp. 67. Calculations from data available at ‘Marian Apparitions of the 20th Century’ <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/resources/aprtable.html> consulted 20 July 2012.
- ^{lxxviii} David Morgan, ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage: Fatima and Her Statues’ in Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen and Catrien Notermans (eds), *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World* (Farnham, 2009), 49-65.
- ^{lxxix} *Ecclesia* 17 May 1947; Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, 190-219; Vincent *Catholicism*, 82-108
- ^{lxxx} *Ecclesia* 31 May 1947. 40,000 greeted her in San Sebastián.
- ^{lxxxii} Jeffrey S. Bennett, *When the Sun Danced: Myth, Miracles and Modernity in Early Twentieth-Century Portugal* (Charlottesville, 2012).
- ^{lxxxiii} Morgan, ‘Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage’, 57, 53.
- ^{lxxxiv} *Ecclesia* 28 Feb., 5 June 1946; *Signo* 29 May 1984
- ^{lxxxv} *Ecclesia* 18, 25 Oct. 1947
- ^{lxxxvi} *Ecclesia* 17 Jan. 1948
- ^{lxxxvii} *Ecclesia* 21 June, 25 Oct. 1947
- ^{lxxxviii} de Mateo Avilés, ‘Entre la repression y la tolerancia’, 339.
- ^{lxxxviii} Juan Bautista Vilar, ‘Los protestantes españoles: La doble lucha por la libertad durante el primer franquismo’, *Anales de Historia Contemporánea* 17 (2001), 305-6;

Vila's correspondence reproduced, Josep Clara, 'Represión, intolerancia y consolidación'.

^{lxxxix} Letter from Buffard to J. H. Rushbrooke 23 May 1945 BA, BWA 1C 14 (A) Spain (1936-55). Folder 1.

^{xc} José Bonifacio, 'These are the facts', typescript of article published *The Commission* 1959, BA, BWA Folder (15) Spain (1950-1962)

^{xcⁱ} Ibid; Letter from Charles Whitten (Spanish Baptist Mission) to Eric Ruden 21 Sept. 1961 BA, BWA Folder (15) Spain (1950-1962).

^{xcⁱⁱ} Typescript, 'Information on Spain', Ecumenical Press 29 Feb. 1952. BWA Folder (15).

^{xcⁱⁱⁱ} See Jacques Delpech, *The Oppression of Protestants in Spain* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956; French original published 1954); Manuel López Rodríguez, *La España Protestante: Crónica de una minoría marginada, 1937-75* (Madrid: Sedmay, 1976); Vought, *Protestants in Modern Spain*.

^{xc^{iv}} See Antonio Cazorla-Sánchez *Las políticas de la Victoria: la consolidación del Nuevo estado franquista* (Madrid, 2000).

^{xc^v} Iribarren, 'Introducción', *Documentos colectivos*, 45-6; see also Jesús Iribarren, *Papeles y memorias: Medio siglo de relaciones Iglesia-Estado en España, 1936-1986* (Madrid, 1972), 109-12.

^{xc^{vi}} Iribarren, 'Introducción', *Documentos colectivos*, 45-6; see also Jesús Iribarren, *Papeles y memorias: Medio siglo de relaciones Iglesia-Estado en España, 1936-1986* (Madrid, 1972), 109-12.

^{xc^{vii}} *Boletín Oficial de España* 156, 1 July 1967, 9191-4

<https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1967-10949>; *Dignitatis Humanae*,

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html, both consulted 30 September 2013