

# **The Civil Guard and the Spanish Second Republic, 1931-1936**

**Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
History in the University of London**

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## **Abstract:**

This thesis seeks to understand the variety of factors that influenced the fairly widespread defection of much of the Spanish paramilitary constabulary, the Civil Guard, during the military rebellion that sparked the 1936-1939 Civil War. The significance of this phenomenon for the initial stages of the uprising has been recognised in the literature, but the explanations presented for it have been often either overly deterministic or focus too much on structural aspects, at the expense of social and historical factors. Indeed, most academic studies have conflated the issue of the Civil Guard with that of the “military problem”, that is, the ubiquitous presence of the military in the political evolution of modern Spain, which often allowed the Spanish armed forces to interfere and eventually assume the control of the governing of the nation.

This study, while noting the importance of the links between the Civil Guard and the military, gives equal if not greater importance to the fact that the former is primarily a policing body, and thus a variety of other dynamics have to be considered when attempting to understand the attitudes and actions of the corps. Indeed, while much of the military was detached from the daily workings of society, civil guards were on the front line of social conflict, and this unavoidably affected attitudes within the corps towards the viability of the Republic, and the legitimacy of its left-wing governments. Furthermore, the Civil Guard was not immune to the political passions of the day. Indeed, the antagonism between the Left and the Civil Guard reached a new intensity in the wake of the October 1934 Revolution, leading to a further deterioration when the leftist Popular Front coalition won the February 1936 elections. The polarization that infected Spanish politics during this period, as well as the increasing levels of social unrest and political violence, were key factors in influencing civil guards' loyalties once the military rebellion began in July 1936.



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A special note of thanks is due to my two examiners: Francisco J. Romero Salvadó and Helen Graham, whose comments and critiques of my thesis undoubtedly will be of great assistance as my research moves on to the next stage.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to express my eternal gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Paul Preston. He has been a source of inspiration and knowledge, and his indefatigable support has enabled me to accomplish much of what I have done over the past few years. I can only hope he is pleased with the results.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Civil Guard, Spain's paramilitary constabulary and largest police force until recent times, played an influential role in many of the pivotal events of the Second Republic (1931-1939), a fact recognized by both historians and contemporary protagonists of otherwise diverse views. For example, many have noted that the reluctance of the Director-General of the Civil Guard, Lieutenant General José Sanjurjo, to maintain the monarchy through force after the Republican victory in the April 1931 elections was instrumental in the peaceful change of regime.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the uncertainty of gaining the support of the Civil Guard for any potential coup against the Republic would prove a deterrent for many would-be military conspirators for the next five years.<sup>2</sup> Their concerns over the attitudes of the Civil Guard were well-founded. When the Army rebelled in July 1936, several scholars have noted that the division of Spain in those first few days roughly corresponded to the split of loyalties among the Civil Guard in favor of

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<sup>1</sup> Amongst those witnesses to the events of 12-14 April 1931 who noted the importance of Sanjurjo's desertion of the monarchy: Miguel Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII* (Mexico City, 1962), pp. 165-166; Conde de Romanones, "Historia de cuatro días", originally published in 1940, reproduced in *Notas de una vida* (Madrid & Barcelona, 1999), pp. 511-512; Álvaro Alcalá Galiano, *La caída de un trono* (Madrid, 1933), pp. 191-192; Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco* (Barcelona, 1976), pp. 450-452, and *Mi vida junto a Franco* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1977), pp. 97-98. Historians have accepted largely their verdicts: Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 86n2; Stanley Payne, *Politics and the Military in Modern Spain* (Stanford, CA, 1967), pp. 264-265; Joaquín Arrarás, *Historia de la segunda República española*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1970), p. 28; Guillermo Cabanellas, *La guerra de los mil días*, Vol. I (Buenos Aires, 1975), pp. 178-179; Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London, 1995), pp. 69-71; Eduardo González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio* (Madrid, 1999), pp. 611-617. Ricardo de la Cierva, formerly the official state historian under the Franco regime, talks of Sanjurjo's "three blows" against the monarchy, which earned the General "the number one position in the list of gravediggers of the monarchy": *Historia ilustrada de la guerra civil española*, Vol. I (Barcelona, 1977), pp. 105-110. Rafael Borràs Betriu mirrors La Cierva's "three blows", in which he calls Sanjurjo's adhesion to the Revolutionary Committee on the morning of April 14th "the first of the four *momentos estelares*" which led to the proclamation of the Second Republic: *Cambio de régimen: Caída de la Monarquía y proclamación de la República* (Barcelona, 2001), p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Preston, *Franco*, pp. 70, 111-118.

either the government or the insurgents.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, one historian even suggests that this fact was partially responsible for turning a coup d'état into a civil war.<sup>4</sup>

The actions of the Civil Guard affected the evolution of the Republic in other ways as well. Much like the Roman Catholic Church, the Civil Guard was an institution of great symbolic importance in Spanish society, and this image was not simply discarded with the proclamation of the Republic. The Civil Guard's role as the daily defender of the state and the social order under the monarchy, and its veneer of uncompromising military discipline, had shaped popular perceptions of that very state and society. For those of more humble origins, the Civil Guard was the living symbol of an unjust, occasionally brutal, social order. Given that the Civil Guard was a representative of the central state, this perception was thus transferred towards the state itself, a state whose laws and representatives were viewed in a still largely rural society as foreign impositions, as opposed to being the will of the "people" (usually understood in local terms). It was the principal task of the new Republican government to reformulate this relationship between state and society. The repeated heavy-handedness of civil guards in dealing with protests and disorders throughout the Republican period contributed to the alienation of sectors of the working-classes from the new regime. Because of and in addition to this, the employment of the corps by the governments of the Republic was an immediate and continual source of friction between the pro-republican groups, especially those of the Left. They felt that the continued utilization of the Civil Guard was at best an

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<sup>3</sup> Preston, *Franco*, p. 148; Raymond Carr, *The Spanish Tragedy: The Civil War in Perspective* (London, 1986), p. 75; Joan Villaroya i Font, "La Guardia Civil: La crisis del Estado, 1923-1939", *Historia 16*, Vol. 19, No. 218 (1994), pp. 44-46; Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 79 and 79n4.

<sup>4</sup> Alejandro Vargas González, "La Guardia Civil ante el alzamiento", *Historia 16*, No. 308 (2001), p. 75.

anachronism, at worst a betrayal of the ideals of the Republic. Within a month of the new regime's proclamation, the controversy over the employment of the Civil Guard provoked the first governmental crisis of the Republic, and instances of civil guard brutality or violent clashes with the public over the next five years only served to heighten these tensions.

Despite the importance of the Civil Guard, the corps remains on the margin of the existing historical literature of the Second Republic and Civil War. There exists few scholarly works dedicated to the force and its personnel during the Second Republic – or any other period for that matter – and of those that do exist, the majority are produced by members of the corps, or by their colleagues in the military or police.<sup>5</sup> While these official (and sympathetic) histories provide us with much useful information, they also leave many issues untouched, particularly those that may reflect poorly on the prestige and honour of the Civil Guard. Indeed, these works conform to a long historiographical tradition that seeks to defend the military nature of the Civil Guard against its critics.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Of those works that give detailed attention to either the Second Republic as a whole, or focus on certain periods of this era, see Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *La Guardia Civil en la revolución roja de octubre de 1934* (Madrid, 1972); Fernando Rivas Gómez, *El Frente Popular: antecedentes de una alzamiento* (Madrid, 1976); and the relevant sections in Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, 7 vols. (Madrid, 1983-1985), this last title is broadly considered the official history of the corps. Lt. Col. (later General) Aguado Sánchez was the founder and one-time director of the Centre for Historical Studies within the General Directorate of the Civil Guard, in which Lieutenant (later Captain) Rivas Gómez also worked. Established in the late 1960s, the Centre has produced a series of works dedicated to the history of the corps, the most important of these being the journal *Revista de Estudios Históricos de la Guardia Civil* (1968-1988), in which several articles (by Aguado Sánchez and Rivas Gómez, amongst others) on the Second Republic and Civil War appeared. The near-monopoly enjoyed by the Civil Guard over its own history is not a phenomenon restricted to Spain. The lack of independent research about the gendarmerie-style police forces appears to be a common phenomenon throughout Europe: Clive Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 4-5; Jean-Noël Luc (ed.), *La Gendarmerie, État et Société au XIXe Siècle* (Paris, 2002). For a general discussion of the historiography of the Civil Guard, see Gerald Blaney, Jr., "La historiografía sobre la Guardia Civil. Crítica y propuestas de investigación", *Política y Sociedad*, vol. 42, No. 3 (2005), pp. 31-44.

<sup>6</sup> The first histories of the corps appeared in the wake of the *bienio progresista* (1854-1856), during which the organization, if not the very existence, of the Civil Guard was threatened. These histories defended the

Since the Civil Guard's foundation in 1844, its military nature has been a continual source of controversy. Nonetheless, there has been little change in the organization or nature of the corps from that first established by its founder, the Duque de Ahumada. For the Civil Guard and its admirers, this continuity demonstrates the wisdom of Ahumada's vision, and hence the lack of any need to alter the military nature of the corps.<sup>7</sup> In their view, it was the Civil Guard's military discipline and relative protection from undue political interference (read civilian control) that, in their opinion, made it the impartial enforcer of laws and minimized, if not eliminated, the widespread corruption that characterized Spanish civil institutions. This, they would argue, made civil guards<sup>8</sup> more efficient and reliable than their counterparts in non-militarized, civilian forces (local or centralized), and thus indispensable to any and all governments.

A second claim frequently put forward by civil guard historians is that of the political neutrality of the corps. This supposed political neutrality was a by-product of the Civil Guard's military discipline, a neutrality that made it the loyal servant of all governments, no matter what their political ideology. Those political groups that were critical or

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military nature of the corps, and place it within centuries-old traditions of Spanish policing. Indeed, to underline this continuity, considerable space is dedicated within these works to past police forces: Antonio de Quevedo y Donis and José Sidro Sarga, *La Guardia Civil: Historia de esta institución* (Madrid, 1858), Crispín Ximénez de Sandoval, *Las instituciones de seguridad pública en España y sus dominios de Ultramar* (Madrid, 1858), and José Díaz Valderrama, *Historia, servicios notables, socorros, comentarios de la cartilla, y reflexiones sobre el cuerpo de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1858). The arguments and structure of these first works are faithfully replicated in all subsequent general histories of the Civil Guard, including the seven volume *Historia de la Guardia Civil* by Aguado Sánchez.

<sup>7</sup> As one of the corps' more famous Director-Generals, Lt. General José Sanjurjo, stated, "Experience has shown that the fundamental principles governing the training of individual members of the Corps are so sound that they have never been altered. There could be no better proof of the wisdom which has prescribed them." José Sanjurjo, "The Spanish Civil Guard", part II, *The Police Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1931), p. 542.

<sup>8</sup> When referring to the Civil Guard as an institution, capital letters will be used ("Civil Guard"). When referring to the personnel of the corps, lower case letters will be employed ("civil guard" or "civil guards").

hostile to the Civil Guard whilst in opposition (read the Left), the defenders of the corps assert, soon realized the apparent error of their position upon coming to power and recognized the benefits of the corps' services, and thus converted into admirers of the *Benemérita* and its traditions.<sup>9</sup> The underlying logic behind this argument is that those groups that argued for the demilitarization of the corps did so not for any reasons of improving its structure or efficiency, but rather to utilize (or weaken) the Civil Guard for their own partisan political agenda.

Furthermore, the Civil Guard is often portrayed in the official historiography, somewhat misleadingly, as the modern manifestation of a long tradition of paramilitary policing bodies, that reaches back to the Middle Ages. By doing so, they attempt to bolster further the legitimacy of the nature and structure of the corps by presenting these as intimately linked with Spanish civilization. Thus, they would argue that the success of the Ahumadine model was precisely due to its near-perfect conformity with immutable Spanish values and the fundamental needs of Spanish society.<sup>10</sup> Those that sought to

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<sup>9</sup> The Civil Guard was known as "*La Benemérita*" (The Meritorious) amongst its admirers, a title officially conceded to the corps by Alfonso XIII in 1929. This title, curiously, was also used in reference to the Carabinieri in Italy. An example the Civil Guard's view of the love-hate relationship between the Left and the Civil Guard, in which the former are presented as naïve and the source of the tension between the two, see Miguel López Corral, "Los gobiernos de izquierdas y la Guardia Civil", *Guardia Civil*, No. 521 (1987), pp. 41-52.

<sup>10</sup> The emphasis on the national, that is, domestic, origins of the Civil Guard was not a phenomenon particular to the Spanish corps. The Piedmontese Carabinieri Reali, the precursor to the Italian force by the same name, did not officially recognize the French origins of the gendarmerie model, instead claimed a direct link with the Carabini force created in 1791 to combat bandits and brigands: Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State*, p. 183. Traditional historians of the English police also sought to emphasize the historic, national roots of the "New Police": Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (London, 1996), pp. 248-249. The leading historian of the current generation of Civil Guard historians, Captain Miguel López Corral, recognizes the more modern origin of the Civil Guard, though he otherwise maintains the same arguments in favour of the military nature of the Civil Guard as his predecessors: *La Guardia Civil: Nacimiento y Consolidación, 1844-1874* (Madrid, 1995).



undermine or deny this harmonious relationship between the Civil Guard and Spanish traditions were misguided or, using Francoist parlance, part of “anti-Spain”.

In terms of the Republican period, the indispensability and neutrality of the Civil Guard is contrasted to the volatility of the republican regime, and the partisanship of its (leftist) governments. As one civil guard historian asserted, “Spain was not prepared for a democratic regime (*régimen de convivencia*) ... Almost all Spaniards agree that the public disorder [of the period] was an underlying cancer that ended up destroying the Republic.”<sup>11</sup> Official Civil Guard historiography has emphasized the irresponsibility, if not the threat posed by the Left in the form of the October 1934 Revolution, the descent into violence and chaos under the Popular Front government and its “persecution” of the Civil Guard – whose personnel were only doing their duty and, and according to them, served the Republic loyally. This line of argument thus provides the necessary justification for the military rebellion of July 1936 and excuses, if not glorifies, the blatant breach of discipline of those civil guards who joined it in order to “save Spain”. As the official literature extols the supposed political neutrality of the corps, it employs a curious logic that characterizes those civil guards who defended the elected Popular Front government during the Civil War as, at best, misguided or indecisive, or, at worst, politically motivated. Consequently, there is no recognition that those civil guards who joined the rebellion might have been politically motivated as well, or indeed that there was any perceivable sympathy for the Right amongst the members of the corps throughout the Republic. Indeed, in marked contrast to the descriptions of the Left in

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<sup>11</sup> Fernando Rivas Gómez, ‘La Guardia Civil del siglo XX’, in José Sanz Muñoz (ed.), *La Guardia Civil Española* (Madrid, 1994), p. 246. This view can also be found in Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, Vol. V, p. 136.

Civil Guard histories, there is little criticism to be found of the role of the political Right in the breakdown of the Republic and its contribution to social tensions and political violence.<sup>12</sup>

Those works written by scholars not professionally linked to the Civil Guard, the National Police Corps or the military take a markedly negative view of the Spanish policing tradition.<sup>13</sup> In their opinion, the military nature of the Civil Guard, its links with the Army, and its predominance within the Spanish policing apparatus, was a product of the efforts of *ancien régime* forces to control, if not halt the democratization and modernization of Spanish politics and society. This view was first set out in great detail by Diego López Garrido in his seminal work, *La Guardia Civil y los orígenes del Estado centralista*, whose themes were expanded upon in Manuel Ballbé, *Orden público y*

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<sup>12</sup> These views can also be found in the most recent monograph on the Civil Guard during the Republican period: Julio de Antón, *Policía y Guardia Civil en la España republicana* (Madrid, 2001). While providing some useful material, Antón, a Superintendent in the National Police Corps, demonstrates a near-obsession with the Masonic affiliations of many republicans, a favorite theme of the Franco dictatorship, and maintains the fiction that civil guards only acted according to their duty. For a discussion of the dominant pro-Francoist view within the Civil Guard of the Civil War period, see Gerald Blaney, Jr., "Unsung Heroes of the Republic? The Civil Guard, the Second Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1936", in Morten Heiberg & Mogens Pelt (eds.), *New perspectives on the Spanish Civil War after the end of the Cold War* (forthcoming). Nonetheless, there are examples of Civil Guard historians who do not subscribe to the official interpretation, or at least question it: Gonzalo Jar Couselo, "La Guardia Civil en Navarra (18-07-1936)", *Príncipe de Viana*, no. 192 (1991), pp. 281-323; Jesús Núñez Calvo, "Bernabé López Calle: el guardia civil, anarquista y maquis", *Diario de Cádiz* (14 December 2004); José Luis Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 2006). Somewhat more timidly, Miguel López Corral admits that those who joined the 1936 military rebellion did break discipline, though without condemning their actions: "La Guardia Civil en la Guerra (1936-1939)", *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil*, no. 10 (1994), pp. 143-155. The *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil* is published by the General Directorate of the Civil Guard, and this particular issue was dedicated to the history of the corps, in commemoration of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. López Corral's article was reproduced, virtually in its entirety, in the official magazine of the Civil Guard: Miguel López Corral, "La Guardia Civil en la guerra, 1936-1939", *Guardia Civil*, Part I: No. 530 (1988), pp.41-48; Part II: No. 531 (1988), pp.41-48.

<sup>13</sup> Enrique Martínez Ruiz is the most notable exception here. Possibly for this reason, his *La creación de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1976) has exercised a certain influence amongst civil guard historians, evident in such works as Miguel López Corral's *La Guardia Civil. Nacimiento y consolidación*.

*militarismo en la España constitucional, 1812-1983*.<sup>14</sup> Given the longer time frame of Ballbé's book, which covers the Second Republic, it has become the primary reference for works that deal with the Civil Guard in this period.<sup>15</sup> Ballbé, like López Garrido, views the Civil Guard through the prism of the debate over the "military problem" (*el problema militar*), in which the military, through its near independence from the civilian authorities as well as its usurpation of the latter's prerogatives, assumed the role of arbiter of Spanish politics, to the detriment of the democratic development of modern Spain.

One of the principal mechanisms for doing this was through the military's control over issues of public order which, according to this school of thought, had two main consequences for the Civil Guard. Firstly, in terms of the corps' relationship to the general public, the "militarization" of public order necessarily imported rigid militaristic attitudes into the regulation of social tensions and conflict. As a result of their military training and structure, which was meant to separate them from the communities in which they were stationed, civil guards were more aggressive, if not brutal in their dealings with the public, for they saw the latter not as citizens with rights that were to be served and

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<sup>14</sup> Diego López Garrido, *La Guardia Civil y los origins del Estado centralista* (first edition: Barcelona, 1983; revised second edition, Madrid, 2004); Manuel Ballbé, *Orden público y militarismo en la España constitucional, 1812-1983* (Madrid, 1983 & 1985). López Garrido wrote a second book dealing with policing in Spain, much of which deals with the Civil Guard: *El aparato policial en España* (Barcelona, 1987). While his first book principally deals with the mid-nineteenth century, the focus of the second, beyond a summary of material from his first work, is largely on the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>15</sup> Among those works which largely follow the theses of Ballbé are Stanley G. Payne, *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Republic, 1931-1936* (Madison, WI, 1993); Mario López Martínez, *Orden publico y luchas agrarias en Andalucía* (Madrid, 1995); Julián Casanova *De la calle al frente. El anarcosindicalismo en España, 1931-1939* (Barcelona, 1997); Eduardo González Calleja, "El Estado ante la violencia", in Santos Juliá, ed., *Violencia política en la España del siglo XX* (Madrid, 2000), pp. 365-406; Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War*; Carlos Gil Andrés, *La República en la Plaza: Los sucesos de Arnedo de 1932* (Logroño, 2002); Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (London, 2005).

protected, but rather a potential threat that had to be controlled. This in turn served only to radicalize opposition movements, increase social tensions and violence, and thus destabilizing the political process and undermining civilian authority.

Secondly, in relation to the civilian authorities, the Civil Guard's institutional, jurisdictional and personal links with the military gave it a potentially dangerous degree of autonomy from the civilian control, all the more so when the lines between military and civilian competencies were blurred by the presence of military officers in civilian positions. This not only meant that there existed a lack of accountability for the actions of civil guards, which made them all the more likely to resort to force in their dealings with the public, but also signified that in a contest between civilian and military authority, such as that which occurred in July 1936, civil guards would side with the latter. The failure of the Second Republic to rectify this situation, it is argued, contributed largely to its breakdown and collapse into civil war. Indeed, Ballbé goes on to claim that not only did the Republicans fail to fully break with the practices of the past, their supposedly "authoritarian" approach to dissent and public order issues only served to perpetuate, if not exacerbate those problems inherited from the monarchy.<sup>16</sup>

The Civil Guard's military nature and its close links with the army undeniably had an impact on its personnel and institutional cultures. Nonetheless, the near-singular focus on this aspect has led scholars to overlook a series of equally important factors that also influenced civil guard attitudes and behaviour, factors which were crucial to

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<sup>16</sup> Ballbé, *Orden público y militarismo*, pp. ii-iii, 317-396. Ballbé's chapter on the Second Republic is titled 'The contradictions of the Second Republic and the configuration of an authoritarian democracy'.

understanding not only the difficulty of “republicanizing” the Civil Guard but also the dynamics and motivations behind the decisions of many civil guards to join the *Alzamiento Nacional*. Writing in the shadow of four decades of military dictatorship and the threat from *ultra* sectors in the military and the security forces to the democratic transition after Franco’s death (such the attempted coup of February 1981, in which civil guards played a prominent role), it was only natural that scholars focussed their attention on the role of a militarized Civil Guard on the political development of modern Spain. The desire to understand the roots of the military dictatorship and how best to reform the Spanish state – in which the supposed failures of the Second Republic were foremost in mind – were the primary concerns underlining much of the initial academic research on the Civil Guard after the death of Franco. Nonetheless, once the danger to the democratic transition had passed so did academic interest in bodies such as the Civil Guard. This has largely translated into stagnation as far as research into the corps during the Republic and Civil War period, as witnessed by the continued heavy reliance on texts such as Ballbé by more recent works on the period.

This doctoral thesis hopes to build upon our existing knowledge, and employ a variety of different approaches to the history of the Civil Guard during the Republic. The objective is to put the actions and attitudes of its personnel in their full context, identifying both underlying and immediate factors that ultimately led to the defection of many civil guards to the military rebels in the summer of 1936. The vast majority of past studies have attempted to explain the behaviour of civil guards either by referring to their military training, regulations and other official measures meant to shape civil guards in a

particular mould, or by government policies and strategies regarding policing and public order. Such an approach largely relegates civil guards to passive actors, and does not give sufficient consideration to other factors that influenced their conduct and viewpoints. Perhaps as a consequence of this, virtually no independent academic work on the period, even those that deal explicitly with the issues of public order during the Republic, makes any reference to sources such as the professional press of the Civil Guard – or those articles written by members of the corps in the military press – which would have been crucial in ascertaining its personnel's attitudes about a variety of issues and events.<sup>17</sup>

In order to understand the mindset of a civil guard, it is important first to understand the environment that he finds himself in, the pressures and preoccupations that colour his views of that same environment. Chapter Two will examine not only the military aspect of a civil guard's professional and social life, but also his interaction with the general public. Unlike the regular soldier who lived within the confines of garrison life, the civil guard, like any other policeman, had to patrol the communities under his jurisdiction, which involved a much higher level of interaction with the general public and a greater intimacy with the social and political problems of the day. Another difference between the civil guard and his army counterpart is that civil guards lived in isolated posts, greatly outnumbered by the populations that they served. The often tense relationship that existed between civil guards and the (predominantly) rural communities that they served was as important in determining civil guard attitudes and actions as their military background. This dynamic was all the more evident in times of significant social unrest,

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<sup>17</sup> The only exception to this is Gil Andrés, *La República en la Plaza*, yet the author only consults the December 1931 and January 1932 issues of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*, and then only in respect to the issue of reforming the regulations of the Civil Guard and the events at Arnedo.

and affected how civil guards viewed opposition groups and working class organizations. In sum, while civil guards shared their military counterparts' reverence for the concepts of authority and order, these were not abstract notions for the men of the *Benemérita*, but could be matters of life and death.

Indeed, the daily experience of a civil guard also coloured his perception of the political situation and the regime that he served. Like other social groups, civil guards viewed a political ideology or form of government in terms of how these responded to their own interests and concerns. From the perspective of a civil guard, who was situated in the front line of any social conflict, this would mean the ability for a regime to maintain order. Chapter Three will examine how the Civil Guard viewed the social and political crises facing Spain from the "Disaster of 1898" to the fall of the Monarchy in April 1931. With the authority of the constitutional monarchy collapsing in the years after the First World War, alongside the attendant rise in social and political conflict which stoked fears of a Bolshevik takeover (in which civil guards would certainly have been among the first targets for the revolutionaries), civil guards gravitated towards a military solution in 1923. When the failure of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera brought about a similar situation, civil guards then looked (somewhat more reluctantly) to the republican opposition as a possible answer to Spain's problems.

Despite the apparent similarities between the situations in 1923 and 1931, there were significant differences. In contrast to the unswerving support enjoyed by the corps under the dictatorship (and the monarchy in general), as well as the ideological proximity

between many civil guards and the values of the old regime, there existed a certain suspicion, if not hostility, between the *Benemérita* and their new republican masters. Yet, there was not an insuperable divide between the two parties as there was some common ground between the goals of the Provisional Government of the Republic and the Civil Guard, which could have evolved into a more positive relationship. That ultimately this was not the case has led many scholars to focus on the supposed failure of the Republicans to exert effective civilian control over the Civil Guard and the other security forces, as well as establish a “republican” alternative to the militarized approach to public order issues.

While this interpretation is partially true, it overlooks a series of other factors, as well as making a series of debatable assumptions, amongst these the tendency to view the relationship between the Civil Guard and the Republican authorities as static, and thus the widespread defection to the military rebels in 1936 as virtually a foregone conclusion. It is important to stress the evolutionary nature of this relationship, as well as to highlight the different priorities and strategies of the various administrations and how this impacted on attempts to “republicanize” the Civil Guard. Often scholars underestimate the extent and nature of those reforms passed during the Republican-Socialist governments of 1931-1933, and how the Centre-Right administrations of 1933-1935 undermined these significant reforms of the Civil Guard and the public order apparatus.<sup>18</sup> The debate over

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<sup>18</sup> Ballbé sees no change between the Republican-Socialist governments and those of the Radical-CEDA period: *Orden público y militarismo*, p. 363. This should come as little surprise as Ballbé sees the Republican period as a continuation of the policies of the Monarchy, a line of continuity that stretches from the Republic to the Franco regime (pp. 397-402). Turrado Vidal also notes what he sees as a significant continuity between the two Republican periods: *La policía en la historia*, p. 189. For a challenge to these interpretations, see Gerald Blaney, Jr., “Keeping Order in Republican Spain, 1931-1936”, in G. Blaney, *Policing Interwar Europe: Continuity, Change and Crisis, 1918-1940* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 31-68.



the direction and meaning of the Republic, and the breakdown of the unity seemingly enjoyed at the birth of the regime, also necessarily made the “republicanization” of the corps all the more difficult. Furthermore, care should be taken when talking about a rebellion against “the Republic” in 1936 for, unlike the civilian militias of the Carlists and the Falange who had a particular political agenda, it will be seen that many civil guards felt that they were rebelling against a particular government, the Popular Front government, and thus ultimately defending the Republic.<sup>19</sup>

Chapters Four to Six will chart this progression from guarded support for the Republic within the Civil Guard to widespread rebellion. Chapter Four will deal with the first period of Centre-Left rule, in which the seeds of the mutual hostility between the Civil Guard and the Left seen in 1936 were planted. Again, this was not necessarily a product of the conservative outlook of most civil guards, or their military nature, though these aspects were undoubtedly important. The proclamation of the Second Republic provoked a variety of reactions within the Civil Guard. Many civil guards were not against change per se, but rather disorderly change. Indeed, underlying the issues of ideology, the use of force and civilian control, was a concern over levels of social and political violence which were the fundamental preoccupations of most civil guards. From the perspective of a civil guard, high levels of unrest, and the radical rhetoric that usually accompanies it, signified a potential danger to his physical well-being, and to that of his family who resided with him in the *casa-cuartel*. It also resulted in more mundane annoyances such

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<sup>19</sup> A reflection of the political ambiguity of the 1936 rebellion can be seen in General Franco’s manifesto broadcast on 18 July 1936, in which he avoided any explicit reference to either defending the Republic or restoring the monarchy, lying the blame for the situation in Spain on the government of the Popular Front. Preston, *Franco*, pp. 140-141.

as longer hours and frequent mobilisations that took him across the country and away from his family, who were left vulnerable in his absence. Civil guards looked to the reigning government to manage, if not resolve, those conflicts that gave rise to these waves of unrest. When the government seemed unable or unwilling to deal with disorder, civil guards would take what they felt were the necessary measures to impose order, including preventative brutality. When this apparent failure on the part of the government seemed endemic, or due to a supposed revolutionary agenda, then frustration turned into alienation, and possibly even rebellion.

The first murmurs of rebellion were already evident in January 1932, when the ongoing social unrest evident in much of Spain – unrest that was supposed to diminish, if not disappear with the establishment of the Republic – converged with a shift in the political composition of the government from a broad Right-Centre-Left coalition to a more left-wing one. The controversies surrounding events such as those of Castilblanco, Arnedo and Casas Viejas served only to enlarge the growing chasm between the Left and the Civil Guard, leading the latter increasingly to see the former as contributing to the disorder, and thus not fit to govern. At the same time, the corps enjoyed the unstinting support of conservative sectors, who viewed the Civil Guard as the defender of progress and civilization from the dark passions of the easily-manipulated infantile masses, and whose criticisms of the Left Republican-Socialist government echoed those of many civil guards. This allowed civil guards to dismiss those criticisms of the corps coming from the Left as partisan, and also gave a certain popular legitimacy to the view of a growing

number of civil guards that the policies of the ruling political coalition, particularly the Socialists, were the cause of the ongoing unrest.

The rhetoric of the Centre-Right, whose main representative, the Radical Republican Party, had left the Republican-Socialist coalition in December 1931, did much to foster the image of the Left Republican-Socialist governments as overly partisan. Being the largest and oldest of the Republican parties, the Radicals' rhetoric lent a further air of legitimacy to the criticisms of semi- and non-republican sectors, including those within the Civil Guard. The targeting of the Socialists by the Radicals only increased the latent suspicion these groups harboured towards the working class movement. Furthermore, the sheer opportunism of the leader of the Radicals, Alejandro Lerroux, had led him to resort to the time-honoured tradition of courting disaffected elements within the military and the police. It also led the Radicals into an alliance with the authoritarian Right, as represented by the CEDA party. This became more pronounced once the Radicals were in power, as Lerroux and his followers sought to ingratiate themselves with these elements in order to break the organizational strength of the Left and maintain themselves in power indefinitely.

Chapter Five will examine the period of Centre-Right rule, in which the policies of the Radical-CEDA governments not only undermined the reforms of the previous administrations, but also did much to polarize the political atmosphere. Regarding the Civil Guard, these policies of "rectification" and provocation did much to reinforce old suspicions of the Left, particularly after the events of October 1934. The October

Revolution was seen amongst leftist circles as an effort to defend the Republic from those who wished to destroy it, and the repression that followed it evidence of the true colours of the Centre-Right government. From the perspective of the Civil Guard, they had defended the Republic from the Bolshevik pretensions of the Socialists and their allies, a defence that cost the force many dead and wounded. Indeed, the enforced social peace that followed the repression, and the praise the corps received from the government, was contrasted favourably to the disorder of the period of Centre-Left rule during which the Civil Guard was constantly “attacked” by leftist groups for simply doing their duty (as they saw it), attacks that only intensified in the wake of the post-revolutionary repression.

Indeed, the period of Centre-Right rule did much to set the ground for the events of the spring and summer of 1936 when the Centre-Left returned to power in the form of a Popular Front coalition. Chapter Six will examine the process whereby the internal discipline of the Civil Guard broke down, to the point at which rebellion seemed the only option to save Spain, and themselves, from the Communist revolution that they believed was imminent. While it is clear now to all but the most partisan of historians that this Bolshevik threat was more a phantom menace than a reality in the making, at the time it seemed all too possible to many civil guards. False rumours of revolutionary preparations, coupled with the radical rhetoric of the working class organizations and the rising tide of strikes, land occupations and street violence made the ominous warnings of the politicians of the Right ring true in the ears of many civil guards. From the point of view of many civil guards, the Popular Front government was unable or, worse yet, unwilling to take the “necessary measures” to deal with the situation. Instead, the

government appeared to prefer “persecuting” those same civil guards who protected the Republic in 1934, and its policies were undermining the authority and morale of the *benemérita*, whose personnel constituted the dam that held back the revolutionary flood. As such, just as in 1934, civil guards would be the first casualties if this dam were ever to break, and so they were ever vigilant for cracks.

Yet, we should not view this as simply the hysteria of a reactionary paramilitary police force. The polarisation that had infected Spanish politics by 1936 had almost inevitably spread to the whole police apparatus, with officers of both leftist and rightist convictions believing that the government was too weak to deal with the feared fascist or communist danger, and beginning to organize their efforts for the defence of their respective causes. Yet, it should be remembered that these politically active civil guards were a minority. Nonetheless, the sympathies of the majority of civil guards leaned towards the military conspirators. This was not simply a case of a civil-military divide, but rather the product of a variety of factors.

Nonetheless, when the deluge broke, the responses of many civil guards were more like reactions to events than the carrying out of well-laid plans. While the murder of Calvo Sotelo at the hands of a squad of Assault Guards led by a left-wing Civil Guard officer had served as a clarion call to those who feared that the Popular Front government had lost control of the situation, there was considerable hesitation amongst a significant number of civil guards when the planned military rebellion was initiated on 17-18 July 1936, particularly in those areas where the uprising did not enjoy widespread popular

support. This was in part due to the ingrained reticence to break discipline, for almost all provincial and divisional commanders were loyal to the government, as was the Director General himself. This fact is significant for it demonstrates that those who did rebel did so not only against the Popular Front, but also against the authority of their own commanding officers and the expressed orders of their Director General.

This most exceptional breakdown in discipline thus reflected a general sense of desperation and fear amongst many civil guards, sensations that would only increase in intensity as events unfurled. A distinction must be made between those who participated in the conspiracy in its early stages, those that joined the rebellion outright, and those that defected later. In this sense, figures on percentages of loyal and rebel civil guards often obscure as much as they reveal. Chapter Seven will attempt to put these figures in their proper context, understanding the variety of motivations behind those that did join the military rebels, and taking into consideration the chronology of these acts. For example, for those civil guards that attempted to suppress their distaste for the Popular Front government and ignore right-wing propaganda about an imminent Communist coup, the temptation to join the rebellion became irresistible once the revolution did break out in those areas still under nominal government control. Moreover, government orders to distribute arms to the working class organizations and to lead their militias against the civil guards' comrades in arms would have confirmed the suspicion in many of these civil guards that the government was at the mercy of the revolutionaries. Indeed, the very order to arm those same organizations that had displayed such hostility towards the corps

was seen as the equivalent of asking them to assist in their own suicides and the massacre of their families.

In conclusion, this thesis will attempt to put the actions and attitudes of civil guards during the Republican period in their proper context. It is hoped that that will present a more nuanced view of the Civil Guard, and consequently, on the corps' relationship with the Republican regime.

## CHAPTER TWO

The Civil Guard was born in a century of conflict and instability. While the War of Independence against France (1808-1814) should have produced a broad sentiment of national unity, the reality was the exact opposite. Tellingly, when the French intervened once again in the Spanish political process less than 10 years later, putting an end to the “Liberal Triennium” (1820-1823) and restoring to King Fernando VII his absolutist prerogatives, the lack of popular resistance to this foreign intrusion into domestic affairs was notable. The divisions within the royalist camp and also amongst the liberals only fractionalized political loyalties further, resulting in civil war (1833-1840) and a string of uprisings. Indeed, despite their eventual victory over the reactionary wing of the royalists in the First Carlist War (as this civil war is commonly known), Spanish liberals were as divided as ever, and the popular appeal of their doctrine was weak outside urban areas. In a predominantly rural country, as Spain was until the beginning of the twentieth century, this meant that the mobilizing power of the liberal state would remain tenuous, which in turn encouraged the increasing intervention of the military in civilian affairs. Local and regional sentiment remained strong, and often resisted the encroachment of the central state into their affairs. The weakness of the state in much of the country and the social upheaval produced by invasion, war and the shift from a seigniorial to a capitalist economy gave rise to banditry, peasant unrest and a pervasive sense of insecurity in much of the country.



When the conservative branch of Spanish liberalism, the Moderates, took power in December 1843, they set out to resolve these problems through the establishment of strong central institutions and a strict control of the political and governing process. One of the key institutions needed to achieve these goals was a national police force. Given the nature of the political situation in Spain, this police force would have had to be a centralized one. The Moderates were not the first group to realize this, as previous governments had attempted to establish policing bodies, but these rose and fell as quickly as the administrations that proposed them.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of effective local or national policing bodies, the maintenance of law and order was entrusted to civilian militias and the military. The former, as elsewhere in Europe, proved to be politically unreliable, were poorly trained, transitory in nature and often as corrupt and arbitrary as the old policing bodies of the *ancien regime*.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, some within the military were beginning to feel uneasy about the constant use of troops for policing duties. The Minister of War, General Mazarredo, expressed these concerns in letter to the Interior Minister on 31 December 1843, in which he noted the negative effects these types of duties were having on the discipline of the Army, which was not organized or trained for such duties, and the need for a regular force under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior to deal with public order issues and banditry.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the various attempts to establish a national police apparatus from 1808 to 1844, see Martín Turrado Vidal, *La policía en la historia contemporánea de España, 1766-1986* (Madrid, 1995), pp. 45-124.

<sup>2</sup> As one militiaman explained to the English traveller George Borrow, "If we meet any person who is obnoxious to us, we fall upon him, and with a knife or bayonet generally leave him wallowing in his blood on the pavement; no one but a national would be permitted to do that." Quoted in Raymond Carr, *Spain, 1808-1975* (Oxford, 1982), p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Diego López Garrido, *El aparato policial en España* (Barcelona, 1987), p. 42. For similar concerns and issues elsewhere in Europe over the use of militias and regular troops for policing duties, see David H. Bayley, *Patterns of Policing: A Comparative International Analysis* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1985), pp. 42-43.

The inadequacy of both the National Militia and the military as police forces was recognized in the preamble of the Royal Decree of 28 March 1844, the first of the two principal founding documents of the Civil Guard. This decree set out the need for a disciplined national force at the disposal of the central government, which despite its civilian function, would be staffed by men seconded from the military. As in many other countries, soldiers were seen as ideal candidates for service in the police, particularly in gendarmerie forces as these were stationed in rural communities, for they were seen as possessing the necessary discipline to fulfil their duties and would be less corruptible. This was a logical conclusion in an era of nation-construction, when the state was expanding both in terms of competencies and personnel. However, the sense of a common identity and loyalty to the nation-state, as opposed to a more local focus, was weak amongst the general population, the same population from which recruits would be needed for an ever-increasing bureaucracy. In order to guard further against the pull of local influence, it was also stated that civil guards would receive a relatively high salary. As such, the decree gave high importance to the selection and pay of personnel, for unless men of impeccable character were recruited and duly recompensed for their service, “the hope placed in this institution that it will reflect the benefits seen in other nations will not be realized”.<sup>4</sup>

The man approached to organise the new force was Field Marshal Francisco Javier Girón y Ezpeleta, the Second Duke of Ahumada, who was Inspector-General of the Army at the

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<sup>4</sup> The full text of this decree can be found in Enrique Martínez Ruiz, *Creación de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1976), pp. 383-388.

time. Ahumada was known for his organisational skills, and had some familial experience with the task of organising police forces as his father, General Pedro Agustín Girón, had put forward a project for the creation of a gendarmerie-type force, the *Legión de salvaguardias nacionales*, over twenty years earlier.<sup>5</sup> As Inspector-General of the Army, Ahumada was charged with resolving those issues affecting the discipline of the military, which had been undermined by seven years of civil war against the Carlists (whose officers were absorbed into the regular army as part of the agreement that ended the 1833-1840 civil war) and then three years of rule by General Baldomero Espartero (1840-1843), who represented the opposing liberal camp (the so-called Progressives) and had forcefully assumed the Regency of the Spanish Crown, only to be dislodged from power in turn by a *pronunciamiento*. During his tour of Catalonia, the Levante and Andalusia – the heartlands of Carlist and Progressive sentiment – Ahumada was distressed with the attitudes of the local civilian officials, who did not to recognize his, nor the central government's authority, and the negative effect this was having on the military garrisons stationed in these areas.<sup>6</sup> As such, he was opposed to the idea that the provincial governors would be entrusted with the selection of officers for the new corps, as stipulated in the 28 March decree, and demanded that he himself would be awarded this key competency. Moreover, he believed the March decree had a series of other organizational shortcomings, amongst these the lack of a general inspectorate to ensure the discipline and efficiency of the new corps.

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the failed proposal of 1820, and an overview of its contents, see Miguel Gistau Ferrando, *La Guardia Civil: Historia de esta institución* (Madrid, 1907), pp. 110-114. In his memoirs, Girón cited the French Gendarmerie as the inspiration for the proposed *Legión de salvaguardias nacionales*: Ballbé, *Orden público y militarismo*, p. 141.

<sup>6</sup> Excerpts of his letters during his inspection of these areas are provided in Carlos Seco Serrano, "Narvaéz y el Duque de Ahumada: Acotaciones a un epistolario", *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil* (henceforth CGC), No. 1 (1989), pp. 333-35.

After his colleague and friend General Ramón Narváez, the “big sword” (*espadón*) of the Moderates, assumed direct leadership of the government, Ahumada could be certain that his recommendations would receive proper consideration. He was not disappointed, and on 13 May 1844 a second decree was promulgated that superseded that of 28 March. The May decree increased the role of the Ministry of War in the corps – placing it in charge of personnel, discipline, pay and organization – while leaving the force at the orders of the Interior Minister and the provincial governors as regards their regular duties.<sup>7</sup> This dual dependency, common to almost all gendarmerie forces, meant that the Civil Guard was governed by two sets of regulations, drawn up by the Ministries of War and the Interior respectively. Nonetheless, the Interior Minister and his representatives would in practice be the junior partners in the running of the corps, even more so when the Civil Guard was officially integrated in to the military in 1878.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, instead of each province simultaneously raising their own companies of civil guards, the corps would spread out in concentric circles radiating from Madrid, thus ensuring their obedience to the central government and a controlled, gradual build-up of its personnel and presence. Indeed, the various academies of the Civil Guard as well as those schools set up for the sons and daughters of its personnel were all located in the environs of the nation’s capital.

While it is true that Ahumada did push the Civil Guard in a more centralized and militarized direction, the significance of this for the political development of Spain has been exaggerated by academics searching for the historical roots of the Franco

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<sup>7</sup> The full text of the 13 May 1844 decree can be found in Martínez Ruiz, *Creación*, pp. 388-395.

<sup>8</sup> Miguel López Corral, “El Gobernador Civil y la Guardia Civil”, in *El Gobernador Civil en la política y en la Administración de la España contemporánea* (Madrid, 1997), pp. 413-420.

dictatorship. In doing so, the development of policing both inside and outside of Spain is often presented in an overly simplistic and deterministic fashion, overemphasizing the differences and overlooking a series of similarities with its European neighbours.<sup>9</sup> In general, Spain is portrayed as having deviated from the “classic” models of liberalism, as represented by the British experience and from that of the first phase of the French Revolution. The dominant characteristics of these two examples, as seen by scholars such as López Garrido and Ballbé, were their decentralized and clear civilian nature. This “classic” model of policing, tied to the local communities, was thus at the service of the general public, not at odds with it.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, if anything, Spain followed the same basic trajectory as that of France. The processes of militarization then marginalization of the French militia forces (the National Guard) and the centralization and militarization of the Gendarmerie National were both underway by 1792. These measures have not been viewed historically as departures from the ideals of the French Revolution, but rather as necessary for the protection and ultimate survival of these same ideals from the forces of reaction. The fact that it was a

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<sup>9</sup> The traditional view of the “failure” or “weakness” of Spanish liberalism in general has been modified or challenged by a number of scholars. See, for example, see Isabel Burdieu, “Myths of failure, myths of success: new perspectives on nineteenth-century liberalism”, *Journal of Modern History* (1988), pp.892-912; Id., “The liberal revolution, 1808-1843”, in José Alvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert (eds.), *Spanish History since 1808* (London, 2000), pp. 17-32; Adrian Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain* (London, 1996), pp. 1-7; Juan Pablo Fusi and Jordi Palafox, *España: 1808-1996. El desafío de la Modernidad* (Madrid, 1997), pp. 11-13 and *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> López Garrido, for example, views the National Militia as the representative of local, municipal power and the “shock force” (fuerza de choque) of liberalism, and sees first the centralization of the state administration by the Moderates and then the militarization of the Civil Guard as victories of counter-revolutionary (that is, non-liberal) forces: *Guardia Civil y los orígenes*, pp. 47-51, 73-114, 168-183. Ballbé titles his section on the founding of the Civil Guard as “The creation of the Civil Guard and its distancing from the classic liberal model”. Ballbé faults the Progressives, as he does Spanish liberalism in general, for “not rejecting political militarism” and failing to establish a civilian and professional police apparatus, like that of England. He characterizes the “English model” as the “classical liberal conception of the police”, and then goes on to compare the English “bobby” with the Spanish Civil Guard, describing the former in the most favourable terms and presenting the latter as little more than an militarized force of occupation: *Orden público y militarismo*, pp. ii-iv, 141-154.

military officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, who took charge of this process, codified it and spread it across the continent, while making compromises with the more moderate sections of the old elite, has not been seen as a defeat of France's liberal revolution. Instead, it was Napoleon's defeat and exile that brought about attempts to restore the status quo ante of the *ancien régime*. In fact, the political fluctuations of France in the nineteenth century did not translate into any major modifications of the organization and nature of the French gendarmerie, which retained its centralized and militarized form. As regards the Spanish case, while the May 1844 decree has been portrayed as a deviation from the traditional model of the French gendarmerie, in fact those changes made by Ahumada reflected not only his own thinking about the needs of the new corps, but also the then-current regulations and structure of its French counterpart.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the effectiveness of the French gendarmerie had impressed many contemporary statesmen. As such, gendarmerie forces were created across Europe, from the Low Countries to Denmark, across the various German and Italian states and also in Russia, all sharing the military nature and same basic structure of the French corps.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, the English experience was neither as consensual nor as purely civilian as traditional portrayed. The establishment of the "New Police" was met by great resistance and suspicion of significant sectors of the English population. While status quo elements of English society eventually came to appreciate the utility of modern police forces, particularly for their usefulness in suppressing disorder, opposition movements and the

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<sup>11</sup> Miguel Martínez García, "La Gendarmería francesa y la fundación de la Guardia Civil", *CGC*, No. 16 (1996), pp.187-205. For the evolution of events in France, see Clive Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 41-46, 59-60, 90-91.

<sup>12</sup> For details of the emergence of gendarmerie forces in various European states, see Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State*.

working classes maintained a certain level of dislike and apprehension of the “Bobby”, giving him nicknames such as “Crusher”, “Blue Devil” and “Blue Locust”. In fact, until the “New Police” model had spread to the rest of England, the London Metropolitan Police acted as a “national riot squad”.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the “professional civilian police” of Britain admired by Spanish scholars (as well as traditional English police historians) was as much an ideal as a reality, as English constables, like their counterparts on the continent, had notable military elements to them, particularly in regards to their training and the universal emphasis on discipline and hierarchy.<sup>14</sup> As one scholar of the English police noted, “A policeman’s training, like a soldier’s, is intended to sever many of his ties with his previous civilian life.”<sup>15</sup> In his training and duties, the British officer on the beat differed little from the Continental gendarme on patrol. Indeed, one can reasonably argue that the title “New Police” (by which English statesmen attempted to differentiate the new police forces from both the traditional policing bodies that preceded them and the centralized “French” model of policing) was as much of a misnomer as the name “Civil” Guard.<sup>16</sup>

Nor did the militarization of the Civil Guard in 1844 signify a hijacking of the liberal agenda by *ancien régime* elements and the Army. As elsewhere, compromise with more moderate sectors of the traditional elite largely allowed Spanish liberals to implement

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<sup>13</sup> Emsley, *Policing in its Context, 1750-1870* (London, 1983), pp. 59-75, 148-155; id., *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (London, 1996), pp. 24-42, 59-84.

<sup>14</sup> Emsley, *The English Police*, pp. 26, 56-59, 254-257; id., “A Typology of Nineteenth-Century Police”, *Crime, histoire et sociétés*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (1999), p. 36; id., *Gendarmes and the State*, pp. 6-7, 7n18.

<sup>15</sup> Ben Whitaker, *The Police in Society* (London, 1979), p. 227.

<sup>16</sup> While English policemen would maintain that they were a force apart when compared to their continental colleagues, they still broadly considered the latter – including the various gendarmeries – as members of the same family of police. Indeed, the *English Police Journal*, which was dedicated to a whole range of police and criminological issues, ran a series of articles on the various European police forces (including the Spanish Civil Guard) outlining their training and structure in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

their reforms, constructing the fundamental institutions of a liberal state.<sup>17</sup> The creation of the Civil Guard, despite its military nature, should be considered part of this liberal agenda, as it was much more a product of liberalism than it was of any feudal ideology. As noted above, given the general situation in Spain, the construction of strong centralized state institutions was necessary in order to transform the deeply-entrenched social, cultural, economic and political structures of the *ancien regime*. A simple expansion or change in the ruling classes would not be sufficient to effect this transformation, as the statesmen of the future Second Republic would discover, for those elements attached to the old order frequently resisted this process. The apparent success of the centralized “French model”, including that of its police, only increased the attractiveness of this route to “modernity” in Spain as elsewhere in Europe. The “English” model of local governance and the federalist option of the United States were seen as anomalies by many European liberals and of limited practical relevance to the problems with which they had to contend.<sup>18</sup> The political instability faced by most European states in the nineteenth century (and the first half of the twentieth), instability on a scale not known in Great Britain, necessarily had an impact on the structure and nature of the police as well as of other state institutions.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the fact that the

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<sup>17</sup> Arturo Cajal Valero, *El Gobernador civil y el Estado centralizado del siglo XIX* (Madrid, 1999), pp. 106-107.

<sup>18</sup> Cajal Valero, *El Gobernador civil*, pp. 26-39; Carr, *Spain, 1808-1975*, p. 236. The roots of the centralized state, of course, go back farther than the French Revolution and the Napoleonic system. The origins of much liberal thought can be traced back to the Enlightenment: Carr, *ibid.*, pp. 61-62. This includes ideas about the role and structure of the police and the law, concepts that preceded the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but found their fullest expression in the “enlightened despotism” of that century: Marc Raeff, “The Well-Ordered Police and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach”, *American Historical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 5 (1975), pp. 1221-1243; Brian Chapman, *Police State* (London, 1970), pp. 15-27.

<sup>19</sup> For the impact of political instability and revolutionary outbursts on the development and structures of police forces, see Hsi-huey Liang, *The rise of the modern police and the European state system from Metternich to the Second World War* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 25, 34-35; Emsley, *The English Police*, pp. 6-7, 248-261. For a discussion of the policing policies of various European countries in the twenty years after



“English” model of policing was largely confined to the component parts of the island of Great Britain (that is, those areas where the legitimacy of the British political order was not under serious threat) is in itself a demonstration of the particular circumstances that produced a more decentralized and less militarized police force.<sup>20</sup> This reality was begrudgingly acknowledged even by the greatest admirers of English liberalism in nineteenth-century Spain, the Republicans. Despite the commitment of a significant sector of the republican movement to the ideals of a federal state as well as their opposition to institutions such as the Civil Guard, when they found themselves in charge of a state that was on the verge of collapse, they doubled the personnel allotment of the Civil Guard.<sup>21</sup>

As mentioned previously, the lack of popular support for the liberal order and the centrifugal political and social forces inside Spain meant that recruitment of civil guards was a selective process. As they would be stationed in small posts scattered across the countryside, discipline and good character were of primary importance. Initially applications were accepted from decommissioned soldiers and militiamen of at least five years of service, of certain physical standards, with a letter of good conduct and character by either their former commanding officer (for ex-soldiers) or the mayor or priest of their

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the First World War, see Gerald Blaney, Jr. (ed.) *Policing Interwar Europe: Continuity, Change and Crisis, 1918-40* (London, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> The first modern police force created by English statesmen was not the Metropolitan Police, but rather the Peace Preservation Force of Ireland, later the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), which was more like the French Gendarmerie than the future “Bobbies”. Sir Robert Peel, the principal figure behind the creation of the Metropolitan Police, was a key figure in the establishment of the Irish force, which came into being in 1822. The RIC became the point of reference for the police forces of the British Empire. For Peel and the Irish police, see Clive Emsley, *Policing in its Context, 1750-1870* (London, 1983), p. 60; id., *Gendarmes and the State*, pp. 246-250.

<sup>21</sup> Miguel López Corral, *La Guardia Civil: Nacimiento y Consolidación, 1844-1874* (Madrid, 1995), pp. 367-374.

hometown, and the ability to read and write. These original high standards set for recruits (as well as the reluctance of the heads of the regular military to lose their best men to the Civil Guard) made it difficult fill the necessary personnel requirements, and temporary compromises on certain requirements (such as literacy) were conceded in order to recruit enough men.<sup>22</sup> By the time of the Republic, while the physical, moral and educative requirements were still in force, recruitment was limited to those with military experience, whose father served in the Civil Guard or those young men who studied at the College of Young Guards.<sup>23</sup>

Recruitment was only the preliminary way of establishing and maintaining the desired type of force. The whole edifice of the Civil Guard was constructed in a manner to imbue certain values amongst its personnel and ensure that they fulfilled their various duties. This first step in this procedure was the training of candidates. Aspirants to the corps were trained initially in either the special academies or by the local command of the area in which they lived or were to serve. Special emphasis was given to topics such as military subjects, Spanish history, and those items most related to the particular service of a civil guard, such as the various laws that he would have to enforce. After passing their initial exams, civil guards would then spend a probationary period under the direct supervision of their commanding officer and more seasoned colleagues. This not only allowed for further opportunities to shape new personnel and instruct the latter in the

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<sup>22</sup> Martínez Ruiz, *Creación de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 56-62. For the difficulties surrounding the educational levels of the first generation of recruits, see Fernando Rivas Gómez, "La enseñanza en la Guardia Civil (Part I)", *REHGC*, No. 13 (1974), pp. 134-145.

<sup>23</sup> Sanjurjo, "The Spanish Civil Guard", pp. 373-377.

practicalities of his job, but also to weed out those recruits who turned out to be unsuited for the demands and pressures of being a civil guard.<sup>24</sup>

This process of moulding civil guards was continual. This was partially done through the rigid hierarchy and discipline of the corps, but was also carried out through attempts to foster a social class of virtuous men dedicated to the protection of the state and society.

The desire to guarantee the discipline of its personnel meant that interaction with the public, outside that necessary for the carrying out of one's duties, was discouraged.<sup>25</sup> As

such, men could not serve in the town of their birth or that of their spouse, and were

housed in barracks. This marriage between the personal and profession was evident in

the term given to these buildings: *casa-cuartel*, literally "home-barracks". The desire to

create the ideal civil guard went beyond those socializing measures of the current

generation of men, but extended into future generations. Life in the *casa-cuartel*

familiarized with, and instilled in, the children of civil guards the values and lifestyle of

the corps, and thus had a self-reproducing quality as sons often went on to follow in the

footsteps of their fathers.<sup>26</sup> For those sons or daughters who lost their father in the line of

duty, orphanages and schools were set up not only to look after their needs, but also to

keep them within the fold. In order to encourage and benefit from this gravitation

towards service in the Civil Guard, the College of Young Guards was established in 1853

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<sup>24</sup> For a general discussion of the training and education of civil guards, see Rivas Gómez, "La enseñanza en la Guardia Civil", *REHGC*, Part I: No. 13 (1974), pp. 134-176, Part II: No. 14 (1974), pp. 117-157.

<sup>25</sup> This practice was common amongst all European gendarmeries, and was known as the "principle of ahistoricalness" in the Austrian Empire: Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State*; Liang, *The rise of modern police*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>26</sup> In examining thirty years of entrants (1953-1984) into the Special Academy of the Civil Guard, Diego López Garrido discovered that an average of 63.28% had fathers who served in the corps. For this and other figures about the relatively high self-reproduction within the Civil Guard, see *El aparato policial en España* (Barcelona, 1987), pp. 136-147.

in order to prepare sons of civil guards for their future life in the corps, and its alumni were given preference in the recruitment and placement. The primacy of a solid moral education, seen as essential for a civil guard, was evident in the regulations of the College. As the first article under the section “Obligations of Young Guards” states: “The primary obligation of the Young Guard is blind obedience and profound respect for his superiors. Subordination and exactness in everything is the basis of a career whose motto can be summed up in three words: self-denial, virtue and honour.”<sup>27</sup>

These values echo those of the *Cartilla* of the Civil Guard. Considered the Bible of the corps, it served as the basis for virtually all subsequent manuals and literature produced for and by the Civil Guard.<sup>28</sup> Produced in pocket-sized form so it could be kept on a civil guard’s person at all times, its contents were expected to be memorized. In addition to containing the Civil and Military Regulations of the corps and the various duties and obligations of a civil guard, the *Cartilla* provided instruction in proper behaviour and etiquette. Indeed, the first nineteen articles of the *Cartilla* itself deal with issues of personal conduct, demonstrating the priority given to moral issues such as duty and self-sacrifice, reflecting in turn concerns over the discipline of civil guards once they were faced with local pressures or potentially dangerous situations. Alongside the *Cartilla* itself, members of the corps were flooded with manuals (issued officially by the corps or by individuals), and a series of professional journals that disseminated everything from recent legislation and policing techniques to Spanish history (including the heroic deeds

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<sup>27</sup> Article 84, *Guardias Jóvenes. Reglamento de 1864* (Madrid, 1993 reprint)

<sup>28</sup> For example, the practical application of the moral instructions of the *Cartilla* to everyday life was demonstrated in a collection of short stories in Senén D’Aco (pseud. for Eduardo González de Escandón), *El Guardia Civil: Episodios de su vida y servicio. Colección de cuentos minúsculos en correlación con los artículos de la Cartilla del Cuerpo* (Ciudad Real, 1899).

of past and present civil guards), as well as being forums for the public expression of issues relating to the daily issues and preoccupations of civil guards.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, a series of general histories of the Civil Guard were published in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. While providing actual historical data, they also served an important function of fostering a common identity that reached back across generations, as well as establishing an historical lineage of the corps and underlining its ever-present role in Spanish society. Despite the variety of topics covered in these journals, manuals and histories, they all contain common themes centring on (military) discipline, duty to the nation and moral rectitude.

These efforts to bolster the morale and convictions of civil guards are a reflection of the difficult life that came with service in the corps. The work was tough, the hours long, and a civil guard was expected to make his rounds no matter what the weather. Unlike other manual labourers, civil guards were largely deprived of those activities that partially alleviated the hardships of their existence. A civil guard was required to monitor village fêtes, not participate in them. The puritanical moral code of the corps prohibited the playing of card games, and meant that an evening of intoxicating release from the daily grind of his existence could result in disciplinary action. The first three articles of the first chapter of the *Cartilla* exhort a civil guard to be a paragon of virtue. Article 6 in the section dedicated to station commandants (*jefes de puesto*) instructs them that they “prevent their subordinates from giving themselves over to diversions inappropriate to the gravity and restraint of the corps”. Article 7 demands that commandants prohibit their

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<sup>29</sup> Rivas Gómez, “La enseñanza”, I, p. 153; López Garrido, *La Guardia Civil*, pp. 156-158. The use of professional journals to transmit necessary information as well as strengthening group sentiment was common practice among all police forces, whether they were militarized or civilian-controlled.

charges from engaging in “any kind of card games”, while Article 8 exhorts them to make sure that their men do not engage in vulgar conversation. The civil guard was never considered to be completely off-duty and he was always held accountable for his actions.

These drawbacks were not compensated for in terms of salary. While a civil guard might expect a relatively high rate of pay in the first decades of the corps’ existence, the increasing budgetary demands of an expanding Civil Guard could not be met by a chronically under-funded Spanish state. As one Interior Minister reported in 1904, the rates of pay for civil guards had not changed since 1871 despite rises in the costs of living.<sup>30</sup> This state of affairs had changed little by 1930.<sup>31</sup> The lack of funds available also affected the living conditions of civil guards, as many *casa-cuarteles* were reported to be in disrepair, with some considered unhygienic and a threat to the health of their inhabitants.<sup>32</sup>

The restrictive and rigid social life imposed on a civil guard also had its potential negative aspects as regards his living quarters, despite official efforts to encourage camaraderie. Regulations dictated that relations between officers and their charges

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<sup>30</sup> AHN, Serie A, Legajo 39A, Letter of the Interior Minister (Allendesalazar) to the Finance Minister, 12 December 1904.

<sup>31</sup> “Leyendo la prensa: De *El Debate*”, *RTGC*, No. 243 (May 1930), p. 201; “Miscelánea: Los haberes”, *RTGC*, No. 247 (September 1930), p. 467; “Miscelánea: el problema económico”, *RTGC*, No. 249 (November 1930), p. 477.

<sup>32</sup> “Miscelánea: El acuartelamiento”, *RTGC*, No. 244 (June 1930), pp. 262-263; “El acuartelamiento”, *RTGC*, No. 245 (July 1930), pp. 283-284.

should not be familiar or relaxed, but formal and courteous.<sup>33</sup> Given the strong emphasis on discipline and submission to one's superior officers, one can imagine that recourse against abusive commandants was limited. As for those commandants who did not cross the line into outright abuse, but were nonetheless overly officious, there was little a civil guard could do but grin and bear it. As they all lived in the same accommodation, this meant that there was no escaping the bane of a problematic commanding officer. An apparently frequent bone of contention was the wives of one's fellow civil guards, as marital conflicts or poor relations between a spouse and one's colleagues could cause considerable tension within the close confines of a *casa-cuartel*.<sup>34</sup>

Yet, service in the Civil Guard brought some benefits with it. For Army officers stuck in the reserve lists, it offered them an active command.<sup>35</sup> After the pacification of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco in 1927, a notable number of Infantry officers from the Army of Africa applied for transfer into the Civil Guard. As one such officer, Enrique Serra Algarra, who later went on to fight in the Blue Division in the Soviet Union and rose to the rank of lieutenant general, explained why he and others wanted to transfer to the Civil Guard:

We went to Africa to defend Spain and fight against the Moor, but when the war ended we found garrison life very boring. As we enjoyed action and war, we

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<sup>33</sup> Miguel Cid Rey (captain of the CG), *La Guardia Civil dentro de la moral. Conducta de sus individuos en el orden civil y militar* (Guadalajara, 1903), pp. 47-61; Pedro Martínez Mainer (captain of the CG), *El consultor del guardia civil* (Avila, 1920), pp. 276-278.

<sup>34</sup> "Del orden interior", *RTGC*, No. 74 (February 1916), pp. 87-95; Cid Rey, *Guardia Civil dentro de la moral*, pp. 63-71. Nonetheless, the valuable functions performed by the wives of civil guards were recognized: "Las esposas de los guardias", *RTGC*, No. 165 (November 1923).

<sup>35</sup> Charles J. Esdaile, *Spain in the Liberal Age: From Constitution to Civil War, 1808-1939* (Malden, MA, 2000), p. 93.

asked to be transferred to the Civil Guard because it promised plenty of action in the persecution of criminals.<sup>36</sup>

Yet the majority of civil guards came from the lower classes, especially the peasantry, as these also constituted the primary group for recruits for the Army given their inability to buy an exemption from military service.<sup>37</sup> For those men who came from areas of high unemployment or underemployment, service in the Civil Guard proved an attractive alternative after completing their military service, especially for those who developed a taste for the soldier's life.<sup>38</sup> The Civil Guard provided them and their families with certain benefits that would be largely out of reach for many poor peasants and landless labourers: secure housing, steady year-round pay, decent clothing (in the form of their uniforms). As one officer commented on this trade between freedom and the disciplined life inside the corps: "How did almost all of you live prior to enlisting into the Civil Guard? [...] Here you have a house, pay, camaraderie, protection. Did you have this when you were dependent on some local patron? Did you dress as well as you do now?"<sup>39</sup> For the civil guard who joined the force without basic schooling, he was taught arithmetic, how to read and write, as well as other useful skills for a future career once his enlistment period ended, or he retired from the corps.<sup>40</sup> If he served enough years within the Civil Guard, he could also expect a modest pension, as well as other forms of social

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<sup>36</sup> Quoted in José Luis Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 2006), p. 30.

<sup>37</sup> Martínez Ruiz, *La creación de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>38</sup> Gabriel Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias del sargento Ferreras* (León, 2002), pp. 12, 51-52.

<sup>39</sup> Cid Rey, *La Guardia Civil dentro de la moral*, pp. 18-21.

<sup>40</sup> Cid Rey, *ibid.*, p. 21.



security.<sup>41</sup> A basic form of personal insurance was also extended to the families of civil guards, whose children received schooling, especially for those sons and daughters whose father had lost their lives in the line of duty, and special funds were set up to assist orphans and widows of killed personnel. All in all, service in the Civil Guard, for all its privations and hardships, offered a certain degree of social mobility to its personnel and their families. It was this linkage between the austere and disciplined life and self-improvement that coloured in no small part (though not exclusively) the perceptions of many civil guards in terms of the liberal social order, labour conflicts and the glorification of military values.

The establishment of a Civil Guard station in a village brought the presence of the central state and its values into the daily life of rural communities in a way largely unknown previously. The role of the Civil Guard was not simply the elimination of banditry and the maintenance of public order, but was also to be the spearhead of a process of “internal colonization”.<sup>42</sup> The “*Benemérita*” was supposed to bring progress, civilization and the concept of the nation-state to what were seen as rural backwaters, whose intense localism was viewed as obstacles to the prosperity and advancement of the nation. This elitist view of the countryside and its inhabitants was not peculiar to Spain,<sup>43</sup> and the preference

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<sup>41</sup> Enrique Martínez Ruiz, “Fondos, pensiones y retiros en los orígenes de la Guardia Civil”, *REHGC*, No. 29 (1983), pp. 159-197; Francisco Martínez Quesada, “La economía del guardia civil a través de su historia (part III)”, *REHGC*, No. 15 (1975), pp. 55-85.

<sup>42</sup> Clive Emsley, “Peasants, gendarmes and state formation”, in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *National Histories and European History* (London, 1993), pp. 87-88.

<sup>43</sup> For similar views in France, see Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA, 1976), particularly Chapters 1 and 2. As noted above, this urban disdain for the ways and peoples of the rural world, and the need for a top-down reform of society were not the peculiar prejudices of 19<sup>th</sup> century liberals, but was evident in much of the thinking of the 18<sup>th</sup> century *philosophes* and underpinned the policies of the “enlightened” absolutism of the reformist monarchs of that period.

of sectors of the peasantry for retrograde or primitive political movements such as Carlism and anarchism only served to confirm for urban liberals the need to transform the manners and mentalities of the vast majority of the Spanish population. While the coercive element of this process has been adequately researched and described by numerous scholars, particularly in relation to the repressive function of the Civil Guard, there also existed a softer, more subtle side to this attempted transformation. The proper and courteous manner of the well-groomed civil guard (sometimes more the expression of an ideal than the reality) was meant to serve as an example to the rural population, while the implicit connection between this country-boy-done-good and the state was evident in the national flag that hung over his barracks. Moreover, in a countryside that was largely devoid of local emergency services, civil guards were charged with providing assistance in cases of floods, fires or other calamities.<sup>44</sup>

This aspect of public service, though conceived of in paternalistic terms, was a key element not only in the identity of a civil guard, but also in how he viewed his role in society. While most popular representations of the Civil Guard reflect the repressive aspects of its function, the image the Civil Guard often portrays of itself within in its own media is that of the “Good Samaritan”, or that of the heroic lawman apprehending criminals, while histories and professional journals of the corps frequently produced statistics accounting for those humanitarian services carried out in any given year. The fact that official figures show that humanitarian duties only accounted for a small portion of services carried out by civil guards, the emphasis on such duties underlines their

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<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of the humanitarian aspects of the duty of the Civil Guard, see Gonzalo Jar Couselo, “La función social de la Guardia Civil”, *Cuadernos de Trabajo Social*, no. 7 (1994), pp.179-192.

importance for the self-image of the corps. Furthermore, as shall be demonstrated below, civil guards also saw their role in the maintenance of order and law enforcement not as an inherently repressive, but rather as yet another humanitarian deed in the service of society. Nonetheless, recourse to violence often was a characteristic of a civil guard's behaviour, though certainly not exclusive to the corps, for reasons to be outlined below.

Whatever the intentions of liberal reformers were, this intervention by the central state was not always well received at the local level, and the men of the Civil Guard thus became caught in middle of this tension between localism and centralism. While most scholarly attention has focussed on the military nature of the corps and those regulations that attempted to minimize the social ties between civil guards and the communities in which they were stationed, the fact of the matter is that in the closed world of rural Spain there was always going to be a certain isolation and alienation between civil guards and the local population. Coming from outside of the town, civil guards, like any other person (including those from neighbouring towns), were looked upon as virtual foreigners. If we keep in mind that the Spanish word *pueblo* means both "village/town" and "people", and thus "my town" and "my people" are interchangeable expressions, we begin to get a sense of the dynamics involved in peasant-Civil Guard relations. Simply put, the local civil guards were not "sons of the village" nor were they members of the "people".<sup>45</sup> This identification of the Civil Guard with foreignness was not restricted to the relatively isolated rural hamlets of southern Spain. In Asturian mining towns, which

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<sup>45</sup> Julian A. Pitt-Rivers, *The People of the Sierra* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 6-12, 130-131. For a discussion of close-knit social relations of rural villages, see Pitt-Rivers, *op cit.*, especially Chapters 1 and 2; Gamel Woolsey, *Death's Other Kingdom: A Spanish Village in 1936* (London, 2004); Gerald Brenan, *South From Granada* (London, 1957); Carmelo Lisón-Tolosana, *Belmonte de los Caballeros: A Sociological Study of a Spanish Town* (Oxford, 1966).

attracted men from all over Spain, civil guards were associated with the one “foreign” nationality that was despised by all the others: the Galicians. Whether this was because of the relatively large numbers of *gallegos* amongst the ranks of the Civil Guard, or a simple conflation of the two most hated “outsiders” is not clear, but the identification was significant as hostility towards Galicians amongst the miners superseded that of ideology or that of any other regional rivalry.<sup>46</sup>

The communal ties within rural villages and towns often superseded the bonds of ideology or those of deep animosity towards a particular institution. For example, the American poet Gamel Woolsey noted that such considerations held firm even in the heated revolutionary atmosphere of the first weeks of the 1936-1939 Civil War. When a group of anarchists from Málaga city came to her small village to arrest a retired civil guard who evidently had a reputation for brutality, the local villagers vigorously opposed them because this particular civil guard was a local man, and thus a “son of the village”. The villagers did not recognize the right of the committees in Málaga to judge one of their own, be he a civil guard or not. It was only the threat of force by the heavily-armed “outsider” anarchists that the villagers gave way and let them take the retired civil guard away.<sup>47</sup>

Long traditions of local rule and a practical, personal view of conflict resolution clashed with the jurist conception of law as legislated by “foreigners” in Madrid and enforced by

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<sup>46</sup> Adrian Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain: The Coal Miners of Asturias, 1860-1934* (Urbana & Chicago, IL, 1987), pp. 71-72.

<sup>47</sup> Woolsey, *Death's Other Kingdom*, pp. 81-82. A similar phenomenon has been observed in relation to anti-clerical vandalism, particular regarding symbols of local patron saints.

the local civil guard, who, despite their peasant origins, were also “outsiders”.<sup>48</sup> This could manifest itself over matters such as personal feuds to more light-hearted affairs such as a rowdy and noisy public remonstrance against individuals who fell foul of local standards of morality or fairness. Since these types of demonstrations of popular disapproval were considered lawless disturbances by the state authorities, it was the duty of the Civil Guard to dissolve them. Nonetheless, such unpopular restrictions on non-political expressions of public opinion were not always forcefully suppressed, and sometimes allowed to continue if they proved impossible to contain.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps this clash of civilizations is best exemplified by the attempt to stamp out rural banditry. The “social” or “peasants” bandit, whose arrest or elimination was one of the principal tasks of the Civil Guard, was often protected by the local populations for as long as he did not commit some sort of act that offended local sensibilities, and frequently was glorified for his struggle against some sort of injustice or the “illegitimate” laws of the “outsiders”. Yet, if the “social” bandit did cross the line and commit a crime or crimes that were recognized as such by the local villagers, the latter would then have no problem with co-operating with the Civil Guard to bring about his capture.<sup>50</sup> The divergence of views between the local peasantry and the Civil Guard

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<sup>48</sup> For rural concepts of “justice” and the “law”, see Pitt-Rivers, *People of the Sierra*, Chapters 11-13; Lisón-Tolosana, *Belmonte de los Caballeros*, Chapters 9 & 10. This, of course, was not a peculiarly Spanish phenomenon. For a description of peasant resistance to the “intrusions of the alien law and its representatives into his world” in France, see Weber, *Peasants into Frenchman*, Chapter 5, and, more generally, Emsley, “Peasants, gendarmes and state formation”, pp. 81-83.

<sup>49</sup> These public chastisements were known as *cencerrada* in Andalucía, and had their equivalents in the French *charivari*, the Italian *scampanate* and the German *Katzenmusik*. In these countries, as in Spain, such demonstrations increasingly attracted the disapproval of the authorities: Pitt-Rivers, *People of the Sierra*, pp. 169-177; Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State*, pp. 252-253;

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of the “social bandit” and the conventions and conditions surrounding his support by rural communities, see Pitt-Rivers, *People of the Sierra*, pp. 178-185; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Manchester, 1971), Chapter 2.

intensified as capitalist conceptions of property overturned long-held local customs regarding the use of common lands and resources. This increasingly became the case as social banditry evolved into anarchism and merged with already existing forms of popular protest. The conflict of interests between the Civil Guard as the representative of the state and the protector of the socio-economic status quo and the exasperations and aspirations of the rural poor could, and did, explode into violent confrontations.

While the Civil Guard came to be closely linked with the interests of the large landowners and local notables, particularly as social unrest mounted, a perfect state of harmony did not exist between the two parties. The fact that the Civil Guard lay outside of the direct control of the municipal authorities, all of whom would have been men of substance who largely viewed the interests of the community and their own personal interests as being one in the same, meant that conflicts of interest could and did arise. Since the Civil Guard was an agent of the central state, a central state that claimed (though never achieved) a monopoly of armed force, the authorities in Madrid ultimately decided where Civil Guard stations would be located, and could also call away the local detachment of civil guards to deal with disturbances outside the district in which they served. Moreover, given the relative thinness of Civil Guard personnel on the ground, in times of high and widespread social tension, local landowners felt inadequately protected from the ire of their social inferiors. As a result, local notables and large landowners pressed for the creation of locally-based and locally-controlled rural guards. This clear challenge to the presumed monopoly of rural policing by the Civil Guard was fiercely resisted by members of the corps, as the proposed Provincial or Rural Guards would not

only serve to marginalize further civil guards within rural communities, but also become a potential competitor for resources.<sup>51</sup>

Nonetheless, local notables recognized the utility of the Civil Guard and would seek to co-opt local forces through the granting of a variety of benefits and subsidies, such as health care, religious sacraments, provisions and furniture. These demonstrations of gratitude towards the Civil Guard, often broadcasted publicly, were frequently recorded in the professional journals of the corps as well as in its Official Bulletins. Moreover, local corporations, large landowners and industrialists managed to circumvent their lack of direct control over the corps by petitioning the government to send a detachment of civil guards during a village fête, the harvest or a labour dispute and promising to cover the costs of mobilization and maintenance of the force.<sup>52</sup>

This connivance between the central government and the local notables could cause considerable consternation amongst civil guards, who could be left feeling themselves pressured from all sides as they were charged with enforcing the laws of the state, only to be undermined or punished by the same state for carrying out their sworn duty. One such instance where this could occur was over the issue of banditry. Similar to the common folk, local notables supported and protected those bandits that were co-opted into their service, and in such cases they hindered the local Civil Guard in its efforts to bring

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<sup>51</sup> Miguel Gistau (Captain of the CG), *Historia de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1907), pp. 205-207; "Leyendo la prensa: La Guardia provincial", *RTGC*, No. 246 (August 1930), p. 366; "Guardia Civil: Servicio Rural", *LCM* (13 February 1931); "Guardia Civil: Guardería rural", *LCM* (4 March 1931); "Guardia Civil: Los guardias rurales", *LCM* (6 March 1931).

<sup>52</sup> See also Michael M. Seidman, *Workers against Work: Labor in Paris and Barcelona during the Popular Fronts* (Berkeley, CA, 1991), pp. 24, 31-32; González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, pp. 44, 44n60. This practice would continue during the Second Republic, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

“their” bandit to justice. In one particular case, the collusion between two gangs of bandits and the local notables in the Estepa district of the province of Sevilla caused national outrage when it was exposed in detail by a local citizen, with the help of the local civil guard commander exasperated after several frustrating years of service in the area. The central state intervened and sent in hundreds of civil guards to round-up the main protagonists, and seventy-nine men were arrested. Nonetheless, powerful friends of the imprisoned men pulled the necessary strings and all of the accused were released without trial. In what must have been seen as an undermining of the very principles that the corps stood for, the Civil Guard officer – and a local judge who assisted in coordinating the inquiry – were transferred out of the district shortly thereafter. The local author who had made the details public was chased out of town.<sup>53</sup>

Another one of the principal duties of the Civil Guard was the persecution of deserters from military service. While this task was traditionally one of the causes of conflict between civil guards and the rural poor, it became a potential source of tension with the proprietor classes once these could no longer purchase an exemption from military service. One article in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* tells of an anecdotal, though very likely true, story of a village where a wealthy family of landowners cajoled and bribed government officials to establish a Civil Guard station in their town. Upon achieving their objective, this family saw itself as the effective “owners” of this detachment of civil guards, and thus acted as if the latter were no more than their

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<sup>53</sup> Hank Driessen, “The ‘noble bandit’ and the bandits of the nobles: Brigandage and local community in Nineteenth-Century Andalusia”, *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1983), pp. 109-110. Pitt-Rivers notes that if a man enjoyed good relations with local authorities he “need fear no outside interference”: *People of the Sierra*, pp. 16-17.



employees. One day, one of the sons of this family, claiming physical illness, gained a temporary release from his obligatory military service. Once his official period of release had ended, and it was clear that he was healthy, this son still failed to return to his garrison. The local Civil Guard received the order to oblige him either to return to his garrison or to admit himself into the nearest military hospital. After choosing the second option, and being of perfect health, he was quickly released from the hospital and then dispatched to Spanish Morocco. No sooner had this son been sent off to Africa, the local detachment of Civil Guard received a notice threatening eviction from their housing as soon as the current contract expired.<sup>54</sup>

While civil guards may have experienced some friction or resentment towards local notables, on the whole relations between the two groups were harmonious, for whatever conflict of interests may have arisen, their common fear of the lower classes was greater. From the civil guard's perspective a local notable may be corrupt or insufficiently patriotic-minded, but the latter nevertheless belonged to the "respectable" classes who appreciated the services and sacrifices of the *Benemérita*.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, civil guards existed in a near-permanent state of tension, if not conflict, with the lower classes. Due to their dire living conditions and lack of legal recourses for addressing grievances, it was this social group that produced the bandits and lawbreakers, and whose members were the source of most instances of public disturbances. Indeed, as an outsider whose

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<sup>54</sup> Mariano Moral García (Corporal of the CG), "El problema del acuartelamiento: El caciquismo rural", *RTGC*, No. 154 (December 1922), p. 449.

<sup>55</sup> This division of the public into groups appears to be common amongst police forces, regardless of their nature. In his study of the attitudes amongst several police forces in America, the sociologist William A. Westley noted that "Policemen seem to distinguish and define these groups on the basis of their supposed attitude towards the police, their values (what will make them respect the police), their political power, and their relationship to the ends of the police." William A. Westley, *Violence and the Police: A Sociological Study of Law, Custom and Morality* (Cambridge, MA, 1970), pp. 96-105.

authority was never fully accepted, who enforced alien and unpopular laws, as well as being the nearest, most tangible symbol of the state, civil guards were always going to be the foci for the hostility of the lower classes. This reality was never absent from the consciousness of civil guards, as demonstrated by the frequent accounts of comrades wounded or killed in the line of the duty that were recorded in their press and literature. It is also evident in the practice of patrolling in twos. While the institution of the “*la pareja*” was seen by some sectors as a more effective mechanism for intimidating troublemakers,<sup>56</sup> in fact it was principally a measure of self-defence for the guards.<sup>57</sup>

The level of tension at any given time or place was an important determinant of the use of force by civil guards. Traditionally, scholars have attributed the employment of violence by civil guards almost exclusively to the military nature of the corps and the lack of accountability of its personnel.<sup>58</sup> While items such as Article 2, Chapter 5 of the Military Regulations of the corps state that the civil guard, like a soldier, is nothing more than the executor of the orders he receives from his superiors, and thus free of any responsibility for carrying out his duty, it is not necessarily true that these same regulations encouraged the use of force, even if they were open to abuse. The focus on certain parts of the *Cartilla* has often meant the disregarding of numerous other articles in the same manual that advise, if not admonish civil guards to gain the respect and trust of the populations they serve. More specifically in relation to the use of force, Article 4, Chapter 1 of the *Cartilla* notes the negative effects of violence on the public estimation of the corps, while

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<sup>56</sup> As one anarchist activist remarked, “There are two guards. One beats you, and the other has the gun. If you make a move, he shoots you.” Quoted in Jerome R. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, 1994), p. 112.

<sup>57</sup> The system of patrolling in pairs was not peculiar to the Spanish Civil Guard, but was also practiced by other gendarmeries in Italy, France and elsewhere: Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State*, pp. 20, 243n13, 249.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Ballbé, *Orden público*, pp. 148-154.

Article 18 of the same counsels that “your primary weapons should be persuasion and moral authority”, and that a civil guard should only resort to his force as a last option, or in self-defence. These sentiments are also echoed in the literature and press of the corps.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, some manuals were more “understanding” about the need to use force. One such manual noted that “the means of forces that guards employ always have to be those necessary to reduce [the subject] to obedience”. While counseling that personnel use tact and politeness (in accordance to the subject’s social class), if the person or persons resist or insult a guard, the latter is advised “to hit them with your firearms until they are reduced to silence and obedience”.<sup>60</sup> While in practice civil guards demonstrated that they were not adverse to employing various forms of violence and intimidation, interpretations that seek to explain this primarily (or exclusively in the case of Ballbé) through the military nature or the corps’ regulations do not, and cannot account adequately for broad variations in the degrees of violence used by civil guards.

The root determinant of the willingness to resort to violence among civil guards lies in the general social and political situation, as well as that of the locality in which they are stationed. Civil guards viewed the population in which they had to police with a mixture of sympathy, condescension and fear. Coming from the humbler rungs of society themselves, civil guards were aware of the grievances of the peasantry and urban working classes. One article appearing in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* criticized the authorities for treating strikes as “revolutionary events [...] not understanding that a

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<sup>59</sup> Cid Rey, *La Guardia Civil dentro de la moral*, pp. 76-78; Colonel José Osuna Pineda, “Educación Moral: Sanas Doctrinas”, *RTGC*, No. 260 (October 1931), p. 443; Sergeant Manuel Martín Rubio, “La conservación del orden público”, *RTGC*, No. 279 (May 1933), pp.175-176.

<sup>60</sup> Martínez Mainer, *Consultor del Guardia Civil*, pp. 64-65.

strike is the means by which the worker attempts to defend his rights and improve his working conditions". This only becomes a question of public order, it continued, when "coercion is used [by the strikers], attacks are made on property, or when the security forces (*la fuerzas públicas*) are attacked or their instructions disobeyed".<sup>61</sup> As agents of law and order, civil guards were also aware of how these grievances might propel the poorer and more desperate sectors of society into violent conflict with the existing order, and in such outbursts, civil guards were always going to be one of the principal targets of popular ire.

As such, civil guards saw their authority intimately linked with their personal security. Given their relative physical and social isolation, and hence vulnerability, civil guards had a heightened sensitivity to anything that might weaken their authority. The use of force, or the threat of it, was seen as a practical, if not necessary measure in enforcing the law and maintain his position of authority. This perception reflected, to an extent, popular conceptions of the need to assert one's authority when challenged, even amongst those same peasants who resented the authority of the local Civil Guard.<sup>62</sup> Yet, this was not just a by-product of the Civil Guard's nature, nor that of Spanish culture, but rather a consequence of the civil guard's situation as a policeman. In one study of the use of force amongst several American police departments in the 1950s and 1960s, the maintenance of respect for a police officer's authority was a key justification for the use

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<sup>61</sup> "La Guardia Civil en las cuestiones de orden público", *RTGC*, No. 15 (March 1911), pp. 161-167, quoted in Eduardo González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza: Orden público, subversión y violencia política en la España de la Restauración, 1875-1917* (Madrid, 1998), p. 50n64.

<sup>62</sup> Pitt-Rivers, *People of the Sierra*, pp. 156-157.

of violence, and the perceived levels of respect a social group had for the police was a primary determinant of a policeman's conduct when dealing with them.<sup>63</sup>

While legislation protecting the "honour" of the military was an issue of social prestige for Army officers, for civil guards such legislation had a more practical significance.

This is evident in the content of court rulings on *delitos de insulto a fuerza armada* concerning civil guards: throwing stones at them, striking them, threatening them with a firearm or a knife, dynamiting a *casa-cuartel*, and so on. One particular ruling particularly reflects this concern by civil guards over their vulnerability. This ruling judged the phrases "Out with the Civil Guard" and "Have at them, they are few in number" to be *insultos a fuerza armada*. A look at those rulings in which military judges decided that a particular action was not a *delito de insulto a fuerza armada* may perhaps give us cause to re-evaluate how open-ended such interpretations were in practice. Among those rulings listed in the *Guía del Instructor*, the following were judged not to be crimes against the authority of a civil guard: a civilian who unintentionally hits a civil guard when resisting being deputized by a civil guard; verbal insults against a Civil Guard corporal after the latter struck the former; when a civilian gets into a fist fight with a Civil Guard corporal after a heated discussion of a particular matter (that is, not related to the law).<sup>64</sup> Indeed, in one notable ruling, a group of defendants were absolved from any wrongdoing when a contingent of civil guards appeared to be over-stepping their authority and conniving with local authorities to falsify

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<sup>63</sup> Westley, *Violence and the Police*, pp. 118-143, especially pp. 138-139, and more generally, pp. 92-108.

<sup>64</sup> Captain Manuel García Mercadillo, *Guía del Instructor* (Madrid, 1935), pp. 68-71. All the rulings cited were during the Restoration Monarchy, that is, prior to 1923.

the results of a local election in Navarcles, to which they were greeted with stones and howls of protest by the townsfolk.<sup>65</sup>

These preoccupations over personal safety had their impact on the institutional mentality of the corps and influenced their views on society, which placed a premium on concepts such as authority (conceived of in hierarchical terms) and order. These two concepts, authority and order, were seen as the foundations of civilization and progress, and were meant as necessary checks on individualist egoism. As one Civil Guard instructor explained

All relations, be they public, private or familial, need to be established, regulated by someone. It is necessary, moreover, that this someone, with greater skill, with more knowledge, with greater power, establish these relations so that they are respected by all, either voluntarily or through coercive means. From here is born the concept of authority that, as we see, can be accepted or imposed. [...] Men, while biologically equal, are not so socially. [...] It is evident, then, that there is a difference (between men) that tends to elevate some and humble (*rebajar*) others. The greater the level of social complexity, the greater the levels of differentiation. History confirms these assertions, and continues to do so each day as the division of labour becomes ever more minute.

Authority, given the imperfection of mankind, is useful and necessary in social practices [...] Man needs a guide that puts him on the right road, a protector that helps him and defends him, a teacher that instructs and counsels him. These

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<sup>65</sup> Castor Calviño Sabucedo, *Defensa hecha ante del Consejo de Guerra de los paisanos ... en la causa por el supuesto delito de insulto a la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1904).

are precisely those social goals that the various classes of authority dedicate themselves to. Honour, respect, the obedience that one gives to the authorities is nothing more than the consequence of the gratitude of the citizenry for the protection, knowledge and counsel that they receive.<sup>66</sup>

In this article we can see the components of the institutional mentality of the Civil Guard and the basic mindset of its personnel vis-à-vis society at large. On the more personal level, it demonstrates recognition of how the discipline of the corps had led to the social betterment of its personnel, and thus the hierarchy, paternalism and military values of the corps were seen in a positive light. This recognition was not the product of simple indoctrination, for indoctrination is only effective if it has some sort of resonance with the personal experiences of its intended audience. Instead it reflected the benefits gained discipline and from what was known as a “good moral education”, of which religion played an integral part.<sup>67</sup> Those elements of society that did not possess these qualities were seen to suffer from their deficiencies. This included, for example, their colleagues in the Security Corps (*Cuerpo de Seguridad*), whose well-known short-comings were seen as products of “the total absence of subordination and discipline”.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Captain Manuel Rodrigo Zaragoza, “Cursillo de ética. Capítulo III: La Autoridad”, *RTGC*, No. 250 (December 1930), pp. 515-516. This piece was part of a series of articles titled “Short courses on ethics” was published in the *RTGC* by Captain Rodrigo Zaragoza, who was an instructor at the College for Young Guards as well as at the corps’ own Special Academy. See also Major José Pastor, “Vulgarizaciones: Delitos contra la Autoridad”, *RTGC*, No. 247 (September 1930), pp. 394-395. For earlier examples of this mindset, López Garrido, *La Guardia Civil y los orígenes*, pp.157-158. López Garrido attributes these attitudes directly (and apparently exclusively) to the authoritarian internal nature of the corps itself.

<sup>67</sup> Cid Rey, *La Guardia Civil dentro de la moral*, pp. 23-26; “Qué es moral”, *RTGC*, No. 76 (April 1916), pp. 19-20.

<sup>68</sup> “Algo que importa: El Cuerpo de Seguridad”, *RTGC*, No. 76 (April 1916), pp. 78-80. The Security Corps was part of the Interior Ministry police (*la policía gubernativa*). The uniformed *Cuerpo de Seguridad* (Security Corps), patrolled the streets and dealt with public order in the provincial capitals and the large towns, and the plain-clothed *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* (Surveillance Corps) primarily investigated crimes, including political ones.

In terms of his role in society, the civil guard saw himself as the “defender of order”, a necessary component in the proper workings of society. He was necessary in the same manner as religion was to the good of mankind, and thus those of his colleagues who had been killed in the line of duty were portrayed as “martyrs”. The Civil Guard saw itself as an instrument of civilization, part of a brotherhood of gendarmeries that existed in other “advanced” societies.<sup>69</sup> As pointed out in the article above, civilized society was both “accepted or imposed”. The Civil Guard was the guardian of that society, which sometime required the use of force if it were to survive. Civil guards believed that when performing coercive duties they were doing so for the common good, to maintain order, for without order there could be no progress. Those members of society that recognized the utility and sacrifices of the *Benemérita* were seen as part of the “respectable” and “civilized” classes, and this normally meant the middle and upper classes, though could include the lower classes as well. Those sectors of society that attacked the Civil Guard or attempted to undermine its authority were seen as criminals, deviants and/or foreigners.

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<sup>69</sup> This identification with other gendarmes corps is evident in the title of one article about the organisation of the Italian *Carabinieri*, in which the latter are referred to as the “Italian Civil Guard”, *RTGC*, No. 26 (February 1912), pp. 118-128. See also comments in *El Mentor del Guardia Civil* (weekly journal), No. 1 (1 August 1855), pp. 2-4. The image of the efficacy and utility of the Civil Guard was underlined by the petition of various Latin American governments to send missions of the *benemérita* to help organize and train their own police forces. “La Policía de Colombia copiada de nuestra Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, No. 129 (November 1920), p. 8; “Nueva misión a América”, *RTGC*, No. 143 (January 1922), p. 20; “El coronel peruano César Landazuri: Estudiando a la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, No. 145 (March 1922), pp. 81-83 [note: the pagination of the issues of the *RTGC* run continuously for each year, and this article, despite appearances, was the front page story for its particular issue, demonstrating its importance]; “Las misiones de la Guardia Civil en la América latina”, *RTGC*, No. 191 (January 1926), pp. 25-26.



It is important to note here that while the Civil Guard generally viewed the lower classes as the “dangerous classes”, they still differentiated the average “honourable” worker from those who sought to “exploit” his hardships for their own political goals, these often being characterized as either, at best, misguided, or, at worst, barbaric. The fact that anarchism was the dominant ideology amongst the landless labourers, and also amongst many of the urban working classes, made this characterization of the working-class movement seemingly all the more justifiable. Anarchism in its negation of state authority and its doctrine of “propaganda by the deed” was, in ways that socialism was not, the antithesis of all that civil guards held to be the building blocks of a society. As one conference held by the corps on the phenomenon of anarchism concluded, anarchism was a barbaric foreign doctrine, and anarchists “harmful beasts” (*bestias dañinas*), whose destructive influence had to be eliminated from Spanish society. Indeed, the anarchist was considered by the attendees of this conference to be worse than the common criminal, for unlike the latter, the anarchist believes his actions are justified and moral, and thus lacking the foundation for redemption.<sup>70</sup>

“Those who have ideas” (*los que tienen ideas*) were seen as the root of most social indiscipline and an implicit threat not only to society at large, but more importantly for civil guards they poisoned relations between them and the working classes. As the lower classes were viewed generally by civil guards as impulsive, less civilized and almost infantile, the efforts of those “agitator” who sought to mobilize the working classes against the system constituted a danger to their own physical safety. This concern could

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<sup>70</sup> First Lieutenant Emiliano López Montijano, “Sobre anarquismo (De las conferencias de oficiales en el 14º Tercio)”, *RTGC*, No. 83 (November 1916), pp. 44-53.

take on the characteristics of paranoia, as seen in the Civil Guard's reaction to the alleged Black Hand conspiracy of the 1880s. As the anarchist movement grew in western Andalucía, rumours began to spread about a plot to murder landowners and those that supported them and destroy their crops and property. While civil guards were active in the forging of evidence to prove this conspiracy's existence, it is very likely that they believed the threat to be real, as witnessed by references to the Black Hand in 1915 when they feared another plot was in the making in the area.<sup>71</sup> As anarchists, like the social bandits of earlier times, enjoyed the support of the rural workers and could fairly easily disappear in their midst, in times of mounting social unrest, civil guards would adopt brutal and often arbitrary tactics in their attempts to marginalize and eliminate the movement. The violence employed by both civil guards and anarchists could, and did evolve into a vicious circle, which only made civil guards more determined to assert their authority through forceful means. As one historian noted, "living as they did among their enemies, [civil guards] became unusually ready to shoot."<sup>72</sup>

Some scholars have explained phenomena like the hysteria surrounding the Black Hand and its subsequent repression through reference to a militarized public order apparatus dominated by a Civil Guard outside the control of the civilian authorities.<sup>73</sup> But these types of incidents, and particularly the role the Civil Guard played in them is somewhat more complex. First of all, this particular incident occurred in a time of general international concern over the emergence and growth of anarchist movements, as well as

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<sup>71</sup> Mintz, *Anarchists of Casas Viejas*, pp. 23-24, 24n10, 106-110; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 62-64.

<sup>72</sup> Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 157-157.

<sup>73</sup> Ballbé, *Orden público y militarismo*, pp. 233-239.

their violent activities.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, while the magnitude of the Black Hand membership was certainly exaggerated by the Civil Guard and other authorities, the existence of such an organization had some basis in reality.<sup>75</sup> Given the international atmosphere, the increasing mobilization of the working class, and the local atmosphere for those civil guards caught in the middle of mounting social conflict in western Andalucía, the danger represented by the Black Hand conspiracy seemed all too real and had to be dealt with by all means necessary. The working class and peasant movements that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century not only challenged those values that civil guards were trained to defend, but represented a broader, better-organized and thus greater danger to what were previously uncoordinated and precisely-defined outbursts of popular protest. As thus, they implicitly further undermined the authority of civil guards, and hence heightened their existing sense of insecurity and vulnerability. The resort to measures such as the manufacture of evidence and other dubious tactics was not restricted to a supposedly uncontrollable and unaccountable Civil Guard, but employed by other police forces which felt that the general public did not appreciate the scale of the threat presented by anarchism and other subversive movements.<sup>76</sup> The justification or romanticizing of anarchists by some sectors of the public and press, just as with the bandits of a previous generation, would have struck civil guards as an insult to the very

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<sup>74</sup> González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, p. 233. The Italian police was also exercised by the emergence of secret societies and working class movements, and occasionally created suitably threatening conspiracies to provoke the government to take the “appropriate” action: Richard O. Collin, “The Blunt Instruments: Italy and the Police”, in John Roach and Jürgen Thomanek (eds.), *Police and Public Order in Europe* (London, 1985), pp. 188-189.

<sup>75</sup> González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, pp. 232-241.

<sup>76</sup> The Parisian police, for example, believing that they needed to awake the French public and its politicians to the nature of the anarchist movement enabled, if not set up the anarchist bombing of the Chamber of Deputies in 1893: Chapman, *Police State*, pp. 87-88.

real sacrifices and sufferings they and their colleagues had to endure in order to protect society from such dangerous elements.

This perception of anarchists as savages that needed to be dealt with severely, as well as a general suspicion of most working class movements, was not necessarily the product of the military nature and training of the Civil Guard. These perceptions were shaped and justified by general attitudes of the day towards dissent and working class mobilization, as well as by the dominant academic and pseudo-scientific theories of the era. The emergence of the discipline of criminal anthropology did much to mould public opinion, and that of those charged with dealing with social order and crime. By the middle of the nineteenth century scientific theory purporting to explain criminality were already circulating in Spain. One such theorist was the Catalan phrenologist Mariano Cubí, who mixed the lack of culture and moral education of the masses with certain physical characteristics of individuals. These types of theories eventually merged with the new science of psychiatry, and theories about “temporary insanity”, “moral insanity” (*locura moral*), and “degeneration”. This last concept came to enjoy common currency, as did the idea of a struggle between “rational society” and the “degenerate offenders” who were “foreigners to reason and from society”. These theories evolved into the concept of “atavism” popularized by the Italian criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso, whose works were translated and read across Europe, including in Spain.<sup>77</sup> Such ideas fit into liberal concepts of the rational man and the ability to achieve social harmony through the application of reason and science to the art of government. In consequence, those that

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<sup>77</sup> Pedro Trinidad Fernández, *La defensa de la sociedad: Cárcel y delincuencia en España, siglos XVIII-XX* (Madrid, 1991), pp. 248-263.

existed on the margins of society or resisted society's laws were seen as somehow lacking in some faculty or another.

Moving beyond the terrain of common criminality to that of political crimes, Lombroso and his followers characterized anarchist militants as born criminals or insane, or both.

In contrast to reformist minded socialists who sought the orderly transformation of society, anarchists with their tactic of "propaganda of the deed" attempted to achieve their ideal society through violence and acts of robbery. This perception of anarchism as primitive, backwards and degenerate held great currency amongst many scholars and was transmitted to the general public through books, newspapers and popular journals. Such interpretations were picked up on in police journals,<sup>78</sup> and as seen in the above reference to anarchists as "harmful beasts", the Civil Guard as well.

The distinction between the "noble" yet impressionable and impulsive worker, and the "deviant agitator" seen in many Civil Guard commentaries was also prevalent in the emerging discipline of social psychology, which gave a scholarly veneer to fears over the breakdown of traditional methods of social control and the mobilization of the lower classes. The ideas of the "maddened crowd" and "collective crimes" were already being propagated and discussed widely by the turn of the twentieth century. The most influential thinker in this field was the Frenchman Gustave Le Bon. Le Bon, who like Lombroso had many followers in Spain, noted with concern the growing impact of the uncultured, infantile masses in the political life of various states, whose movements he

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<sup>78</sup> See, for example, the quotation from *La policía española* about anarchists in Trinidad Fernández, *La defensa de sociedad*, p. 261.

feared would drag their respective nations backwards and threaten the progress of government by reason, a scenario that the extension of suffrage made increasingly possible.<sup>79</sup> Mixed with concepts of Social Darwinism and prescribing measures to control the “dangerous masses”, the “savages of Europe”, it fit in nicely with the ideology of military discipline and hierarchy imbued in civil guards, as well as their concerns over the mobilization of “social inferiors” by demagogues who sought to subvert the natural social order and undermine the principle of authority.<sup>80</sup> Proposals to reduce the incidence of “collective crimes” and reinforce the fabric of the social order centred around the necessity of a “good moral education” and the rehabilitation of past criminals through work societies and programs, proposals that not only appeared in Civil Guard journals,<sup>81</sup> but also conformed with the fundamental values of the corps.<sup>82</sup>

This general concern amongst the “civilized” classes about the irrational, uneducated savages in their midst often led to a cultural blurring of civilian and military. Much like with the centralization of the state and the establishment of militarized police forces, the extent of this blurring depended upon the perceived fragility of the political and social order. One of the principal frontiers where this blurring occurred was in relation to the police and public order. For scholars such as Ballbé, this blurring was exactly the

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<sup>79</sup> Trinidad Fernández, *ibid.*, pp. 263-282. For more general treatment of the influence of the theories of scholars like Lombroso and Le Bon, see Serge Moscovici, *The Age of the Crowd: A Historical Treatise on Mass Psychology* (CUP, 1985) and Carl F. Graumann and Serge Moscovici (eds.), *Changing Conceptions of Crowd Mind and Behavior* (New York, 1986).

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, Captain Manuel Rodrigo Zaragoza, “Cursillo de ética. Capítulo V: El orden social”, *RTGC*, No. 252 (February 1931), pp. 125-126.

<sup>81</sup> “La criminalidad y su repression. Conferencia pronunciada en la Academia de Jurisprudencia el día de 3 de Mayo de 1916 por D. Augusto del Cacho”, *RTGC*, NO. 83 (November 1916), pp. 57-67.

<sup>82</sup> Captain Manuel Rodrigo Zaragoza, “Cursillo de ética. Capítulo IV: Deber y Obligación, Moral y Derecho, Honor”, *RTGC*, No. 251 (January 1931), pp. 23-24; Captain P.C.M., “Criminalidad”, *RTGC*, Part I: No. 250 (December 1930), p. 526, Part II: No. 251 (January 1931), pp. 24-25.

problem in Spain, and the roots of the “military problem” lay in the lack of a “professional civilian police” which led to a “distortion of the traditional functions of the Army by resorting to military officers for the maintenance of the interior security of the state”, which in turn encouraged politically-minded officers to intervene in the political process.<sup>83</sup> Yet, the employment of the military in public disturbances was fairly common through Europe, often at the behest of the civilian authorities.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, in Spain as elsewhere, military intervention was often in conjunction with, or at the encouragement of civilian groups, as opposed to being done in the name of the military itself. Yet, militarism was not simply about the influence of professional soldiers in policy-making and politics in general, but also an issue of “how far the categories, mentalities, and modes of operation of the military have percolated into society at large”.<sup>85</sup> From the soldier-kings and boy scouts before the First World War to the paramilitary political groups that followed it, we can see just how easily the distinction between purely civilian and purely military can be lost. Considering such cultural currents and policing practices, combined with a seemingly constant stream of social unrest and “indiscipline”, it seems almost logical that civil guards would, like certain civilian sectors, begin to gravitate to more militaristic solutions to society’s problems.

Surrounded by corruption, localism, disrespect for the law, etc., it is little wonder that civil guards began to see themselves as the only force for order, morality and patriotism in Spanish society, much like their colleagues in the regular military. Under normal

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<sup>83</sup> Ballbé, *Orden público y militarismo*, pp. ii-iv.

<sup>84</sup> For France and Germany, see Anja Johansen, “State bureaucrats and local influence on the use of military troops for the maintenance of public order in France and Prussia, 1889-1914”, *Crime, History & Societies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2001), pp. 53-73.

<sup>85</sup> Volker R. Berghahn, *Europe in the Era of Two World Wars: From Militarism and Genocide to Civil Society, 1900-1950* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2006), pp. 73-75.

circumstances, such sentiments of frustration and indignation would produce nothing more than grumbling conversation amongst colleagues or complaints in the corps' own press. Yet, when coupled with periods of rising social unrest and frequent acts of political violence, these sentiments could take on a much more dangerous form. Civil guards often found themselves literally caught in the crossfire over tensions between the central government and local interests and within local communities themselves. As agents of the state, civil guards looked to the state to resolve these issues, restoring order and thus removing the potential and real danger posed to members of the corps. With the vast majority of civil guards stationed in small, relatively isolated outposts, treated as interfering outsiders by a largely hostile population that greatly outnumbered them, it should be of little surprise that civil guards were very sensitive to levels of social and political conflict. As will be discussed in the next chapter, when the state appeared to be unable to control the situation, civil guards began to take matters into their own hands in defence not only of those ideals held to be most dear to the corps, but also of their own personal safety. This could take the form of increased brutality against perceived and real enemies. In a period where the very foundations of the state appeared to be crumbling, it also could translate into disaffection and acts of indiscipline.



## CHAPTER THREE

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the foundations of the Restoration Monarchy began to crack. The Restoration system was constructed in the wake of the political and social chaos that marked the period commonly known as the Revolutionary Sexennium (1868-1874), which also included the short-lived First Republic (1873-1874). The Sexennium itself was a product of the lack of a political consensus amongst social and political elites, mixed with growing popular discontent against the restrictive political and economic system erected under the conservative governments of Isabel II. The coalition of forces that brought down the Bourbon monarchy soon split into factions, and that which originally was designed to be a simple change of dynasty accompanied by a limited opening of the political process converted into numerous revolts at home and in Cuba, the abdication of the replacement monarch, Amadeo I, and the proclamation of the First Republic. The disastrous experience of the Sexennium, particularly under the Republic, was etched in the minds of a generation of politicians, who then restored the Bourbons to the Spanish throne and forged a system of power sharing, the *turno pacífico*, that was intended to prevent a similar breakdown.

This consensus amongst the elites, and the apathy of the bulk of the Spanish population was eroded by the “Disaster of 1898”, which marked the starting point of the gradual breakdown of the Liberal Monarchy. The humiliating military defeat at the hands of the Americans as well as the loss of the final remnants of Spain’s once-great global empire generated an avalanche of criticism of the political status quo, which found resonance

amongst nearly all quarters of Spanish society. “Regenerationism”, as this movement came to be called, denounced the shortcomings of the Liberal Monarchy, blaming it for Spain’s backwardness and descent into third-rate status. On a more fundamental level, the process of industrialization and urbanization made the maintenance of the strict control of the political process signified by the *turno* system ever more problematic. Moreover, faced with these challenges, the two dynastic parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, began to break into factions, further undermining the functioning of the *turno* system. The polemics and dynamics produced by the First World War only served to heighten the impact and intensity of these undercurrents, despite the fact that Spain remained neutral throughout the conflict. Indeed, by 1917 these forces for change had not only permeated civil society but also the military and security forces, which formed a kind of guild organizations known as *juntas* in defense of their professional interests and employed the rhetoric of regenerationalism.<sup>1</sup>

All this had an impact on attitudes within the Civil Guard. The Spanish-American War had driven a wedge between the military and civilian politicians, as each party laying blame for Spain’s humiliating defeat at each other’s doorstep. The belief amongst the military that society – and politicians in particular – did not fully appreciate their sacrifices in defending the national interests of Spain filtered into the Civil Guard, for not only did many of the latter’s officers come from the army and was imbued with the same

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<sup>1</sup> For the incipient unionism amongst the Interior Ministry police, see Eduardo González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza: Orden público, subversión y violencia política en la España de la Restauración, 1875-1917* (Madrid, 1998), pp. 521-522. For attitudes amongst the military, see Carolyn P. Boyd, *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain* (Chapel Hill, 1979); Stanley G. Payne, *Politics and the Military in Spain* (Stanford, 1967), Chapter 8. For a general overview of the period see Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, *Spain 1914-1918* (London, 1999).

patriotic values, but the *Benemérita* itself had units in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, units that were repatriated and integrated into the peninsular force. Indeed, in the wake of the *Cu-Cut* incident in 1905, when a group of military officers ransacked a Catalan newspaper that criticized the military, rumours spread that disgruntled officers may assault parliament. The upper hierarchy of the Civil Guard made it be known that they would not be willing to fire on their comrades in arms.<sup>2</sup>

As social and political conflict mounted during the First World War, disaffection with the Restoration system grew. Echoing regenerationist critiques of the political system, a series of articles published in the corps' own journal noted the decadence of the Restoration Monarchy, criticizing the defects of *caciquismo* and the "partisanship" of the political class in the face of national crisis. "The political situation in Spain," it complained, "is relatively close to chaos."<sup>3</sup> While the Civil Guard was among the most disciplined of the various military and security forces, it was not immune to the political currents running through all sectors of Spanish society. Thus, as various military units attempted to imitate the relative successes of the working class unions and formed *juntas*, elements of the Barcelona Civil Guard garrisons established contacts with the leading *juntero* of the city, Colonel Benito Márquez.<sup>4</sup> The fact that this nascent form of indiscipline emerged in Barcelona, the most conflictive city in Spain, was no coincidence, nor was the fact that the city was the scene of the greatest incidents of Civil Guard

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<sup>2</sup> Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1975* (Oxford, 1982), p. 561n3; Payne, *Politics and the Military*, p. 95; Romero Salvadó, *Spain 1914-1918*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>3</sup> "Ética social", *RTGC*, No. 152 (October 1922), pp.344-345; "Ética social (II)", *RTGC*, No.153 (November 1922); "Ética social (III)", *RTGC*, No. 154 (December 1922), pp.450-451; "El problema del acuartelamiento: El caciquismo rural", *RTGC*, No. 154 (December 1922), pp.448-449.

<sup>4</sup> Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, Vol. IV (Madrid, 1984), p. 116.

brutality. The link between high levels of social and political violence, a weak and ineffective government, and discontent within the Civil Guard were revealed by statements in the corps' own press. After a particularly tumultuous year, the Civil Guard expressed its exasperation with the government. In language laced with the threat of a *pronunciamiento*, it was announced in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* "This has to stop", followed by a long, detailed list of "aggressions" against the Civil Guard in 1919. "The government and the country should pay attention to this", it explained, for "one cannot nor should not consent to this environment of murder and cowardice by the masses against the *Benemérita* institution of the Civil Guard."<sup>5</sup>

The issue of a regime's legitimacy was intimately linked to the authority, and hence personal well-being, of civil guards. Since civil guards were charged with protecting the ruling regime, as well as being the primary force for maintaining public order, its personnel were primary targets for opposition to the *status quo*, organized or spontaneous. As the legitimacy of a regime crumbles, the physical threat to those who attempt to maintain it increases in tandem. While the monarchy most closely matched the value system of many within the Civil Guard, its legitimacy (or at least that of its form under the Restoration system) rested ultimately on its conformity with the needs and will of the nation. For civil guards, the litmus test for this conformity was its ability to maintain order, to preserve "social harmony". When the first organised challenge to the Restoration system emerged in 1917, it largely focussed on reforming the current system by opening up the political process to new groups so that the government would more accurately reflect the will of the nation and allow for a reduction in tensions, and

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<sup>5</sup> "Las agresiones a la Guardia Civil en el año 1919", *RTGC*, No. 119 (January 1920). Italics mine.

presumably violence. This consensual solution, as opposed to a revolutionary one, had some resonance in the Civil Guard.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, it was the fear of a revolutionary outcome that most exercised the minds of many civil guards. Not only was such a state of affairs repugnant to a group of men imbued with a strong sense of the moral value of discipline, it also carried with it the threat of physical violence against those whose duty it was to maintain order. Revolution was ideologically an anathema for most civil guards for it meant the weakening of those societal controls that separate civilized man from barbarians, controls that they viewed vital for their authority and hence safety. Thus, any radical deviation from the established order would be viewed as suspect.

It was in this context that republicanism was viewed by the Civil Guard. The tumultuous, disastrous experience of the First Republic was etched into the historical memory of the Civil Guard.<sup>7</sup> The failure of the First Republic was not seen in the context of a regime that emerged in a period of already high tension and conflict, but rather in terms of republicanism's unsuitability for the character of Spanish civilization. As one article in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* explained, despite the good intentions of those "respectable elements" which supported the First Republic during the last

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<sup>6</sup> "Ladera" (anonymous Civil Guard officer), *Fechas de sangre: dos semanas de anarquía en España. Historia, comentarios y sucesos culminantes de la rebelión de 1909 y de la huelga general revolucionaria de 1917* (Madrid, 1917), pp. 326-328.

<sup>7</sup> This view was shared by their military colleagues. For the negative connotations of republicanism amongst the military, see Fernando Fernández Bastarreche, "The Spanish Military from the Age of Disasters to the Civil War", in Rafael Bañón & Thomas M. Barker (eds.), *Armed Forces and Society in Spain: Past and Present* (New York, 1988), pp. 239-240; Carlos Seco Serrano, *Militarismo y civilismo en la España contemporánea* (Madrid, 1984), p. 397. The equation of republicanism with anarchy evidently enjoyed popular currency throughout Spanish society until the mid-1920s: Stanley G. Payne, *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Spanish Republic, 1931-1936* (Madison, WI, 1993), p. 23.

monarchical crisis, a political ideology based on “systems” as opposed to the “true social order” was bound to descend into revolution.<sup>8</sup> Spain’s natural, hierarchical social order, they felt, was consecrated by both religion and natural law. Any government or regime must act in accordance with these if society is to progress; those that ignore them court disaster.<sup>9</sup> For the Civil Guard, as for much of the Spanish Right, republicanism became synonymous with disorder and anarchy. Thus, while the governments of the Restoration Monarchy struggled to contain the increasing unrest of the period, the Civil Guard press reminded its readers of the “horrors” of the First Republic and celebrated the corps’ historical role in suppressing Republican coup d’états.<sup>10</sup> The fact that these articles were published in reaction to a largely anarcho-syndicalist uprising is particularly telling for they show the tendency to conflate republicanism with all forms of revolutionary activity.

Republicanism’s association with weak government and anarchy seemed all the more dangerous to civil guards in the atmosphere generated after the collapse of the monarchy in Russia and the triumph of the Bolsheviks. The Russian Communists had managed to take advantage of the collapse of a tottering monarchy and wrench power from the Republican Provisional Government that attempted to replace it. In the revolutionary euphoria that swept across Europe, police and governments everywhere – including traditionally tolerant countries such as Switzerland – were on the look out for Bolshevik subterfuge as the Communists set up the Third International and called for the world

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<sup>8</sup> “Del tiempo viejo: La república en España”, *RTGC*, No. 114 (1919), p. 291.

<sup>9</sup> “¿Qué es “moral”?”, *RTGC*, no. 76 (April 1916), p. 19; Captain Manuel Rodrigo Zaragoza, “Cursillo de ética. Capítulo II: El Estado”, *RTGC*, No. 249 (November 1930), pp. 475-476; “Capítulo III: La Autoridad”, *RTGC*, No. 250 (December 1930), pp. 515-516; “Capítulo V: El orden social”, *RTGC*, No. 252 (February 1931), pp. 125-126.

<sup>10</sup> “Los sucesos de Zaragoza” & “Las sublevaciones en el Ejército”, *RTGC*, No. 121 (1920), pp. 1-2 & 8-12 respectively; “Los sucesos de Zaragoza: Una página histórica de la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, No. 120 (1920), pp. 24-27.

revolution.<sup>11</sup> Parallels between Russia and Spain were not the fantasies of just conservative and reactionary elements. Republicans such as Marcelino Domingo called Spain the “Russia of the West”, and anarchists and sectors of the Socialists also felt that the time was ripe to follow the Bolshevik example and so joined the Third International.<sup>12</sup> Fears amongst the Civil Guard during previous periods of social unrest, subversive movements and working-class mobilisation – such as during the Black Hand conspiracy of the 1880s – reappeared with the near-paranoia over Bolshevik agents, fuelled by an increase in violence and revolutionary rhetoric. The Deputy Inspector of the Barcelona Civil Guard, amid rumours that Lenin himself had arrived in Barcelona, reported to the Director General of the corps, Lt. Gen. Juan Zubía y Bethencourt, of the “grave” situation in that city as anarcho-syndicalist militants at the orders of foreign revolutionaries had mobilized 80,000 workers and were planning a revolutionary grab for power. The colonel requested the declaration of martial law to pre-empt the alleged plot.<sup>13</sup>

It was this perception of the inadequacy of normal means of control and the eroding legitimacy of a regime that seemed to be in terminal decline as governments rose and fell in rapid succession that drove civil guards, alongside other groups, towards more radical positions. As mentioned before, while social unrest and violence plagued all of Spain

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<sup>11</sup> For the attempts of various European governments and their police forces to monitor and control the activities of Communists and their suspected sympathizers in the years immediately following the Bolshevik seizure of power, see Hsi-huey Liang, *The rise of the modern police and the European state system from Metternich to the Second World War* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 213-236.

<sup>12</sup> For the impact of the Communist revolution in Russia and the attempted revolutions elsewhere on the political climate in Spain, see Gerald Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914-1923* (Stanford, 1974); Eduardo González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio. Orden público, subversión y violencia política en la crisis de la Restauración, 1917-1931* (Madrid, 1999), Chapter 1; Romero Salvadó, *Spain 1914-1918*, pp. 150-153, 179-185.

<sup>13</sup> Colonel Deputy Inspector of the 21st Regiment to the Director General of the Civil Guard (5 January 1919), AHN, Ministerio de la Gobernación, Serie A, Legajo 17<sup>a</sup>, Exp. 1, 543 and 1229.

throughout this period, the situation was particularly acute in Barcelona. As a result, civil guards stationed there lost faith in the ability of civilian statesmen to resolve Spain's problems, and assumed an attitude of insubordination and began to take matters into their own hands. A month before General Primo de Rivera's military *pronunciamiento* in September 1923 suspended the constitutional legality and put an end to the Restoration system, the Civil Governor of Barcelona protested that the commander of the provincial contingent of the Civil Guard repeatedly ignored him, and only reluctantly obeyed his orders.<sup>14</sup> When Primo finally did "pronounce" against the government, the Civil Guard of both Barcelona and nearby Zaragoza refused to intervene against the rebels, while the remainder of the corps maintained a position of extremely dubious loyalty to the regime.<sup>15</sup>

That the Civil Guard did not come to the aid of a weak government is not surprising in a Europe where communist insurrections were still a reality. The Restoration Monarchy had failed to meet its principal responsibility as a State, which is to maintain order, and thus lost its legitimacy. Captain Manuel Rodrigo Zaragoza, who was an instructor at both the School for Young Guards and the Special Academy for officers, outlined this theory of legitimacy in his "short ethics courses", published several years later in the *Revista*

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<sup>14</sup> Civil Governor (Barcelona) to the Interior Minister (No. 902, 19 August 1923), AHN, Ministerio de la Gobernación, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 6, Barcelona.

<sup>15</sup> Colonel Guardia Civil 3º y 21º Tercios to the Interior Minister (No. 444, 13 September 1923), AHN, Ministerio de la Gobernación, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 6, Barcelona; María Teresa González Calbet, *La dictadura de Primo de Rivera* (Madrid, 1987), pp. 70-71; González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio*, pp. 266-267. According to General López de Ochoa, the commanders of the Barcelona garrison of the Civil Guard had pledged their adhesion to "the movement" prior to the actual *pronunciamiento*: Eduardo López de Ochoa, *De la dictadura a la república*, (Madrid, 1930), p. 27. The official history of the Civil Guard, *La Guardia Civil Española*, published by the National Directorate of the Civil Guard in 1994, makes no mention of the events surrounding Primo de Rivera's *pronunciamiento*. Somewhat more surprisingly, the October 1923 issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* also fails to mention the events of the previous month; in fact, when reading this issue one would hardly have known that Primo's coup happened at all.



*Técnica de la Guardia Civil*. He explained that order is maintained by authority (the State). Without order, a society falls into anarchy and the natural social order is destroyed, making the progress of mankind impossible. Thus, when a society enters a period of social crisis, it is faced with two options: dictatorship or revolution. While dictatorships (like that of Primo de Rivera) are meant to be a temporary “heroic” measure to re-establish the social order, “if in the critical moment there is not a force of order able to take power ... inevitably revolution will come.” In such a disastrous situation, “society throws itself down the road of violence, destroying all that is right and moral”, “it being submerged forever in insanity and degeneration, destroying the civilization that humanity had been working towards for centuries.”<sup>16</sup> The implicit reference to the events in Russia could not have been clearer.

The failure of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship to construct a new political order that would permanently resolve Spain’s political, economic and social problems meant that civil guards would come to face in 1930-1931 a situation similar to that of 1917-1923. King Alfonso XIII had found that his support for the dictator and (implicitly) Primo de Rivera’s policies had alienated military officers and politicians alike.<sup>17</sup> Thus, as the monarchy entered yet another crisis, Alfonso XIII found himself in an even weaker position than in 1917. The interim government of General Berenguer set up in the wake

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<sup>16</sup> Rodrigo Zaragoza, “Capítulo II: El Estado”, pp. 475-476; “Capítulo III: La Autoridad”, pp. 515-516; “Capítulo V: El orden social”, pp. 125-126. See also the anonymous articles “Delitos contra la Autoridad” in *RTGC*, Nos. 247 & 248 (September & October 1930), pp.394-395 & 453-454. Such attitudes are still hold weight today. The semi-official history by Aguado Sánchez (who was the former director of the Center for Historical Studies within the National Directorate) takes a very apologetic view of the 1923 coup, while failing to mention its illegality (or the positions taken within the Civil Guard): *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, pp.192-193. Julio de Antón, a Police Commissioner of the National Police, takes a similar view in his *Historia de la Policía Española* (Madrid, 2000), p. 233.

<sup>17</sup> Payne, *Politics and the Military*, pp. 256-263; Gabriel Cardona, *El poder militar en la España contemporánea hasta la guerra civil* (Madrid, 1983), pp. 103-112.

of Primo de Rivera's resignation lacked sufficient support to carry out its function.

Ultimately, the solution of this crisis depended on the ability of pro-monarchist elements to patch together a coalition willing to restore the pre-1923 constitutional order in some form or another, or for the republican opposition to mount a successful challenge to overthrow the tottering monarchy. While the number of active monarchists disposed to save the regime appeared to shrink by the day, the republican opposition seemed to grow ever broader, including ex-monarchists, the Socialists and republicans themselves. As unrest mounted and the political situation appeared uncertain, civil guards looked to which group, the monarchist or the republicans, would prove the stronger in this contest for power and, most importantly, prevent a complete breakdown of authority and thus avert a lapse into revolution.

While the monarchy was weakened, it was not yet defeated, and the pro-republican opposition realized that in order to take power themselves they would have to undermine the regime's instruments of self-defence. Amongst the most important of these was the Civil Guard. Well-founded concerns remained over the possible resistance of the Civil Guard to the establishment of a republican regime. Civilian conspirators feared for the success of a rebellion only supported by a small group of army officers and their largely conscripted troops, given the discipline and often better training of the *Benemérita*.

Julián Bestiero, President of the Socialist Party (PSOE), told Antonio Bartolomé y Mas of the National Revolutionary Junta in September 1930 that his party would not act against the regime "without the previous guarantee from enough of the military forces that they

would keep the Civil Guard in their quarters.”<sup>18</sup> As the leader of the Revolutionary Committee, Niceto Alcalá Zamora, noted, “with the view of those who are sure of victory and wish to govern in the near future, it was preferred to make it known to this institution that it should not go against the national will and that it would retain its position of guaranteeing the new legal order.”<sup>19</sup>

In order to gain the support, or at least the neutrality of the Civil Guard, the republicans would need to present themselves as a credible alternative government, that is, one that would provide a solution to the chronic unrest and instability of the monarchy. Indeed, in an effort to project an image of a “conservative” Republic of “order”, Alcalá Zamora and Miguel Maura – both ex-monarchists and Catholics – were given leading roles in the Revolutionary Committee.<sup>20</sup> Alcalá Zamora presented an image of a “Republic of order” in a speech given in Valencia (13 April 1930), stating that the republicans wished to establish a “Republic that was viable, able to govern and conservative in nature.” He went on to exclaim that “I will not assume the role of a Kerensky, and implant a convulsive and epileptic Republic.”<sup>21</sup> At the same time republicans portrayed the regime as having lost its legitimacy and thus rebelling against it was completely justified, perhaps even a duty. The National Revolutionary Junta drew up a manifesto in September 1930 and distributed it around Civil Guard barracks in anticipation of the

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio*, p. 530.

<sup>19</sup> Niceto Alcalá Zamora, *Mis memorias* (Barcelona, 1998), p.165.

<sup>20</sup> Ben-Ami, *Origins of the Second Republic*, pp. 86-87; Carr, *Spain 1808-1975*, p. 595; González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio*, p. 530.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Joaquín Arrarás, *Historia de la Segunda República*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1970), p. 40.

planned uprising against the monarchy. In this manifesto, the illegality of the present government was stressed as well as calls for unity with the cause of “the people”.<sup>22</sup>

For the monarchy, given the political unreliability of the military and the poor state of the Interior Ministry police, the continued discipline amongst the Civil Guard was paramount.<sup>23</sup> As a consequence of this dependence on the Civil Guard, the monarchy could not be a passive bystander to the republicans’ efforts to undermine the loyalty of the corps. The intelligence services were conscious of the propaganda efforts of the republicans amongst the armed forces.<sup>24</sup> The government was also aware of the growing cooperation amongst the anti-monarchist opposition and their plans to bring down the regime, and in September 1930 the Interior Minister instructed the Director General of Security, General Emilio Mola, to draw up plans for concentrating the forces of the Civil Guard in the various provincial capital and other strategic points in the event of an attempted uprising.<sup>25</sup> A detailed blueprint, drawn up with the advice of the Civil Governors of each province, was in place by November.<sup>26</sup>

While the Berenguer government was able to suppress the disjointed republican rebellions of December 1930 fairly easily, it was not complacent about the potential threats to the monarchy and began its own propaganda offensive amongst the Civil

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<sup>22</sup> González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio*, p. 530.

<sup>23</sup> One of the first priorities of the Berenguer government was to rectify the deficiencies of the Interior Ministry police, and Berenguer requested the newly-appointed Director General of Security, General Emilio Mola, to draw up a comprehensive reform within the space of three months: Emilio Mola Vidal, *Obras Completas* (Valladolid, 1940), pp. 233-234.

<sup>24</sup> Mola, *Obras Completas*, pp. 349 & 631; Shlomo Ben Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain* (Oxford, 1978), p. 88

<sup>25</sup> Dámaso Berenguer, *De la Dictadura a la República* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 209-210.

<sup>26</sup> Mola, *Obras Completas*, p. 481; González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio*, pp. 547-8 & 547n145.

Guard. The King's "special predilection" and "his interest and attraction" for the Civil Guard was plastered across the front page of the January issue of the force's journal.<sup>27</sup> Two initiatives were announced days later. Firstly, the government declared a series of improvements in the pay of the Civil Guard.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, on the Saint's Day of Alfonso XIII, it was announced that the King would award General José Sanjurjo, the commander of the Civil Guard, the Gran Cruz de Carlos III – one of the Spanish military's highest honours. If the symbolism of this act was not already obvious, it was decided that the King would personally present the medal to Sanjurjo in the main royal residence in Madrid on the anniversary of the Civil Guard's creation. All press accounts noted the extraordinary character of this move.<sup>29</sup> In addition to this, the Cross of San Fernando was awarded posthumously to the Civil Guard sergeant who was killed in the suppression of the December revolt. As noted in the article announcing this, Sergeant Gallego would be the first Civil Guard to receive this medal, as it is normally only awarded to those soldiers displaying extraordinary conduct in the defense of the regime in battleground-type situations.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to the King's admiration of the corps, the military press played on the traditional suspicion of many within the Civil Guard about the revolutionary intentions of

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<sup>27</sup> "Días de S.M. el Rey Don Alfonso XIII", *RTGC*, no. 251 (January 1931), pp. 1-3. Also, the fact that the regime felt the need to censor the corps' journal in January is particularly telling.

<sup>28</sup> "Guardia Civil: Importante mejora", *LCM* (22 January 1931); "Ante el secreto del año", *RTGC*, no. 251 (January 1931), p.3; "Guardia Civil: Aumento de los premios de constancia", *LCM* (5 February 1931). These financial inducements were made in conjunction with a general salary increase for the armed forces, declared that same month: Payne, *Politics and Military*, p. 260.

<sup>29</sup> "El aniversario de la creación de la Guardia Civil", *Ejército y Armada* (30 March 1931); "87 aniversario de la fundación de la Guardia Civil", *LCM* (29 March 1931); "Su Majestad el Rey impone en palacio al general Sanjurjo la gran cruz de Carlos III", *ABC* (29 March 1931).

<sup>30</sup> "Guardia Civil: Se propone al sargento muerto en Jaca para la cruz de San Fernando", *LCM* (14 February 1931).

the Left. The “three principal decrees of the ‘conservative’ Republic” that the failed revolt had attempted to establish were published in *La Correspondencia Militar*. The third of these decrees was the abolition of the Civil Guard and the establishment of a radical, left-wing “People’s National Guard”<sup>31</sup> The government was aided in its efforts to win the hearts and minds of the Civil Guard by monarchist supporters. Prominent monarchists such as the Conde de Guadalhorce, as well as those intimately tied to the fallen dictatorship, like former Finance Minister José Calvo Sotelo and the general’s own son, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, began a publicity campaign to halt the “growing republicanism” within the armed forces.<sup>32</sup> In a January 1931 article, José Antonio described what he called “the miracle of the Civil Guard”: in a society which seems inherently lacking a sense of communal or civic duty, the *Benemérita* stands out for its discipline and sacrifice for the greater good.<sup>33</sup>

After the failed republican *pronunciamiento* of December 1930 the government demonstrated once again the importance it placed on the services of the Civil Guard, and its concern over the discipline of the *Benemérita*. In the middle of January 1931 a second Mobile Unit was created within the Civil Guard as a rapid-reaction force to deal with any further attempted uprisings. As was pointed out in an article in *La Correspondencia Militar* discussing the establishment of the 29<sup>th</sup> Regiment, “This measure ... should produce a deep sense of satisfaction amongst all of us, because it reveals once more the confidence the government ... has placed in the forces of the [Civil Guard], which it

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<sup>31</sup> “Documentos interesantes de la fracasada revolución”, *LCM* (18 January 1931).

<sup>32</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, pp. 219-220.

<sup>33</sup> José Antonio Primo de Rivera, “El milagro de la Guardia Civil”, originally printed in *La Provincia* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) on 7 January 1931, reproduced in the *Revista Profesional de la Guardia Civil* – the post-Civil War successor to the *RTGC* – no. 8 (August 1943), pp. 7-8.

considers the firmest supporter (*sostén*) of order and tranquillity.” Yet, not just anyone could enlist in this crack unit. Alongside meeting the physical requirements, the authorities needed to be certain that “convinced that [candidates] are not contaminated by any advanced political idea.”<sup>34</sup>

The Republicans were not discouraged after their failed attempt in December 1930 to topple the regime through force, and more overtures were made to the Civil Guard from the pages of the republican newsletter *La Gaceta de la Revolución*, associated with the Radical Republican Party of Alejandro Lerroux. Seeking the “benevolent neutrality” of the Civil Guard in the event of another republican uprising, they attempted to assure the corps that its future would be secure under a Republican government and that it would attend to the Civil Guard’s economic grievances. Yet, this time, with the carrot came the stick: if, when the time comes, the Civil Guard opposed the will of “the people”, “the people will hate it, and the Republic, in their name, will issue a thunderous decree of dissolution.” In another article, the republicans asked their followers to take note of the name or ID number of any agent of the police who attacked them, who would then find himself relieved of his employment once the Republic was installed.<sup>35</sup>

The republicans did achieve a more concrete gain when contact was established with General Sanjurjo by Lerroux. Lieutenant General José Sanjurjo Sacanell was one of the most prestigious Army officers of his time, his actions in the Moroccan Wars earning him

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<sup>34</sup> “Guardia Civil: El 29 Tercio”, *LCM* (23 enero 1931); “Guardia Civil: El ingreso en los Tercios moviles”, *LCM* (29 January 1931).

<sup>35</sup> “Los partidos republicanos a la Guardia Civil”, *La Gaceta de la Revolución*, No. 5 (28 January 1931); “A los soldados”, *La Gaceta de la Revolución*, No. 7 (12 February 1931).

seven promotions, numerous medals (he was the only officer to have been awarded the Cross of San Fernando twice, the Spanish military's highest honour), and a noble title, the Marqués del Rif. His family was traditionally associated with the cause of the Carlist pretenders, though General Sanjurjo himself never fully identified with their cause.<sup>36</sup> Sanjurjo was like many officers of his generation: while holding no clearly defined political ideas beyond a vague nationalism, Sanjurjo believed in the Army's right to intervene in politics whenever enough of its officers felt that a government was running counter to the "national will".<sup>37</sup> Indeed, as the General commented to his friend Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, "the State is like a limited company; if the management is good then that's fine; if management is bad, then change it".<sup>38</sup> Given Sanjurjo's stature amongst his fellow officers and his command of the Civil Guard, his sympathies were a constant preoccupation for monarchists and republicans alike.

The course of Sanjurjo's interventions in politics was characterized by pragmatism and reversal of positions. Sanjurjo's first political activity came with his brief flirtation with the *Juntas de Defensa Militar*, only then to become an *antijuntero*.<sup>39</sup> As Military Governor of Zaragoza, Sanjurjo pledged his support for Primo de Rivera's *pronunciamiento* in September 1923, playing an active role in the destruction of the

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<sup>36</sup> Though the surname Sanjurjo is Galician in origin, the Sanjurjo family planted its roots in Navarra, one of the historic strongholds of Carlism. His grandfather and paternal great-uncle both fought under the first pretender, Carlos V, during in the First Carlist War, with the latter, José Antonio Sanjurjo, became the personal secretary to the pretender. Sanjurjo's father and maternal uncle followed the banner of Carlos VII in the Second Carlist War, the latter relative eventually becoming the aide-de-camp of the pretender. Enrique Sacanell Ruiz de Apodaca, *El general Sanjurjo: Héroe y víctima* (Madrid, 2004), pp. 25-29.

<sup>37</sup> For interventionist attitudes among the Spanish military, see Payne, *Politics and the Military*; Cardona, *El poder militar*; Raymond Carr, "Spain: Rule by Generals", in Michael Howard (ed.), *Soldiers and Governments* (London, 1959), pp.135-148.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford, 2002), p.247.

<sup>39</sup> Boyd, *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain*, p.143n4



constitutional monarchy.<sup>40</sup> As the popularity of the dictator began to wane and plots against his rule began to surface, Primo de Rivera placed his trusted friend Sanjurjo in the crucial post of Director-General of the Civil Guard in December 1928.<sup>41</sup> Yet, when Sanjurjo realized the extent of the alienation from Primo de Rivera amongst many within the Army, as well as a tumultuous drop in public support for the dictator, Sanjurjo counselled his comrade to resign.<sup>42</sup> Sanjurjo's importance was recognized by the anti-*primorriverista* General Berenguer, who left Sanjurjo in the post of Director-General while he attempted to construct the delicate bridge back to constitutional legality.<sup>43</sup> Yet, given Sanjurjo's personal ties to Primo de Rivera, whose efforts were now denigrated by a king and government anxious to disassociate themselves from the dictator, and Sanjurjo's pragmatic, if not opportunistic approach to politics, his unconditional support of the monarchy was not assured.

Some have claimed that Sanjurjo's actions during the first few months of 1931 were influenced by a feeling of resentment towards the king for the latter's "abandonment" of Primo de Rivera, leading some to insinuate that the General's own "abandonment" of Alfonso XIII after the April elections was some sort of payback.<sup>44</sup> Whatever Sanjurjo's personal relations with the Royal household, there does not appear to be any evidence

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<sup>40</sup> Cardona, *El poder militar*, p. 79. According to General Eduardo López de Ochoa, the "various indiscretions" of Sanjurjo obliged Primo to move the date for his pronunciamiento forward: *De la dicatura a la República*, p. 27.

<sup>41</sup> Sacanell Ruiz de Apodaca, *El general Sanjurjo*, pp. 73-75.

<sup>42</sup> Cardona, *El poder militar*, p. 101.

<sup>43</sup> Emilio Esteban-Infantes, *General Sanjurjo. Un laureado en el penal del Dueso* (Barcelona, 1957), p. 114.

<sup>44</sup> Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco* (Barcelona, 1976), pp. 555-556; Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mi vida junto a Franco* (Barcelona, 1977), p. 89; Marqués de Hoyos, *Mi testimonio* (Madrid, 1962), p.171; Esteban-Infantes, a close friend of Sanjurjo and his aide-de-camp, noted that the General was upset with the treatment that Primo de Rivera received after his resignation and had a difficult relation with the King, but stresses that Sanjurjo's actions were not influenced by personal considerations: *General Sanjurjo*, pp. 113 & 125-126.

that Sanjurjo entertained any serious thoughts about the possibility of regime change until the fall of the Berenguer government in February 1931. Indeed, not only did he congratulate his men for defending the regime during the rebellion of December 1930,<sup>45</sup> but also he was instrumental in the economic concessions granted by the government to the corps in January 1931.<sup>46</sup> Given the frequent complaints made by the Civil Guard in their own journal over pay, Sanjurjo's efforts cannot be seen as anything else than an attempt to bolster the morale of his men and endear them to the faltering regime.

Yet, the collapse of the Berenguer government and the difficulty in putting together a coalition to replace it were the most instrumental factors in conditioning Sanjurjo's attitudes towards the political crisis facing the monarchy. The weakness of the King's position, and the growing popularity of the republicans, convinced Sanjurjo of the advisability of agreeing to the invitations of Lerroux's representatives to meet with the Radical leader.<sup>47</sup> Lerroux, always keen to exploit discontentment within the military, asked Pedro Rico of Republican Action in mid-January 1931 to arrange a meeting with the highest-ranking general possible. Through a mutual friend, Rico was put in contact with Colonel Ubaldo Aspiazú, a close confidant of Sanjurjo and later the intermediary between Sanjurjo and the republicans during the critical days of 13-14 April 1931. Aspiazú set up a meeting between Lerroux and the General in February. Though Sanjurjo made it clear that he would not join any conspiracy, he (and by extension the Civil Guard) would not oppose a change of regime "if the entire people should want a

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<sup>45</sup> Sanjurjo's message to the Civil Guard (General Order of 17 December 1930) is reprinted in Esteban-Infantes, *General Sanjurjo*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>46</sup> "Guardia Civil: Importante mejora", *LCM* (22 January 1931); "Ante el secreto del año", *RTGC*, no. 251 (January 1931), p.3; "Guardia Civil: Aumento de los premios de constancia", *LCM* (5 February 1931).

<sup>47</sup> Esteban-Infantes, *General Sanjurjo*, pp.113 & 126-127.

Republic”.<sup>48</sup> Strangely, Lerroux, stated in his memoirs that Sanjurjo refused his advances (though he claimed it was well known that the general was sympathetic to the republican cause), which, incidentally, is the same story Sanjurjo told General Mola, whose intelligence network found out about the meeting.<sup>49</sup> Stranger still is the fact that outside Lerroux’s inner circle within the Radical Party (and the monarchy’s surveillance services), no other republican leader appeared to be aware of this significant development. According to Rico, Lerroux wanted to keep this important contact all to himself so as to prevent him from being sidelined, which would not be surprising given the distaste many of the other republican leaders felt towards him.<sup>50</sup>

Sanjurjo’s position was similar to that of his men. In spite of their role in suppressing the December 1930 revolt and the propaganda efforts of the government, the Civil Guard began its own propaganda campaign in January 1931 in order to demonstrate the corps’ political neutrality. Even before Sanjurjo met with Lerroux, the Civil Guard announced its “profound apoliticism” in the decidedly pro-monarchist *La Correspondencia Militar*. The Civil Guard claimed that it too was a “victim” of the political system, which forced the corps to perform political tasks that were outside their duties – like persecute republicans – which only tarnished the force’s good reputation. As such, the “fully justified ... instinctive antagonism” felt by the republicans towards the Civil Guard meant

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<sup>48</sup> Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic, 1931-1936* (Brighton, 2000), pp. 134-135; Questionnaire by José María Carretera for Sanjurjo, *Archivo Sanjurjo*, quoted in Sacanell Ruiz de Apodaca, *El general Sanjurjo*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>49</sup> Alejandro Lerroux, *La pequeña historia de España, 1930-1936* (Barcelona, 1985), p. 65; Mola, *Obras Completas*, p. 631.

<sup>50</sup> Townson, *Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, p. 135.

that, as proof of its integrity and to avoid any accusation of partiality, the corps must remain completely aloof from the electoral process.<sup>51</sup>

This did not signify necessarily absolute neutrality, or a willingness to join any republican conspiracy against the monarchy. The republicans allegedly made some inroads with the Civil Guard. General Mola received an anonymous letter in May 1930 warning of anti-monarchist sentiment in large parts of the armed forces, including the Civil Guard.<sup>52</sup> Civil Guard historian Aguado Sánchez echoes this, claiming that by summer 1930 the Republican Military Association had many sympathizers amongst Civil Guard officers.<sup>53</sup> Yet, given the ingrained suspicion towards republicanism amongst many civil guards, Alcalá Zamora noted that despite their propaganda efforts, the republicans had very few adherents amongst the *Benemérita*.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, despite the regime's concerns over attitudes within the Civil Guard towards the political struggle, it appears that, on the whole, there was little to worry about. An article published in the Civil Guard section of *La Correspondencia Militar* in March 1931 demonstrate the veracity of Alcalá Zamora's negative assessment. This article discussed the republican propaganda pamphlets that were distributed in the various barracks of the Civil Guard in an attempt to gain their support for the failed December 1930 rebellion, and dismissed the republicans' promises of better working conditions and pay, as well as job security under a republic as "siren songs". The Civil Guard would not be fooled by these "tricks" and "lies", as the "captured documents" from the December rebellion clearly demonstrated

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<sup>51</sup> "Guardia Civil: Sinceridad electoral", *LCM* (24 January 1931).

<sup>52</sup> Mola, *Obras Completas*, p. 349.

<sup>53</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, p. 219.

<sup>54</sup> Alcalá Zamora, *Memorias*, p. 165.

that the republicans planned to dissolve the corps and initiate a social revolution. Aware of the “true” intentions of the republicans, and true to their duty as civil guards, “there does not exist, nor ever will, the most remote fear that these forces will be contaminated by the burst of insanity which characterized the defeated movement [of December]”.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, another article instructed the government to not “rest on its laurels” and take advantage of the “period of tranquillity” following the failed rebellion to equip the Civil Guard properly so that the latter would be better placed to defend the regime against the next attempted insurrection.<sup>56</sup>

Nonetheless, if a period of tranquillity followed the abortive insurrections of December 1930, it did not last. By the end of March 1931 pro-republican elements had begun to step-up their campaign once again. The trial of the Republican leaders over the December uprisings began on 20 March, and ended not with the condemnation and marginalisation of the republicans, but their acquittal and vindication. Indeed, events had gained a momentum that seemed impossible for the Aznar government to contain, despite its conciliatory gestures. On the 24-25 March student protests at the Complutense University in Madrid descended into a virtual battle with the Civil Guard and police. These protests spread to other universities across Spain and further undermined public confidence in the regime.<sup>57</sup> Given the apparently continual deterioration of the monarchist position, the increasing unrest, and with the municipal elections less than two weeks away, the government began to bolster its security apparatus in anticipation of trouble. From 29 March a series of changes in the commands of the Civil Guard and

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<sup>55</sup> “Guardia Civil: Cantos de sirena”, *LCM* (18 March 1931).

<sup>56</sup> “Guardia Civil: Período de tranquilidad”, *LCM* (24 March 1931).

<sup>57</sup> Ben-Ami, *Origins of the Second Republic*, pp. 216-217.

Interior Military police were announced. These included new Chiefs of Police in Madrid and Barcelona (the former going to a colonel of the Civil Guard, José Aranguren Roldán, who would later play a key role in July 1936 as the commander of the Civil Guard in Catalonia); a new Deputy Director-General of the Civil Guard was (General Benito Pardo González, who was previously Regimental Inspector of the Civil Guard in Barcelona), as were two new Inspectors within the National Directorate (General Agustín Marzo Balaguer, who was previously Chief of Police in Madrid, and General Manuel Gómez García, who was elevated to the rank of Brigadier General so he could occupy this post); Colonel José Osuna Pineda was assigned sub-inspector of the Mobile Unit based in Madrid (the 27° Tercio); and new provincial commanders of the Civil Guard were named for La Coruña, Teruel, Navarra, Huelva, Castellón, Valencia and the Balearic Islands. Also, the Director General of the Carabineros (the militarized frontier and customs police) was recalled from leave.<sup>58</sup>

In the face of the growing vociferousness of the republicans, pro-monarchist forces mobilized their own propaganda campaign, which frequently targeted the Civil Guard. Some monarchists showed their support for the regime through donations to the Civil Guard.<sup>59</sup> The readers of the monarchist dailies *ABC* and *El Debate* started up a public subscription for the mother of the Civil Guard sergeant that was killed during the confrontation with republican students in Madrid.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, *ABC* printed a full-page picture of the grieving mother on its front page, with the caption “Civil Guards have

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<sup>58</sup> “Nuevo jefe superior de Policía de Madrid” & “Reales decretos de varios ministerios”, *ABC* (29 March 1931); “Firma del Rey”, *Ejército y Armada & ABC* (2 April 1931); “El Director General de Carabineros”, *ABC* (2 April 1931).

<sup>59</sup> Ben Ami, *Origins of the Second Republic*, p. 212.

<sup>60</sup> *ABC* (28 March 1931)

mothers too”.<sup>61</sup> The monarchist military press joined the chorus. A front-page article addressed to the Civil Guard and the other security forces in *La Correspondencia Militar* claimed that the confrontation between the corps and the University of Madrid students was provoked by “foreigners” and “communists”, the enemies of order who “hate authority and all those who possess the smallest vestige of it.” What was needed, it continued, was “to form a united front against anarchy and disorder. This is the duty and in the interest of all who wear a uniform; the security and the prestige of the state demands it.”<sup>62</sup> As later articles would demonstrate, for the editors of *La Correspondencia Militar* (and, one would suppose, for its readers), the monarchy was the best defence against disorder, a republic being synonymous with it.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the propaganda of pro-monarchist sectors and the prominent ceremony held on 28 March, hosted by the King in honour of Sanjurjo, and by extension the Civil Guard, events were undermining the monarchist position. As the political momentum appeared to be favouring the republican cause, it demanded a level of pragmatism from the Civil Guard. The various Civil Guard commentaries on the clashes with student in Madrid, for example, were not dedicated to denouncing the protests as the work of subversive elements, but rather complained about the negative press the *Benemérita* was receiving by its handling of the events.<sup>64</sup> This sensitivity to public criticism, while not new, was significant when placed in its political context, that is the conviction amongst the Civil Guard that a change in regime was a distinct possibility. Indeed, two days before the

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<sup>61</sup> *ABC* (27 March 1931)

<sup>62</sup> “La autoridad y el compañerismo”, *LCM* (7 April 1931)

<sup>63</sup> “¡A las urnas!”, *LCM* (12 April 1931)

<sup>64</sup> “Guardia Civil: Después de los sucesos”, *LCM* (28 March 1931); “Guardia Civil: La ley, en quiebra”, *LCM* (2 April 1931).

municipal elections were to take place, an article appeared in the staunchly monarchist *La Correspondencia Militar* in which the Civil Guard expressed its gratitude for the support it had received from pro-monarchist elements, including the honours rendered to the Civil Guard sergeant that was killed in the university clashes, it also announced that the corps would not intervene in the political process. Instead, it would simply do its duty and would not “demonstrate the least bit of sympathy for any particular group”.<sup>65</sup>

The election results on 12 April were worse than even the pessimistic Aznar Government expected. In spite of expecting a less-than ideal result, the scale of the success of the Republican-Socialist coalition came as a surprise and left the government unsure as to how to handle the situation. The Conde de Romanones, who was the Secretary of State, noted that upon arriving in Madrid that afternoon, “I was immediately aware that the battle was lost.”<sup>66</sup> To take stock of the situation, all of the members of the government (except for the Ministers of War, Navy and Finance) met in the Ministry of the Interior at around 5:30 p.m. General Sanjurjo also went to the ministry, the only non-minister to do so. All of the members of the government were despondent and unsure as to what action they should take. In his account of this meeting, Romanones states that amongst the gloomy ministers gathered in the Interior Ministry, “the most important vote of all those we encountered there was his, above all for the post he held.” At this point, several of them turned to Sanjurjo to gauge his reaction to the events. To the general, the “national will” he spoke of to Lerroux two months earlier had made itself known: with the military divided, the republicans victorious, and the government in disarray, now was the time for

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<sup>65</sup> “Guardia Civil: El fruto de un sacrificio”, *LCM* (10 April 1931).

<sup>66</sup> Conde de Romanones, *Notas de una vida* (Madrid & Barcelona, 1999), p. 499.



pragmatism, not force. Thus, when asked by those present whether the regime could still count on the Civil Guard, Sanjurjo responded that “until last night you could have”.<sup>67</sup> After Sanjurjo told those gathered there that they could not count on the Civil Guard to defend the regime, Romanones claimed that “with this, the last hope of the regime fizzled away.”<sup>68</sup>

Yet, while Sanjurjo’s position came as something of a shock, the General’s reluctance to overturn forcibly the election results was in line with the view of the majority of those gathered at the ministry. Except for Juan de la Cierva, no one had considered the armed defence of the monarchy to be a serious option.<sup>69</sup> As Hoyos notes, “no one suggested that they replace [Sanjurjo] as Director General of the Civil Guard with someone else who would show himself disposed to carrying out blindly the orders of the Government.”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, as Romanones himself said the next day, “the Mauser [the rifle used by the Civil Guard] is an inadequate answer to the manifestation of suffrage.”<sup>71</sup> Lacking a clear plan of how to deal with the situation, but not wanting to give the appearance of a crisis, they decided to wait events out and not to meet again until 14 April, their next regularly scheduled meeting. By doing so, events developed outside of their control and a compromise solution that could have preserved the monarchy became increasingly unlikely.

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<sup>67</sup> Sanjurjo’s exact words differ slightly in the various accounts of those present, yet all essentially agree on their meaning. See Conde de Romanones, “Historia de cuatro días”, originally published in 1940, reproduced in *Notas de una vida*, pp. 499-500 & 511-512; Gabriel Maura Gamazo, *Recuerdos de mi vida* (Madrid, 1934), pp. 206-207; Hoyos, *Mi testimonio*, pp. 122-129; Álvaro Alcalá Galiano, *La caída de un trono* (Madrid, 1933), pp. 191-192.

<sup>68</sup> Conde de Romanones, “Recuerdos de las últimas horas”, *El Sol*, 4 June 1931.

<sup>69</sup> Ben Ami, *Origins of the Second Republic*, pp. 239-240 & 245-248.

<sup>70</sup> Hoyos, *Mi testimonio*, p. 129.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Ben Ami, *Origins of the Second Republic*, p. 242.

Despite the plans of those gathered at the Interior Ministry, not all members of the government felt that events should be left to chance. When the Minister of War, General Dámaso Berenguer, learned of the election results later that evening, and the reactions of those ministers gathered at the Interior Ministry, as well as that of Sanjurjo, he quickly realized that things could quickly get out of hand if the government did not take control of the situation. Fearing that the election results would expose the divisions in the military, especially if they provoked a pro-republican *pronunciamiento*, he sent out a telegram at 1:15 a.m. on the morning of 13 April. In this telegram Berenguer instructed the Captain Generals to maintain discipline amongst the troops under their command to avoid any unnecessary violence as the country followed “the logical course that the supreme national will imposes on it.”<sup>72</sup>

Berenguer was not the only one who felt that a solution to the looming crisis could not wait until the fourteenth. Throughout the thirteenth, the various ministers shuffled back and forth attempting to formulate a way of salvaging the monarchy.<sup>73</sup> In the meantime, General Sanjurjo, very likely aware of Berenguer’s telegram and unwilling to wait for the government to decide on a course of action, re-opened contact with Lerroux.<sup>74</sup> While the

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<sup>72</sup> Berenguer, *De la Dictadura a la República*, pp. 316-320. In his meetings with various ministers, Berenguer showed each of them his telegram. All of them approved it: Romanones, *Notas de una vida*, p. 513.

<sup>73</sup> Ben Ami, *Origins of the Second Republic*, pp. 240-242.

<sup>74</sup> General Franco relates the story of Natalio Rivas, who claimed to have personally seen Sanjurjo himself in Lerroux’s building on the thirteenth: Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones*, pp. 88-89, 121. Rivas (or Franco himself) was probably embellishing somewhat as it seems highly unlikely that Sanjurjo would personally go to meet with Lerroux, given the likelihood that he would have been spotted. Indeed, the fact that such an important development as the Director-General of the Civil Guard meeting with a member of Revolutionary Committee before the fate of the king had been decided would have picked up on and announced in the press.

exact result of this contact is unclear, especially as Lerroux appears to have kept this development a secret from the rest of the nascent Provisional Government, even sources which seek to downplay Sanjurjo's involvement with the republicans before the official transfer of power admit Sanjurjo was in contact with the republicans from the thirteenth via his intermediary Colonel Aspiazu.<sup>75</sup> It seems that Sanjurjo had had some encouragement to approach the Radical leader. There have been claims that some prominent monarchists, either members of the government or with close ties to it, advised Sanjurjo that morning that he, in the interest of maintaining order, place the services of the Civil Guard at the disposal of the republicans in the event they take power. Alcalá Galiano claims to have been told by "an illustrious historian and ex-minister of the Crown" that on the morning of the 13th, the leader of the Catalan *Lliga Regionalista* Francisco Cambó, the Treasury Minister Juan Ventosa and the Minister of Labour Gabriel Maura (who was probably Alcalá Galiano's source), pessimistic about the fate of the monarchy, made such an suggestion to Sanjurjo.<sup>76</sup>

The historian Ricardo de la Cierva alleges that at 9:00 p.m. that evening, presumably as a result of Sanjurjo's negotiations with Lerroux, the General circulated a telegram to the regional commanders of the Civil Guard informing them that they "give the proper orders to the forces under your command so that they do not oppose the just expression of the

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<sup>75</sup> Esteban-Infantes, *General Sanjurjo*, p. 129; Hoyos, *Mi testimonio*, p. 188.

<sup>76</sup> Alcalá Galiano claims to have been told by "an illustrious historian and ex-minister of the Crown" [Gabriel Maura?] that on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Francisco Cambó, Minister of the Treasury Juan Ventosa and Minister of Labor Gabriel Maura, pessimistic about the fate of the monarchy, made such an intimation to Sanjurjo: *La caída de un trono*, p. 198n1. The British Ambassador in Madrid, Sir G. Grahame, informed the Home Office that a "reliable authority" had told him something along the same lines: FO371/15771 No. 152, Grahame to Henderson (16 April 1931).

republican triumph that could arise from the Army and the people.”<sup>77</sup> The existence of this telegram has been questioned,<sup>78</sup> but if true would have only signified that Sanjurjo shared the same concerns as Berenguer: that in the absence of clear orders, a clash between monarchist and republican garrisons could erupt and lead to violence, perhaps even a civil war. In any event, the initiative was passing to the Revolutionary Committee as crowds of their supporters began taking control of the streets, demonstrating in favour of the Republic. Encouraged by the relative passivity of the government, which in the past would have already declared martial law and sent the Civil Guard and Army into the streets, to the republicans and the population at large the days of the monarchy seemed numbered and rumours of an abdication spread.<sup>79</sup>

As dawn broke on the fourteenth, the Second Republic was proclaimed in the Basque town of Eibar, with similar declarations occurring across Spain. Later that morning, after meeting with several ministers of the government, the King accepted that all was lost and agreed to leave the country with the hope that an interim government could be formed

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<sup>77</sup> Ricardo de la Cierva, *Historia ilustrada de la guerra civil española*, Vol. I (Barcelona, 1977), p. 107.

<sup>78</sup> De la Cierva appears to be the only person to have known of this telegram’s existence, his knowledge of it deriving from the testimony of a Socialist employee in the Palacio de Comunicaciones, Gabriel Mario de Coca. Aguado Sánchez, rather convincingly, challenges De la Cierva’s evidence on technical grounds: *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, p. 230. Rivas Gómez disputes the significance De la Cierva attaches to the supposed telegram (as well as its veracity), arguing that “Sanjurjo would have done nothing more than second that which was ordered by the Minister of War in [his earlier] telegram [to the Captain Generals]”: Fernando Rivas Gómez, “La Guardia Civil en la caída de un rey”, *REHGC*, No. 16 (1975), pp. 130-131. It would seem the strongest argument against the existence of such a telegram is the fact that *none* of the main protagonists, neither monarchist nor republican, nor any of the major newspapers mention it; which, given its significance, would be very difficult to explain.

<sup>79</sup> The republicans and their supporters were astounded by the inaction of the government in the face of what normally would have been considered revolutionary or seditious demonstrations, as several Civil Governors characterized them in their telegrams to the Interior Ministry: AHN, Civil Governor [Navarra] to the Interior Minister and the Director General of Security (No. 594, 12 April 1931), Civil Governor [Huelva] to the Interior Minister and Director General of Security (No. 627, 13 April 1931), Ministerio de Gobernación, Serie A, Legajo 16A, No. 16. For a description of the popular mood during the evening of the 13th, see *El Socialista & El Sol* (14 April 1931).

and then oversee a plebiscite on the future of the monarchy.<sup>80</sup> As the King was to be escorted in his journey into exile by a contingent of Civil Guards, Under-Secretary of the Interior, Mariano Marfil was asked to make the necessary arrangements; this meant informing Sanjurjo of the King's decision.<sup>81</sup> Shortly thereafter, Sanjurjo placed himself at the orders of the Revolutionary Committee.

There is much debate about just when Sanjurjo passed over to the Republicans. His own version, published in both the military and Civil Guard press, minimized his contacts with the Committee by noting that he did not officially (that is, publicly) meet with the Republicans until the King had abdicated, that is late in the afternoon. Nonetheless, Sanjurjo's account unintentionally admits that he effectively placed himself at their orders *in the morning*: "[Sanjurjo's] position was to respect the people's sovereignty and the national will because he understood that the Army was a part of the nation. Yet he felt that until the [Revolutionary Committee] effectively assumes power, he could not put himself in contact with them out of loyalty and discipline [to the King] ... but he authorised the emissary to communicate his position to Alcalá Zamora and [Miguel] Maura".<sup>82</sup> Other accounts corroborate that Sanjurjo adhered to the Committee prior to the Alcalá Zamora-Romanones meeting, that is, before 1 p.m. Alcalá Zamora in a public speech reprinted in *El Sol* states that the Committee received the adhesion of the Civil Guard by 12 noon.<sup>83</sup> Romanones and Gregorio Marañón, both witnesses to the Alcalá

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<sup>80</sup> Ben Ami, *Origins of the Second Republic*, p. 243.

<sup>81</sup> Miguel Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII*, p. 164. Maura mistakenly claims that Sanjurjo knew of the King's resolution to leave the country by 9:00 a.m.

<sup>82</sup> The official account, doubtlessly approved by Sanjurjo himself as they are all word-for-word reproductions of each other, can be found in several sources: "La neutralidad de la Guardia Civil", *LCM* (16 April 1931); "Lealtad de la Guardia Civil", *RTGC*, No. 255 (1931), pp.242-243; *El Sol* (15 April 1931).

<sup>83</sup> *El Sol* (12 May 1931).

Zamora-Romanones meeting mention Alcalá Zamora informing Romanones that he had already received the adhesion of General Sanjurjo.<sup>84</sup> Miguel Maura has Sanjurjo himself appearing at his residence at 11:00-11:15 a.m. to place himself at the orders of the Committee, though this was unlikely.<sup>85</sup> Sanjurjo's close friend and aide-de-camp Esteban Infantes is evasive about the General's contacts with the Revolutionary Committee before the transmission of powers was agreed between Alcalá Zamora and Romanones, but insists that Sanjurjo did not formally adhere to the Provisional Government until this occurred.<sup>86</sup>

From that moment on, Sanjurjo became increasingly active in aiding the peaceful change of regime. When summoned to the War Ministry around noon, Berenguer informed Sanjurjo (as well as Generals Millán Astray and Cavalcanti) of the plans to set up an interim government.<sup>87</sup> Sanjurjo, perhaps fearing that any attempts to salvage the monarchy would only exacerbate the situation in the streets and in the barracks, responded that there was no other alternative but for the Alfonso to abandon the throne. Yet, as with the issue of Sanjurjo's contacts with the Revolutionary Committee, there is some disagreement about the impact, if not content of Sanjurjo's comment. Francisco

Franco Salgado-Araujo, recording his cousin's attempts to shift blame for his own

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<sup>84</sup> Romanones, *Notas de una vida*, p. 517 & Marañón, quoted in Rafael Borrás Betriu, *Cambio de régimen: Caída de la Monarquía y proclamación de la República* (Barcelona, 2001), p. 260 (originally found in Marañón's *Obras Completas*, Vol. IV, Madrid, 1968, p.493).

<sup>85</sup> Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII*, pp. 164-165. It appears that Maura, writing from memory years after the events, had confused the order of events: Sanjurjo did come to his residence, but not until after the transfer of powers was known. If Sanjurjo would have personally appeared at Maura's flat at the time Maura claims, it would have been impossible for him to have escaped the notice of the many reporters and bystanders gathered outside. Given that not a single newspaper mentions what would have been a major development in the course of events, it is likely that Maura was thinking of the message Sanjurjo sent via his intermediaries.

<sup>86</sup> Esteban Infantes, *General Sanjurjo*, p. 131; *La sublevación del general Sanjurjo* (Madrid, 1933), pp. 136-137

<sup>87</sup> Berenguer, *De la dictadura*, p. 337.

inaction during the crisis, claims that General Franco adopted his position of passive acceptance of the proclamation of the Republic after discovering from General Millán Astray – who was present at the War Ministry with Sanjurjo – that Sanjurjo said that he could not count on the Civil Guard to defend the king, and thus Alfonso had to leave Spain.<sup>88</sup> Director-General of Security Mola's rather less personally-motivated version has Millán Astray informing Berenguer that Franco ("a person in Zaragoza whose opinion had to be taken into account") felt that in the circumstances "there already was no other solution other than the king giving up the throne".<sup>89</sup> Socialist sources claimed that Sanjurjo threatened to resign if Alfonso did not abdicate.<sup>90</sup>

By the time Romanones arrived at the residence of Alcalá Zamora to discuss the forming of an interim government at around 1:00 p.m., the initiative had clearly passed to the Republicans. The Aznar Government's lack of resolve only reinforced popular perceptions that a change of regime was nigh. Thus, not only had Sanjurjo communicated his support of the Provisional Government, but many Civil Governors across Spain had also begun to place themselves at the orders of Alcalá Zamora.<sup>91</sup> Faced with such a situation, and amidst fears that events could soon evolve beyond the control of the Provisional Government itself if the king did not immediately leave Spain, Romanones abandoned this final attempt to salvage the throne and yielded to Alcalá Zamora's demand that the king leave Spain "before the sun set".<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mi vida junto a Franco*, pp. 97-98; *Mis conversaciones privadas*, pp. 450-452.

<sup>89</sup> Mola, *Obras completas*, p. 867.

<sup>90</sup> *El Socialista* (15 April 1931).

<sup>91</sup> Marañón, quoted in Borrás Betriu, *El cambio del regimen*, p. 260 (originally found in Marañón's *Obras Completas*, Vol. IV, Madrid, 1968, p. 493).

<sup>92</sup> Descriptions of the Alcalá Zamora-Romanones meeting can be found in Alcalá Zamora, *Mis memorias*, p. 192; Romanones, *Notas de una vida*, p. 517; Marañón, *Obras Completas*, IV, pp. 492-493.

Once the news of Romanones' capitulation became known, Sanjurjo's emissary Aspiazu, who was waiting at Miguel Maura's residence, informed the General of the events and of the new government's request that he come to Maura's house to discuss the necessary measures to maintain order during the Provisional Government's assumption of power. Now that the required formalities had been taken care of, Sanjurjo agreed.<sup>93</sup> After meeting with Maura at around 4:30-5:00 p.m., Sanjurjo went to the National Directorate of the Civil Guard to meet with his immediate subordinates and begin transmitting the proper orders to the regional commanders.<sup>94</sup> When the Provisional Government arrived at the Puerta del Sol to take possession of the Interior Ministry and officially declare the Republic, the civil guards stationed inside the building presented their arms to the new government, at which point the Socialist leader Francisco Largo Caballero commented to Alcalá Zamora: "The Republic is a fact (*La República es un hecho*)".<sup>95</sup>

To what extent were Sanjurjo's claims of his inability to rely on the Civil Guard true? Histories produced by the Civil Guard historians dispute the claim that Sanjurjo abandoned the King. They follow the official line set out (very likely by Sanjurjo himself) back in 1931, which was that arguing that Sanjurjo was not a minister and could not determine government policy. Sanjurjo could not and did not refuse to carry out a direct order to employ the Civil Guard. It was the defeatism of the government and its passivity in the face of the growing crisis that led to the fall of the monarchy. Once

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<sup>93</sup> *El Sol* (15 April & 7 June 1931); "La neutralidad de la Guardia Civil", *LCM* (16 April 1931); "Lealtad de la Guardia Civil", *RTGC*, pp.242-243.

<sup>94</sup> Esteban Infantes, *La sublevación de Sanjurjo*, pp. 136-137; César González-Ruano & Emilio Rodríguez Tarduchy, *Sanjurjo: Una vida española del novecientos* (Madrid, 1933), pp. 172-173.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Borrás Betriu, *El cambio de regimen*, pp. 288-289.



powers had passed to the Republican regime and the now-established government called upon his services, Sanjurjo simply acted as his duty demanded.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, as the Civil Guard historian Rivas Gómez notes, by accepting the interpretation that Sanjurjo was to blame – which he clearly does not believe, stating the general was made a “scapegoat” by Romanones – one would be accepting implicitly that “by extension, all of the Civil Guard” turned their back on the monarchy.<sup>97</sup> For members of the *Benemérita*, who pride themselves as the determined defenders of the Spanish State, such an interpretation was clearly unacceptable. They doubt the veracity of Sanjurjo’s “supposed” comment on the night of the 12th that he could not count on the Civil Guard to follow orders to defend the regime. As Rivas Gómez argues, Sanjurjo could not have made such a claim for, as he himself just learned of the election results, he would not have had time to consult with the regional commanders to gauge their reactions to the situation. Therefore, such a statement would be completely speculative, and in Rivas Gómez’s opinion, untrue.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, these authors challenge all claims made that the Civil Guard did anything but follow orders during those three days. Yet, by proposing that Romanones was only seeking to shift blame from himself to Sanjurjo, Rivas Gómez appears to believe that the Count was at least exaggerating Sanjurjo’s

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<sup>96</sup> The official account, doubtlessly approved by Sanjurjo himself as they are all word-for-word reproductions of each other, can be found in several sources: “El general Sanjurjo, respetuoso con la voluntad nacional, se pone al servicio de la República”, *El Sol* (15 April 1931); “La neutralidad de la Guardia Civil”, *LCM* (16 April 1931); “Lealtad de la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, No. 255 (May 1931), pp. 242-243.

<sup>97</sup> Fernando Rivas Gómez, “La Guardia Civil del siglo XX”, in José Sanz Muñoz (ed.), *La Guardia Civil Española* (Madrid, 1994), p.209. Rivas Gómez first put his version of events – which seek to exculpate both Sanjurjo and the Civil Guard from any hint of wrongdoing – in his article “La Guardia Civil en la caída de un rey”, (1975), pp. 111-167. His account has since become the official interpretation of events. See Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, Vol. IV (Madrid, 1984), pp. 225-244.

<sup>98</sup> Rivas Gómez, “La Guardia Civil del siglo XX”, p.209. Rivas Gómez bases his interpretations largely on the account given by Esteban-Infantes: Esteban-Infantes, *General Sanjurjo*, pp.125-126.

comments that night, or at worst, making the whole thing up. By singling out Romanones, Rivas Gómez unfortunately overlooks the fact that all those present at the Interior Ministry that night record Sanjurjo as saying the same thing (though differing in the exact wording).

Moreover, Sanjurjo's statement about the attitude of his men should not have been a surprise for, as we have seen, the unwillingness of the Civil Guard to contest a republican victory had been announced in the *La Correspondencia Militar*, the last of such announcement being only two days before the elections.<sup>99</sup> Nonetheless, a cursory glance at newspaper accounts of events across Spain between the thirteenth and fourteenth show that most civil guards were willing to break up demonstrations when receiving clear orders to do so. The telegrams of at least two provincial governors also report that the Civil Guard units under their jurisdiction were willing to maintain order.<sup>100</sup> This was echoed in the memoirs of the Director-General of Security, General Mola, who stated that among the various police forces in Madrid, only the Civil Guard gave the impression of being disposed to obey orders.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, as one republican demonstration made its way through the streets of Madrid they were confronted by a contingent of Civil Guards in the Plaza de Cibeles who dispersed them, as ordered by Mola.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> "Guardia Civil: El fruto de un sacrificio", *LCM* (10 April 1931).

<sup>100</sup> AHN, Civil Governor [Navarra] to the Interior Minister and the Director General of Security (No. 594, 12 April 1931), Civil Governor [Huelva] to the Interior Minister and Director General of Security (No. 627, 13 April 1931), Ministerio de Gobernación, Serie A, Legajo 16A, No. 16.

<sup>101</sup> Mola, *Obras Completas*, pp. 857-859.

<sup>102</sup> Mola, *Obras Completas*, p. 856; "Represión sangrienta en las calles de Madrid", *El Socialista* (14 April 1931). According to sources within the Socialist party, Sanjurjo punished the officer who was in charge during the confrontation at Cibeles: González Calleja, *El máuser y el sufragio*, p. 614n352.

It is evident from the accounts of both Mola and Sanjurjo's aide-de-camp Esteban Infantes that clear orders were not forthcoming from the government. By the evening of the thirteenth, this lack of direction, coupled with rumours of an abdication, led to an increasing reluctance on the part of many civil guards to disperse the masses of pro-republican supporters filling the main public areas of Madrid.<sup>103</sup> Gregorio Marañón reported that as he was returning to his home that evening, he noted that "in the faces and actions of several of the guards, and in the words of an officer that I talked to briefly, one could perceive a tortured indecision. The representatives of authority began to doubt themselves and whom they were meant to serve."<sup>104</sup>

This sense of uncertainty only increased as the Republic began to be proclaimed from various town halls on the morning of the fourteenth. In Eibar, the first town to make such a proclamation, the local Civil Guard contingent remained in their barracks as the jubilant crowds celebrated. This was not necessarily a welcomed event, for as one of the newly-elected republican councillors, Juan de los Toyos, reported to his colleagues in San Sebastián, "the Civil Guard does not view favourably [their proclamation of a Republic], but rather with long faces. In fact, they seem as if they wished to drive us off."<sup>105</sup> This growing reluctance to intervene was also evident in Madrid. When the Under-Secretary of the Interior, Mariano Marfil, told the commanding officer of the Civil Guard stationed around the Ministry of the Interior that the King wished his men to disperse the pro-republican crowds gathered there, the officer responded

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<sup>103</sup> Berenguer, *De la dictadura*, pp. 332-333; Borrás, *Cambio de régimen*, p. 227.

<sup>104</sup> Marañón quotation in Borrás, *Cambio de régimen*, p. 228.

<sup>105</sup> Mola, *Obras Completas*, p. 863; Arrarás, *Historia de la segunda República*, I, p. 24. De los Toyos quotation in Borrás, *Cambio de régimen*, p. 234.

Tell His Majesty that, on his orders, I would go out into the Puerta de Sol on my own and let the crowds tear me to pieces, but I cannot order those under my command to do so because they will not obey.<sup>106</sup>

At around three in the afternoon a republican crowds descended on the Palacio de Comunicaciones and raised the tricolour flag. The civil guards charged with defending this important building did not intervene.<sup>107</sup>

Newspaper accounts of the day demonstrate a variety of reactions by civil guards to the events, and such confusion was natural as Sanjurjo did not begin to transmit orders about the change of regime until after six in the afternoon.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, reactions varied amongst the Civil Guard to the change of regime. Some guards began to fraternise with the republican crowds. In Ubeda (Jaén) the captain of the local Civil Guard led a group of republicans as they entered the town hall and proclaimed the Republic there.<sup>109</sup>

Elsewhere, there were civil guards who were rather less enthusiastic about the change in regime. In the town of Treviana (Logroño), the newly-elected Republican councillors approached the commanding officer of the local Civil Guard post to complain about the provocative actions of local monarchists. Sergeant Hernández Ramirez responded with his belief that “all republicans are swine (*canallas*) and that his only regret was not opening fire on them on the day of the elections.” Upon receiving the news the following

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<sup>106</sup> Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII*, pp. 162-163. Unsurprisingly, Civil Guard historians dispute the veracity of this exchange: Rivas Gómez, “La Guardia Civil en la caída de un rey”, pp. 134-136; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, pp. 233-234.

<sup>107</sup> Berenguer, *De la dictadura*, p. 338, Arrarás, *Historia de la segunda República*, I, p. 30.

<sup>108</sup> González-Ruano and Rodríguez Tarduchy, *Sanjurjo*, pp. 172-173; Esteban-Infantes, *General Sanjurjo*, p. 136.

<sup>109</sup> *Ahora* (15 April 1931)

day, 15 April, that the Republic had been proclaimed throughout Spain, the republicans of Treviana still encountered hostility from the local Civil Guard. In contradiction to the official position of the corps' loyalty to the new regime, Sergeant Hernández Ramírez probably more accurately reflected the view of many civil guards when he told his new civilian superiors that "with the coming of the Republic, he became a republican by force."<sup>110</sup>

Civil guards greeted the coming of the Republic in a variety of ways: some with resignation, some with a sense of trepidation, some with varying degrees of enthusiasm and others with varying degrees of hostility. That some sort of political change was on the cards was widely perceived. As one article announced, the establishment of the Republic "[was] not, nor could have been a surprise for those who followed attentively the country's political situation".<sup>111</sup> What seemed to concern civil guards most was that if a change of regime was to be effected, it be done in as smooth a manner as possible so as to minimize the weakening of governmental authority. It was exactly this concern, the preservation of authority, that most exercised the thoughts of many civil guards as they feared that the loosening of the established norms of control would unleash those dark forces that led to the establishment of communism in Russia.

Yet, the strategic abandonment of an unpopular and illegitimate monarchy in order to halt the further radicalization of the situation and a conversion to republicanism are two

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<sup>110</sup> Both quotations from Carlos Gil Andrés, *La República en la Plaza: Los sucesos de Arnedo de 1932* (Arnedo, 2002), pp.237-238.

<sup>111</sup> "Guardia Civil: El cambio de régimen", *LCM* (17 April 1931).

different things. One of the principal tasks of the new regime was to “republicanise” both the mentalities and methods of the *Beneméríta*. This was no easy undertaking for, besides having to change ingrained institutional cultures, the disagreements amongst the component members of original Republican-Socialist coalition rendered difficult a clear definition of what “republicanism” and the “Republic”. Added to this was a historic antagonism between Republicans and Socialists, one the one side, and the Civil Guard on the other – not to mention the hostility of many amongst the working classes towards the corps – and the continuation, if not escalation of social unrest into the Republican period. As shall be seen in the following chapters, these combination of factors would prove fatal to the Republican project, however broadly defined.

## CHAPTER FOUR

On 15 April 1931 in Barcelona the newly-elected Radical councillor Jordi Vinaixa travelled to the Civil Guard barracks located on the Ramblas, went up to its balcony and raised the Republican flag. After doing so, he proclaimed that the Civil Guard, in allowing the tricolour fly over their quarters, were now a “Republican Guard”.<sup>1</sup> This symbolic act represented the hope that the Civil Guard, in accepting the legitimacy of the Republic, was now at the service of the people’s will and no longer its oppressor. This transformation seemed to be accepted by the Barcelona Civil Guard themselves. The commander of the 4th Company of the 21st Regiment, Captain Emilio Escobar, sent a telegram to the Catalan leader Francesc Macía, describing a large public ceremony whereby the Catalan flag was raised alongside the Republican one above their barracks. He goes on to describe the sense of fraternity between the crowds gathered for the ceremony and the *Benemérita*, congratulating Macía for his nomination as President of the Catalan *Generalitat*, and declared the unshakable loyalty of the Civil Guard to the new Catalan authorities.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite the optimistic atmosphere of the first days of the new regime, a tempestuous current ran under the bridge from monarchy to Republic, which would soon carry away much of this initial goodwill. The proclamation of the Second Republic was simply the first step in “republicanising” Spanish society, and the institutions that governed it. Amongst the latter, the Civil Guard – despite its official acceptance of the Republican regime – would prove amongst the more difficult to Republicanise. The attempted process of “republicanisation” would be a complex one in

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<sup>1</sup> *El Debate* (16 April 1931).

<sup>2</sup> “En Barcelona: La adhesión de la Guardia Civil”, *Ejército y Armada* (17 April 1931).

which aspects both pertaining to the corps as well as those extraneous to the Civil Guard would all have their impact.

One of the obstacles facing this proposed republicanisation was an underlying sensation that the corps was incompatible with the new political order. The primarily repressive role of the Civil Guard under the monarchy, and its ubiquitous presence meant that the corps had become for many the living embodiment of an oppressive regime and unjust social order. As a result, the popular image of the Civil Guard amongst the Republicans and the working class organizations was that of being the “enemies of the people”, or in the words of the left-wing Socialist, Julio Alvarez del Vayo, the Civil Guard was “the most hated figure in Spain”.<sup>3</sup> The Civil Guard, and the police in general, were not viewed by substantial sectors of the population as the neutral enforcers of the nation’s laws, but as the brutal agents of the social and economic elite. The Republican authorities were well aware of this popular hostility towards the *Benemérita*, and the negative image that could result from its use by the new regime. This included the more conservative members of the Provisional Government, such as the former monarchist and now Prime Minister Niceto Alcalá-Zamora, who asked the Interior Minister and fellow conservative Republican, Miguel Maura, either to abolish the Civil Guard or to reform it “in such a manner as to make it appear that we have dissolved it”.<sup>4</sup> Even the military authorities, who counted amongst the staunchest defenders of the *Benemérita*, could on occasion feel the need to cater to public hostility towards the corps.<sup>5</sup> What was clear was

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<sup>3</sup> Julio Alvarez del Vayo, *Freedom’s Battle* (London & Toronto, 1940), pp. 311-312.

<sup>4</sup> Miguel Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII* (Barcelona, 1966), p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> General Rodríguez del Barrio, the National Inspector of the Army and soon to be conspirator against the Republic, did not call for the formation of the local garrison of the Civil Guard during a review of the



that the change in regime could not, on its own, erase deeply felt anti-police attitudes amongst sectors of the population and the Republican coalition now in government.

There existed considerable disagreement within the Republican-Socialist coalition over what should be done with the Civil Guard. For some, the corps was at best an anachronism, a relic left over from the monarchy, and at worst a complete contradiction to the principles of the new democratic regime. While recognizing the hostility of elements of the general population and his colleagues towards the corps, Interior Minister Maura, decided after reviewing the regulations of the Civil Guard that no reform of these was necessary. Furthermore, aware that the new regime needed the services of the Civil Guard, Maura was concerned that any attempt to reform the corps would undermine the morale, if not loyalty of the force.<sup>6</sup> Maura's refusal to alter "a single comma of the famous ordinances" of the Civil Guard reflected more than the rumblings of a recalcitrant ex-monarchist. Simply put, the Provisional Government could not dissolve the Civil Guard for fear of the backlash this would cause within the military, and also because of the lack of an alternative professional police force to take over its functions. The Interior Ministry had its own police forces, the Security Corps and the Surveillance Corps. Numerically weaker than the Civil Guard, the Interior Ministry police were also notorious for their ineffectiveness in dealing with major disturbances.<sup>7</sup> To have abolished the Civil

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armed forces stationed in Málaga in early July. While the civil provincial governor protested at this omission, Azaña suspected that the General had decided to do this in order to avoid any hostile response from the public: Manuel Azaña, *Diarios Completos: Monarquía, República y Guerra Civil* (Barcelona, 2000), p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> Maura, *Así cayó*, p. 206.

<sup>7</sup> On the *policía gubernativa* and issues surrounding the reform of the security forces, see Maura, *Así cayó*, pp. 265-275; Niceto Alcalá Zamora, *Memorias* (Barcelona, 1998) pp. 220-221; Diego Martínez Barrio, *Memorias* (Madrid, 1983), p. 109; Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, p. 185; Emilio Mola, *Obras Completas* (Valladolid, 1940), pp. 233-234.

Guard would have left the new regime virtually defenceless in the face of attacks from both the Left and the Right. As Diego Martínez Barrio, a moderate and Republican of long standing, noted, most Republicans had to “subordinate profound convictions about the necessity to transform the institute” to the exigencies of the time.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, these “profound convictions” were not so easily suppressed and were the cause of the first major rift within the Provisional Government before the Republic was even a month old. On 10 May 1931, a scuffle that had broken out at the inauguration of the newly-formed “*Círculo Monárquico Independiente*” in Madrid – most likely due to the provocative actions of its members – quickly evolved into angry Republican crowds attacking those places most associated with the old regime. The involvement of the Civil Guard in the protection of some of these buildings, as well as the fact that the Director-General of Security, Carlos Blanco Pérez (a crony of Alcalá Zamora with no ties to the Republican cause),<sup>9</sup> had granted the monarchist group permission to organize, had mobilized Republican supporters into mounting a popular show of force against monarchist (or presumed monarchist) elements. Blanco was not only a personal friend of Alcalá-Zamora but had served as Director-General of Security on two previous occasions under the monarchy. In light of the recent anti-Republican comments of the Primate of the Catholic Church in Spain, Cardinal Segura, religious buildings were attacked and soon churches across Madrid were being sacked and set on fire. Also targeted were those conservative elements within the government and the state that were seen as obstacles to

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<sup>8</sup> Martínez Barrio, *Memorias*, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> Santos Martínez Saura, *Memorias de un secretario de Azaña* (Barcelona, 1999), pp.84-86, 93-94; Maura, *Así cayó*, pp. 241-242. See Blanco’s greeting to the men of the Interior Ministry police in the BODGS of 20 April 1931, reproduced in José Caamaño Bournacell, *La policía a través del tiempo, 1908-1958* (Madrid, 1999), p.163.

the (leftist) Republican agenda, namely the Civil Guard and Maura himself, with demands for the dissolution of the former and the dismissal of the latter.

Maura, a devout Catholic, was alarmed by the prospect of the Republic descending into mob rule and quickly resolved to send out the Civil Guard to suppress the protests.

Maura's desire to deploy the Civil Guard, one of the most potent symbols of the monarchy, against a pro-Republican demonstration was too much for the other members of the government to countenance, and the Interior Minister soon found himself confronted by virtually all of his colleagues. Indeed, even the monarchist Blanco thought such an action inflammatory, and was the first one to alert the cabinet to Maura's plans.

The Minister of War and left-wing Republican Manuel Azaña led the opposition against Maura, threatening to resign if the Civil Guard was used against the demonstrators.

Meanwhile, a group of members of the Ateneo (of which Azaña was the President) arrived at the Interior Ministry. From the balcony at the front of the Ministry building, their spokesman read out a statement in favor of the abolition of the Civil Guard and the dismissal of Maura. Incensed at the blatant meddling of the other ministers in his duties, as well as the personal affront to his authority, Maura offered his resignation. The impasse was finally resolved the following day as the disturbances spread to several other cities, with martial law being declared in Madrid and Maura was granted full authority to deal with issues of public order. Nonetheless, the use of the Civil Guard by the Republican government was seen as so controversial, that it was deemed less problematic to send regular troops into the streets to restore order.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Maura, *Así cayó*, pp. 240-264; Martínez Barrio, *Memorias*, 36-38; Alcalá Zamora, *Memorias*, pp. 217-222; Stanley G. Payne, *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Republic, 1931-1936* (Madison, WI, 1993),

The rapidity with which a relatively small disturbance spread nationwide was not lost on the members of the Provisional Government, nor was the potential for the exploitation of such unrest missed by the enemies of the regime. Consequently, the usefulness of the Civil Guard soon became clear to many of Maura's colleagues. Alcalá-Zamora, who had been the first minister to try and prevent Maura from sending out the Civil Guard, made a public speech blaming the events of 10-11 May on extremist elements out to discredit the Republic, while praising the discipline of the Civil Guard and its loyalty to the new regime.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, the same Azaña who so strongly opposed the use of the Civil Guard in May 1931 would later find himself defending the force in parliament. Cipriano de Rivas Cherif, Azaña's brother-in-law and close friend, noted that while many requested the dissolution of the Civil Guard, the Minister of War felt that this was a long-term objective, to be arrived at very gradually: that is to say, only once a suitable replacement was set up. Azaña felt that while the Republic did not necessarily enjoy the full loyalty of the corps, as long as its discipline was intact, there was little reason to push through a measure that was bound to provoke a strongly hostile reaction amongst the military at a time when the War Minister was attempting to introduce wide-ranging reforms.<sup>12</sup>

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pp. 44-45. Juan-Simeón Vidarte claims that Azaña himself offered the balconies of the Interior Ministry to his Ateneo colleagues for them to read their proclamation: *Las Cortes Constituyentes de 1931-1933* (Barcelona, 1976), p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> *El Sol* (12 May 1931); Alcalá-Zamora, *Memorias*, pp. 220-222.

<sup>12</sup> Cipriano de Rivas Cherif, *Retrato de un desconocido. Vida de Manuel Azaña* (Barcelona, 1981), p. 196.

As periodic incidents of unrest continued on into the summer of 1931, the government's reliance on the Civil Guard became all the more evident. By the end of May Maura already was receiving complaints from the civil governors about the need for more Civil Guards properly to monitor and maintain order in their provinces.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, once civil governors managed to get reinforcements for their provinces, they were reluctant to release them from service. When the Civil Governor of Barcelona requested the return of the 29th Regiment (a rapid-response mobile unit normally stationed in the Catalan capital), Maura sent out a telegram on 24 August to those Civil Governors in whose provinces these men had been deployed. In response, the Civil Governor of Valencia claimed that not only could he not release those reinforcements stationed in his province, but he requested that even more men be sent.<sup>14</sup> The plight of the Barcelona Civil Governor was shared by several of his colleagues, as they pleaded with the Interior Minister for the return of their Civil Guard personnel.<sup>15</sup> This situation continued throughout the year, as the Interior Minister repeatedly had to ask provincial governors to release those reinforcements that were no longer necessary, often with the same result.<sup>16</sup>

Although not in possession of the two Ministries that deal with the Civil Guard, nor in control of any of the provincial governorships, the Socialists also had to contend with the

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<sup>13</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 15, Civil Governor [Cádiz] to Interior Minister (No. 1913, 27 May 1931); Civil Governor [Cádiz] to Interior Minister (No. 1172, 16 June 1931).

<sup>14</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 19, Civil Governor [Valencia] to Interior Minister (No. 899, 25 August 1931). See also the responses of the Civil Governors of Oviedo (Legajo 39A, No. 18, 25 August 1931) and Zaragoza (Legajo 39A, No. 19, 25 August 1931), both of who stated that they could not afford to release those reinforcements stationed in their respective provinces.

<sup>15</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 19, Civil Governor [Zamora] to Interior Minister (No. 318, 08 September 1931); Civil Governor [Valladolid] to Interior Minister (No. 77, 2 October 1931).

<sup>16</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 15, Interior Minister to Civil Governor [Cádiz], (No. 376, 16 December 1931), Civil Governor [Cádiz] to Interior Minister (No. 845, 23 December 1931), Interior Minister to Civil Governor [Cádiz], (No. 646, 24 December 1931); Legajo 39A, No. 14, Interior Minister to Civil Governor [Alicante], (No. 374, 16 December 1931).

issue of the Civil Guard, particularly in the light of the views of their constituency, which consisted in large part of workers and peasants who were had direct experience of the Civil Guard's more repressive dimension. Like their Republican colleagues, there existed differences of opinion amongst the Socialist leadership about the Civil Guard, and despite the hostility of many of them towards the corps, moderation initially characterized many of those views expressed. Juan-Simeón Vidarte, a member of Prieto's centrist grouping within the Socialist Party and later an outspoken critic of Republican policies regarding police reform and public order, explained:

We Socialists did not want to abolish those institutions charged with defending the social order – as was the anarchists' position – but rather reform some of the more anachronistic regulations ... that were unacceptable under a democratic regime for the repression of emotional and momentary protests of wide sectors of public opinion.<sup>17</sup>

While there was some internal debate amongst the Socialists as to their specific role in a Republican administration, the overall strategy was that of bolstering the new regime.<sup>18</sup> To this end, they eschewed any radical proposals that might undermine the moderate reformist image that the Provisional Government was attempting to portray, or antagonize still powerful sectors such as the military. This meant swallowing, like their Republican allies, their deep-seated hostility towards the Civil Guard. As Vidarte explains, while the dissolution of the Civil Guard was part of the Socialists' agenda, the

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<sup>17</sup> Vidarte, *Las Cortes Constituyentes*, p. 292.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the moderation of, and divisions amongst, the Socialists, see Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic* (henceforth *CSCW*), (London, 1994), Chapter 3.

exigencies of the situation and pressure from their coalition partners obliged them to drop this pledge from their platform.<sup>19</sup> At the Extraordinary Congress of the PSOE in July 1931, a representative from Jaca (Huesca) presented a motion for the disarming the Civil Guard. The hapless delegate was unable to complete his petition due to the disapproving response his proposal caused amongst his colleagues.<sup>20</sup> Taking this sentiment even farther was Julián Besteiro, one of the most prominent, though conservative leaders amongst the PSOE. Echoing Maura's position, Besteiro remarked to the Minister of War, Manuel Azaña, that the Civil Guard "is an admirable machine. One needs not to abolish it but make it work in our favour."<sup>21</sup>

Nonetheless, while opinions such as Besteiro's were not the mainstream view within the PSOE, during the first year of the Republic the majority of Socialist representatives limited their demands to the Interior Ministry to the transfer of problematic Civil Guard officers. Indeed, such transfers constituted the primary strategy employed by the Provisional Government as it would not only defuse local tensions, but was also felt to be less antagonistic to Civil Guard sensibilities than a policy of the widespread purging its ranks. This measure was often necessary wherever there existed a history of hostility between Civil Guards and local Republican and Socialist representatives, a fact recognized even by Director-General Sanjurjo, who commented to Azaña that his men might have difficulty accepting orders from those whom they previously viewed as the

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<sup>19</sup> Vidarte, *Las Cortes Constituyentes*, pp. 292-293.

<sup>20</sup> *El Partido Socialista ante las Constituyentes* (Madrid, 1931), p. 56. The Socialists efforts to moderate their agenda and the expectations of their growing constituency, and the difficulties they encountered in doing so, see Paul Preston, *CSCW*, Chapter 3.

<sup>21</sup> Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, p. 425.

enemy.<sup>22</sup> As a result, waves of large-scale transfers of NCOs (sergeants and corporals) and guards were carried out by the National Directorate during the spring and summer of 1931.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, even this moderate position could sometimes lead to disagreements, especially when doctrine clashed with pragmatism. In one interesting case, the Socialist parliamentary deputies for the province of Badajoz (all members of the PSOE's right and centre groupings, including the *besteiristas* Manuel Muiño and Narciso Vázquez and the *prietistas* Julián Zugazagoitia and Juan Simeón Vidarte) wrote to the Interior Minister requesting the wholesale transfer of all Civil Guard personnel in their province.

Interestingly, this was before the election of the deputy for Badajoz who was the most militantly critical of the Civil Guard, Margarita Nelken, who did not enter the Cortes until after a by-election on 4 October 1931. Only days after the letter sent by the deputies, a series of telegrams from municipal authorities (many of these Socialists) and local Socialist organizations in and around the town of Alburquerque petitioned the Interior Minister to prevent the transfer of the District Commandant of the Civil Guard, with whom they enjoyed a positive relationship.<sup>24</sup> Yet, as the year wore on and frustrations and passion rose, the debate within the PSOE about the limits of their moderate stance towards the Civil Guard became more heated, particularly as rural workers flooded into the Socialists' union, the UGT, bringing the explosive situation in the countryside to the

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<sup>22</sup> Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>23</sup> "Disposiciones generales de la Guardia Civil", LCM (20 May 1931, 17 June 1931, 18 July 1931)

<sup>24</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 14, Agrupación Socialista [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1299, 24 July 1931); Workers' Centre, Barrio Pilar Ferrera [Alburquerque, Badajoz] to Interior Minister and Socialist Parliamentary Deputy Celestino García (No. 1416, 27 July 1931); Gregorio Zamora, et al, [Montijo, Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1432, 28 July 1931); Mayor of Alburquerque [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1492, 29 July 1931); Mayor Sendras [San Vicente de Alcántara, Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1517, 30 July 1931).



forefront of the Socialists' attention, as well as provoking confrontation with Civil Guards at the local level.

While the exigencies of being in power caused a certain tension with the beliefs and experiences of republicans and Socialists in regards to the *Benemérita*, the change of regime produced a similar conflict amongst the Civil Guard. While some Civil Guards greeted the proclamation of the Republic with a strong sense of dread or distaste, there were a few who saw the reforming agenda of the new regime as a better response to the chronic conflict that characterized labour relations in Spain. The British journalist Henry Buckley recounted one startling display of hostility to the old order. Travelling in a third-class railway carriage in the autumn of 1931, Buckley had encountered a Civil Guard sergeant who had startled him by exclaiming that "People can say what they like about the monks and nuns but I tell you this that unless you burn down all their buildings and thus destroy their lairs Spain will never get anywhere". Buckley recounts his surprise as this remark, "given its source", noting that this civil guard "was one in a thousand in his class".<sup>25</sup>

The majority view within the Civil Guard was rather less iconoclastic. Instead, most Civil Guards greeted the relatively peaceful change of regime with mixture of relief and a sense of foreboding. This perspective was best explained in a front-page editorial statement made in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*:

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<sup>25</sup> Henry Buckley, *Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (London, 1940), p. 78. Nonetheless, the religious devotion of the ordinary civil guard should not be exaggerated. In his memoirs, Civil Guard Sergeant Gabriel Ferreras noted that his colleagues did not share his religious fervor, one of them sneering that he could not believe that in the twentieth century "that there could be such fanatic individuals": Gabriel Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias del sargento Ferreras* (León, 2002), p. 59.

Save for various isolated incidents ... this transcendental political change occurred with minimal disturbance, a clear sign of the civic-mindedness and understanding (*comprensión*) of the different social classes, and contradicts the suspicion that the Spanish people will fall into some insane mimicry of Soviet nihilism. Nonetheless, we believe it indispensable as a prudent measure that the authorities and those people of order, aided at all times by the lavish protection provided by the Civil Guard, watch closely any revolutionary attempt – presumably in the form of attacks of the communist disease – which left unobserved will try to submerge the nation in endless chaos. Democracy and liberty, fair enough, but justice as well. If the country has rejected aristocratic absolutism, it has not been to fall under another form of absolutism, one even more intransigent and tyrannical, an absolutism that disgusts the conscience of all human beings.

The Civil Guard, wisely led by General Sanjurjo, maintains at every moment and will maintain forever a position of absolute neutrality in regards to political matters, respectful of the will of the people and serving loyally the ruling regime (*el Poder constituido*).<sup>26</sup>

The second article of the same issue, titled “The Loyalty of the Civil Guard”, also an editorial, picks up on the issue of the purported political neutrality of the corps. It praised the efforts of General Sanjurjo during the transfer of powers, attributing to him (and by extension, the Civil Guard) most of the credit for the smooth transition from monarchy to

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<sup>26</sup> “La República Española”, *RTGC*, No. 255 (May 1931), p. 241. As the *Revista Técnica* uses a system of continual page numbering, that is, carrying over the page number from one issue to another, starting anew at the beginning of each year, page 241 constitutes the first page of the May 1931 issue of *RTGC*.

Republic. While this was somewhat of an exaggeration, the article was meant to convey the fundamental importance of the Civil Guard to the new regime, as well as warning against those who sought to undermine the Republic for their own partisan agendas:

One can consider our Republic as an unshakeable political block (*un bloque estatal incommovible*), under whose shadow all of the different political sectors – from the conservative to the socialist – will be able to discuss their various programs in a noble and civilized parliamentary debate. No one should dare try to disturb the material and spiritual peace that has been gained with the regime that was brought about with the acquiescence of all, for they have no right to do so and would deserve the most staggering (*fulminante*) and harsh punishment.<sup>27</sup>

Several sentiments are evident in these two articles. The first of these is the fear that the Provisional Government will suffer the same fate as its Russian counterpart in 1917. The concern was that the change of regime would result in an erosion of state authority, thus creating an opportunity for a Bolshevik-style conquest of power. The need to protect the Republic from such a danger was in the interests of all and, given the election results, represented the national will. For most Civil Guards, Communists and anarchists were the main danger, not monarchists. The Civil Guard saw itself as the primary pillar supporting the Spanish state and the first line of defence against any Communist uprising or social revolution, a view shared by their colleagues in the military and conservative sectors of civilian society who never stinted in their support of the corps. As such, those who did not appreciate the necessity and sacrifices of the Civil Guard and who criticised

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<sup>27</sup> “Lealtad de la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, No. 255 (May 1931), pp. 242-243. For further praise of General Sanjurjo’s actions on 14 April, see “Guardia Civil: El mayor acierto del general Sanjurjo”, *LCM* (16 April 1931).

the *Beneméríta* were seen as marginal, irresponsible or subversive elements. Unlike their new Republican masters, the Civil Guard did not look upon these conservative groups as a threat, but rather sectors of opinion that had to be accommodated within the new political order. As many monarchists flocked to the various Republican parties, particularly the Radicals, it appeared to many Civil Guards that this accommodation was possible as well as desirable. Indeed, the very example of the Civil Guard's own Director-General, not to mention the presence of two former monarchists in the government itself, seemed to prove the point. One can even say that how the new regime treated the more flexible and moderate sectors of the previous political order was seen by many Civil Guards as a litmus test of sorts as to the future of the corps itself under the Republic. This meant that the marriage of convenience between the Civil Guard on the one hand, and the (Left) Republicans and Socialists on the other, was susceptible to considerable strain.

The underlying conflict of perspectives between the Left Republicans and the Socialists, and the Civil Guard and their political allies in the Republican Centre and Centre-Right, could and did erupt into full blown confrontations as both sides struggled to define the political character of the Republic, as was first seen during the events of 10-11 May. This tension manifested itself in a variety of ways and occasions, and at times within the two blocks themselves, and continued throughout the life of the regime. For a regime anxious to establish the rule of law, and thus ensure that Civil Guards respected the new legal order, policies such as the establishment of a committee to judge and punish "responsibilities" for the crimes of the dictatorship could prove counterproductive,

particularly due to the vagueness of the very definition of “responsibility” and the inconsistent manner in which responsibility was determined. Given the threats made by the Republicans before the April elections, as well as the limited efforts to purge the security forces, it was feared amongst the corps that virtually any Civil Guard could be brought up and jailed on charges simply for following orders. The perception that the “responsibilities” issue was not one of punishing those who enabled and bolstered an illegal dictatorship, but was rather a vengeful and arbitrary tool of political persecution, was sustained by the fact that no one from the Socialist UGT, including its leader, who was now a government minister, was going to be investigated for their collaboration with Primo de Rivera.

The Republican authorities further confused the issue by justifying one act of military rebellion (that of December 1930), glorifying the “martyrs” Galán and García Hernández, while condemning another (that of September 1923). That this was guided by political considerations over that of legal ones was evidenced by the government’s treatment of General Sanjurjo, who not only openly adhered to the *pronunciamiento* of Primo de Rivera, but he was also a well-known friend and supporter of the dictator. Sanjurjo was not only idolised within the Civil Guard, but also he was seen by most of his subordinates as the symbol of the national will, of the non-partisan nature of the new regime – and thus his treatment was symbolic of the fate of the *Benemérita* itself. Diego Martínez Barrio reported to Azaña that, according to his sources, “the Civil Guard will not consent to Sanjurjo being touched”.<sup>28</sup> While Azaña dismissed this intelligence, perhaps too lightly, given the several crucial services that Sanjurjo provided for the Provisional Government,

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<sup>28</sup> Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, p. 253.

amongst these mollifying the concerns within the military and the Civil Guard about the character of the new regime, it was decided not to bring him in for a statement.<sup>29</sup> Despite such concessions to the sensibilities of the Civil Guard and the military, a sense of distrust towards the more leftist elements within the administration, particularly the War Minister, continued unabated. Azaña's practice of conferring with lesser ranking officers with Republican sympathies on military matters gave rise to a rumoured "black cabinet" of advisors.<sup>30</sup> While Azaña himself had always attempted to avoid unnecessarily antagonizing the military, the Republicans' politicization of matters of discipline and duty, which would – rightly or wrongly – take on a more pronounced character after October 1934, would come back to haunt them later.

Whatever tensions existed between the Civil Guard and middle class Republicans and the Socialist leadership (several of whom came from the middle classes as well), it was the relationship between the *Benemérita* and the labouring classes that proved the most difficult to manage. As the two articles discussed above demonstrate, there was considerable anxiety that the change of regime would open the floodgates to social revolution. For the Civil Guard, given the delicate situation that prevailed while the Provisional Government attempted to consolidate the new regime, compromise, patience and public order were of crucial importance during this potentially dangerous phase in the nation's history. This meant that public acts of dissent, such as strikes and protests, had to be closely monitored and kept strictly within the framework set out by the government.

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<sup>29</sup> Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, pp. 259, 262-263; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London, 1993), pp. 78-79; Paul Preston, "The Prisoner in the Gilded Cage: Manuel Azaña", *Comrades: Portraits from the Spanish Civil War* (London, 1999), pp. 201-204.

The lack of an authentic democratic tradition in Spain meant that under the monarchy opposition to a government often meant opposition to the regime itself, and Civil Guards at times had a difficult time distinguishing between loyal and disloyal oppositions, and the lines between economic and political protests were often blurred. The fact that many Republican politicians themselves suffered from the same difficulty only underlines the point, for one or two elections did not convert Spain automatically into a democratic society. As such, seemingly illiberal measures were seen as temporarily necessary while the regime consolidated itself, which in turn would enact a process of Republicanising society. This process would entail the eventual disappearance of those movements, such as the anarcho-syndicalists, which were seen as products of the exclusive and repressive nature of the monarchy. This also meant that the civil rights of the extreme Left (as well as the Right) could be infringed upon when these came into conflict with the interests of the regime. As Azaña replied to his critics during the parliamentary debate over the Law for the Defense of the Republic, which – rightly or wrongly – sought to criminalize opposition to the regime, “I am not a liberal”.<sup>31</sup>

As has been mentioned before, the Civil Guard viewed the working classes with a mixture of sympathy, condescension and fear. There were some promising signs that the relationship between the two groups could improve. Far from being cut off from the rest of society, as political and cultural ideas infiltrated the civilian population, they would also find some resonance within the Civil Guard. Just as the political atmosphere after 1914 led to Civil Guards adopting the rhetoric of *regeneración*, so the coming of the Republic saw an increasing identification amongst the *Benemérita* with the working

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<sup>31</sup> Manuel Portela Valladares, *Memorias: Dentro del drama español* (Madrid, 1988), pp. 126-127.

classes, even if this was at times only rhetorical. As one article published in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* explained in reaction to a petition to dissolve the Civil Guard and arm the “people”,

Foolish and absurd is the premise behind such a concept, as the corps, far from representing the plutocracy or the nobility, has its roots in the proletariat which feeds it with its red blood [*tiene su raíz en el proletariado que lo nutre con su sangre roja*] and devotes itself to the defence of the law that serves all. The Civil Guard, father of a very modest family, is an honourable worker who offers his labour to the sovereign people ... to guarantee its rights. A thousand examples testify to the impartiality of the meritorious Institute, which denounces and persecutes, when there is cause to do so, the powerful in favour of the humble.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, another article in the same journal noted that the humble Civil Guard was also poorly paid for his labour, echoing a certain resentment towards the attention given to other workers, while no one spoke up for the “worker for peace” (*obrero de la paz*):

It ought to be recognized that the Civil Guards’ services are not rewarded as they should be, in that their derisory salaries have not been raised. When all other types of workers gain an improvement in their pay, many times through violent means, with strikes and threats, no one has raised their voice in favour of the *obrero de la paz*, who endangers his life and that of his family a hundred times in service to the nation.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> J. Ortiz Tallo, “Tribuna Libre: Disolver la Guardia Civil y armar al pueblo”, *RTGC*, No. 259 (September 1931), p. 434.

<sup>33</sup> “Leyendo la Prensa”, *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931), p. 550. The author of this article, which was presumably published in a newspaper, is listed as “Friend”. Given the manner in that the author discusses



In regards to the organized working class movements themselves, many Civil Guards judged these as much, if not more, on their tactics as they did their ideology. As such, there was some distinction between the more reformist and moderate sectors of the working class movement, and those that preached social revolution and endorsed violence, and thus represented a physical danger to those civil guards that had to confront them. The Civil Guard felt that now that the working classes could voice their grievances through their representatives in a free and democratically-elected parliament, there was no justification for such radical measures. Consequently, given that parliament had been freely and democratically elected, such radical elements could be more easily characterized as being against the will of the nation. The majority of the country rejected violent acts and supports the Civil Guard, one article explained, and not just the middle classes, but also

the majority of the proletariat, affiliated to the UGT, that admirable Socialist party that has given so many examples of common sense and sound judgement. The Socialists have shown themselves to be a formidable force for government, perfectly disciplined and united, rejecting violence and by such has condemned the actions of those eternal scroungers who live off disorder (*eternos vividores del desorden*).<sup>34</sup>

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the grievances of the Civil Guard, we can assume that he was a civil guard himself, who disguised his identity to avoid punishment for indiscipline. At any rate, the article's reprinting in the official journal of the Civil Guard demonstrates, at least, that such views reflected those of the corps.

<sup>34</sup> R.N., "Guardia Civil: El mejor elogio", *LCM* (30 May 1931); "Guardia Civil: En defensa propia", *LCM* (28 July 1931).

Civil Guards maintained a distinction between the common worker and those organizations that were dedicated to protecting his interests. The more extremist elements, such as the anarcho-syndicalists and the communists, were not seen as representing the sentiments of certain sectors of working-class opinion, but rather as the exploiters of the frustrations and lack of education of the ordinary worker. From the Civil Guard's perspective, the policies of more radical elements were against the interest of the average "honest" worker, who would then suffer the repressive force of the state, while the "professional agitator" would flee the confrontation that they created, only to foment disorder elsewhere. Moreover, since these "deviants" or "criminal elements" were confronted – and foiled – in their objectives by the Civil Guard, they incessantly criticized the *Benemérita* and demanded its dissolution. Since there existed little concern that the CNT could actually achieve its political goals, the fear was that the anarcho-syndicalists would radicalize the working classes, and the communists would then benefit from this.

Outside its more syndicalist factions, the CNT leadership "regarded the Republic with considerable suspicion and barely restrained impatience", and rejected its labour arbitration mechanisms, particularly as these were in the hands of their bitter rivals, the Socialists, just as they were under the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. They also represented, and encouraged, a considerable sector of working-class opinion, which expected significant change almost immediately.<sup>35</sup> From the very proclamation of the

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<sup>35</sup> Preston, *Coming of the SCW*, p. 75; Julian Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain, 1931-1939* (London, 2005); Carlos Gil Andrés, *Echarse a la calle: Amotinados, huelguistas y revolucionarios (La Rioja, 1890-1936)*, (Zaragoza, 2000), pp. 179-192, passim.; Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (London, 2005), pp. 54-101.

Republic, the CNT demonstrated its refusal to compromise with the security forces. While the other elements of the Spanish Left suppressed their deeply held dislike for institutions such as the Civil Guard for the sake of consolidating the new regime, the CNT, feeling no particular allegiance to the Republic, felt no need to hide their hostility towards the police. Two days after the establishment of the Republic, the anarchist daily *Solidaridad Obrera* provided an example of their position vis-à-vis the police: ‘Yesterday the ex-monarchic forces were nowhere to be seen in the city. The streets were clean of those bad elements, just like garbage. Everyone was praising this preventative measure...because everyone, absolutely everyone, hates these monarchic forces...Let it be that the “monos”, civiles [Civil Guard] and “poli” [police] never return, never!’<sup>36</sup> The Civil Guard was singled out with particular vitriol by the CNT and its fellow-travellers. The pamphlets prepared for the attempted insurrection by radical military officers and anarcho-syndicalists in Sevilla in the end of June 1931, invited everyone, “Armed forces, civilians and soldiers” to join the revolution, yet “we exclude from this call the murders of the people, the Civil Guard”.<sup>37</sup>

As was to be expected, the Civil Guard had little sympathy for the CNT, and consistently called for strong measures to be taken to deal with the subversive organization, a course of action that the Republican authorities themselves were inclined increasingly to follow. Nonetheless, despite the Civil Guard’s antipathy to the tenets of libertarianism and a long history of violent confrontation with the CNT, some words of praise could be offered for more moderate sectors within the movement. After the moderate syndicalist leader Joan

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<sup>36</sup> *Solidaridad Obrera*, 16 April 1931.

<sup>37</sup> A copy of the revolutionaries’ manifesto was read out in full in parliament: *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes* (20 July 1931), p. 58.

Peiró published an article calling for a halt to the violent tactics of his coreligionists, he became the surprising recipient of praise from the Civil Guard (which probably did him and his cause little good in CNT circles). The Civil Guard article, which characterized anarchist tactics as the products of “primitive mentalities”, not only applauded Peiró’s statement but also explained that the corps’ use of force was a reaction to the violence that they themselves were subjected to. In other words, if the CNT would abandon its strategy of “revolutionary gymnastics”, the Civil Guard would act with greater restraint.<sup>38</sup> Whether this would have been the case or not, taken in conjunction with the positive comments made about the Socialists, it at least signified the potential for some sort of improvement in the relationship between the Civil Guard and the working class organizations. Indeed, the improvement of this relationship would be one of the keys to democratizing and Republicanising the Civil Guard (and the working classes themselves). In this regard, the statesmen of the new regime needed to demonstrate to the corps that their strategy of consultation and compromise was a better solution to the instability and unrest that had periodically gripped Spain. This in turn, depended on the government’s ability to “republicanise” the culture of protest and those manifestations of labour unrest inherited from the monarchy.

Nonetheless, this relationship was not defined solely by the central government or the representatives of the various parties in Madrid. In fact, dynamics of the locality in which Civil Guards served had their effect as well. There were municipalities and districts in which the local authorities and the contingent of Civil Guards enjoyed a fairly positive relationship. There were examples of local workers’ associations or Republicans

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<sup>38</sup> “Guardia Civil: Por una vez, de acuerdo”, *LCM* (29 July 1931).

seeking to prevent the transfer of a Civil Guard officer with whom they had a good working relationship.<sup>39</sup> More surprisingly was the request from one Socialist society in Arjona (Jaén) for the sending of more Civil Guards to protect striking workers from the local *patronos*.<sup>40</sup> These examples aside, more often than not, particularly in areas with long traditions of social conflict, the relationship between the local Civil Guards and working classes was tense and full of mutual recriminations. Furthermore, the particular political parties or workers' organizations that dominated a given locality, such as those with a strong anarcho-syndicalist presence, necessarily influenced the dynamics of the situation. The traditional alliance between the local proprietor class and the Civil Guard was strengthened not only by their shared fear of the working class unrest, but sometimes by the government itself. Given the budgetary problems of the central government, and the extra costs of redeploying Civil Guard personnel, offers by local proprietors to cover these additional expenses in exchange for a concentration of forces in their district were often accepted by the Interior Minister.<sup>41</sup> The situation was further complicated by the fact that the political struggles between Left-Centre-Right would often erupt over issues

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<sup>39</sup> "Manifestación popular contra el traslado de un capitán de la Guardia Civil", *LCM* (17 July 1931); "Guardia Civil: Un caso típico", *LCM* (21 July 1931); AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 15, Alcalde de Cabra [Córdoba] to Interior Minister (No. 1536, 23 May 1931), Los Presidentes de Partido Republicano Radical Socialista y Centro Obrero de Fraternidad de Cabra [Córdoba] to Interior Minister (No. 1543, 23 May 1931), Rafael Serrano, Jefe del Centro Telefónico de Cabra [Córdoba] to Interior Minister (No. 1606, 24 May 1931); *Ibid.*, No. 18, Eduardo Caso, Alcalde de Villaviciosa [Oviedo] to Interior Minister (No. 31, 01 October 1931). See also footnote 23 above.

<sup>40</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 16, Sociedad Obrera Socialista de Arjona [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 954, 18 October 1931).

<sup>41</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 16, Civil Governor [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 1439, 22 April 1931; No. 906, 15 May 1931; No. 176, 2 June 1931; No. 240, 3 June 1931; No. 385, 5 June 1931; No. 956, 13 June 1931; No. 1147, 16 June 1931; No. 1108, 20 June 1931; No. 81, 2 July 1931; No. 83, 2 July 1931); *Ibid.*, Legajo 39A, No. 16, Civil Governor [Lérida] to Interior Minister (No. 1991, 28 May 1931); Interior Minister to Civil Governor [Lérida], (No. 386, 12 June 1931); *Ibid.*, Legajo 16A, No. 16, Civil Governor [Navarra] to Interior Minister (No. 1512, 23 May 1931; No. 1284, 23 July 1931; No. 1404, 27 July 1931; No. 450, 13 August 1931; No. 451, 13 August 1931; No. 559, 17 August 1931; No. 1004, 27 August 1931; No. 959, 22 September 1931; No. 1066, 24 September 1931; No. 1291, 27 November 1931).

over the actions and or transfer of the local Civil Guard. Since Republicans, though some only Republicans in name, could come out in defense of the local Civil Guard, this gave a sense of justification and popular support to the corps, as seen in the various declarations in their own press. Moreover, in those areas where there existed considerable popular anti-Republican sentiment, such attitudes could permeate the local Civil Guards units. For example, in the traditionalist and devoutly Catholic province of Navarra, Maura confided to Azaña, all of the Civil Guard sympathized with the Carlists, and thus should be transferred to posts elsewhere in the peninsula.<sup>42</sup>

While the various politicians and representatives in Madrid did not always determine the relationship between Civil Guards and the working classes, that is not to say that they had no impact. Indeed, since the Civil Guard was a centralized institution that relied ultimately on the decisions made in Madrid, the position of the government was of considerable importance. This often left the government in a difficult position, as it had to maintain a delicate balance between meeting the expectations of both the Civil Guard and the working classes. In terms of the former, alongside their concerns about the viability of Republicanism in Spain, the Civil Guard had long feared that the coming of a Republic represented a threat to their livelihood, as was seen by its cautious neutrality in the months before the April 1931 election. In terms of the latter, significant sectors of the population had expected that the new Republic would dissolve the corps, an impression that the Republicans often encouraged in their speeches before assuming power. The threat to the existence of the Civil Guard was linked intimately with the authority of the corps, which was seen by Civil Guards themselves as crucial not only to carry out the

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<sup>42</sup> Azaña, *Diarios completos*, p. 226.

unpopular task of enforcing the nation's laws, but also to the personal safety of its personnel. As such, Civil Guards expected and demanded that the Provisional Government defend the prestige of the *Benemérita* against its detractors, and demonstrate its appreciation for the corps' sacrifices and hardships.

Concern amongst the Civil Guard about the issues mentioned above manifested itself almost immediately. During the May Day celebrations in Barcelona, the local garrison of Civil Guard was accosted and insulted by the more aggressive elements amongst the revellers. Incensed at their treatment, they sent a letter to the Catalan *Generalitat* complaining about the rough and disrespectful treatment that they suffered, and then threatened that they "would no longer tolerate being the victim of insults and aggressions" of "certain elements", namely "communists" and "anarchists".<sup>43</sup> This act of incipient insubordination received the backing of the military press, and evidently considerable public sympathy.<sup>44</sup> More importantly, the Captain-General of Catalonia, General Eduardo López de Ochoa, commented to the press that he was shown a very similar note during an earlier visit to the garrison in which he told the officers of his agreement with their complaints. He noted, however, that he did not authorize the publication of the note, nor should a military institution like the Civil Guard have done such a thing. Nonetheless, López de Ochoa stated that he did not feel that the issue

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<sup>43</sup> "La Guardia Civil de Barcelona presenta una nota al Gobierno de la Generalidad", *Ejército y Armada* (6 May 1931). Macía claimed that he never received any such letter: "Desde Barcelona: El señor Macía dice que no ha recibido el escrito que se atribuyó a la Guardia Civil", *LCM* (8 May 1931).

<sup>44</sup> "La misión de la Guardia Civil", *LCM* (8 May 1931); "Adhesiones a la Guardia Civil: En el 21° Tercio se han recibido más de tres mil tarjetas", *LCM* (10 May 1931). Both of these articles appeared on the front page of *La Correspondencia Militar*.

deserved any official reprimand.<sup>45</sup> Given the fact that López de Ochoa was a liberal and a Republican, his sympathy with the grievances of the Barcelona Civil Guard should have been a cause of some concern to the government, particularly Interior Minister Maura who met with the general soon after the letter's publication. The Interior Minister ordered an investigation of the incident,<sup>46</sup> but the events of 10-11 May would soon erase any desire to make an example of the Barcelona Civil Guard.

Members of the Corps were aware of the heated ministerial confrontation over the use of the Civil Guard during the events of 10-11 May, alongside the Ateneo declaration from the Interior Ministry balcony and the hostile mood amongst the crowds. Not surprisingly, these incidents, in conjunction with those surrounding the May Days in Barcelona, created a sense of unease amongst the Civil Guard. Apprehensive about recent developments, Maura called a meeting of various high-ranking officers of the corps and Director-General Sanjurjo in an effort to alleviate any discontent, and to gauge the mood within the Civil Guard after the events of the previous two weeks. Sanjurjo assured the Interior Minister of his own loyalty and that of his men, though one of the colonels present was less enthusiastic in his support. While stating that he understood the root causes for the outbursts of 10-11 May and was certain that the government would take action to prevent such incidents from occurring again, he let it be known that much of his

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<sup>45</sup> "El capitán general de Cataluña y la Guardia Civil", *El Sol* (5 May 1931); "El capitán general de Cataluña revista las fuerzas de la Guardia Civil", *LCM* (6 May 1931); "Noticias políticas: El documento de la Guardia Civil", *Ejército y Armada* (9 May 1931); "El escrito de la Guardia Civil: Manifestaciones de capitán general de Cataluña", *LCM* (9 May 1931).

<sup>46</sup> "Noticias políticas: Manifestaciones del Sr. Maura", *Ejército y Armada* (08 May 1931).



confidence in the government was based on his confidence in Maura himself.<sup>47</sup> The fact that the minister was also singled out by the protesters probably helped in this identification between the interests of the Civil Guard, the public order and the minister himself.

The views of this particular colonel were echoed throughout the Civil Guard press. In one article, the Civil Guard author both defended the prestige of the corps while demonstrating a comprehension of the sources of popular hostility towards it. The article argued that the discipline of the corps demanded that it follow the orders of its superiors under the monarchy, and thus were passive actors in the abuses of the previous regime. While understanding that this has damaged the reputation of the Civil Guard, the implication was that now that the source of these abuses had disappeared (i.e. the monarchy), so had the basis of hostility towards the force. The article recognised that the corps' function in urban areas is largely repressive, and thus the author believed that those crowds in Barcelona and Madrid that were calling for the dissolution of the Civil Guard were unaware of the variety of humanitarian functions that it carried out in the countryside. As such, it was reasoned, urban dwellers had a distorted view of the functions and duties of the corps.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, the continued reliance of the Republican authorities on the Civil Guard caused a certain concern amongst the latter since their employment in controlling urban

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<sup>47</sup> Maura, *Así cayó*, pp. 272-273. Maura gives the date of 16 May 1931 for this meeting, which Aguado Sánchez calls into question as Sanjurjo was in Spanish Morocco at that time, not returning to Madrid until 12 June: *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, pp. 254-255.

<sup>48</sup> "Los pueblos piden Guardia Civil", *RTGC*, No. 256, (June 1931), p. 290

disturbances was simply adding fuel to the fire. It was argued in a series of articles that the Civil Guard should only be used sparingly in such situations, allowing the Interior Ministry police to do their duty and handle public order in the cities and large towns.<sup>49</sup> Also, another article counselled Civil Guards to act with restraint, recognizing that it was not only the nature of their duty that provoked public hostility towards them.<sup>50</sup> Given that the regime's reliance on the *Benemérita* was likely to continue into the foreseeable future, there also were calls for non-lethal modern means for crowd dispersal so as to reduce casualties amongst protesters, and hence their hostility towards the Civil Guard.<sup>51</sup> The constant redeployments, which left their normal rural districts (and their families that lived in them) undefended, and the consequent long hours also led to requests for increases in personnel from an overwhelmed and overstretched Civil Guard.<sup>52</sup>

The Civil Guard felt that in return for the hardships suffered in service to the Republic, its politicians should adequately defend the corps prestige and properly recompense its personnel. One way that the government could demonstrate its gratitude, Civil Guards suggested, would be a pay raise.<sup>53</sup> Another was public recognition of the sacrifices Civil Guards made defending the regime. As one article claimed, "if this meritorious force did

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<sup>49</sup> "Guardia Civil: Discreción en su empleo", *LCM* (3 July 1931); "Guardia Civil: Así no se puede seguir", *LCM* (7 July 1931).

<sup>50</sup> "Educación Moral: Sanas Doctrinas", *RTGC*, No. 260 (October 1931), p. 443.

<sup>51</sup> "Guardia Civil: La falta de medios", *LCM* (29 May 1931); "Lo que se impone", *RTGC*, No. 258 (August 1931), p. 376.

<sup>52</sup> N.R., "Guardia Civil: Aumentos necesarios", *LCM* (10 June 1931); "Guardia Civil: Se impone el aumento de plantillas", *LCM* (12 June 1931), "Guardia Civil: La utilidad indiscutible del Instituto", *LCM* (10 July 1931).

<sup>53</sup> "Guardia Civil: El haber de la tropa", *LCM* (2 August 1931); "Guardia Civil: Hay que vivir alerta", *LCM* (4 August 1931); "Guardia Civil: Las pensiones de cruces", *LCM* (7 August 1931); "Guardia Civil: Las pensiones de viudedad y orfandad", *LCM* (08 August 1931); "Guardia Civil: Ante el próximo presupuesto", *LCM* (27 August 1931); "Guardia Civil: Ecos de actualidad", *LCM* (30 August 1931); "Manifestaciones del general Sanjurjo", *LCM* (30 August 1931).

not exist, the Republic would have already disappeared.”<sup>54</sup> The Civil Guard certainly felt justified in making such assertions, as similar statements about the utility and necessity of the corps were repeated in the civilian press.<sup>55</sup> There was an understanding that during the period of consolidation of the Republic, challenges to the new political order by extremist elements would occur and almost necessarily result in violent confrontations between Civil Guards and sectors of the general population, such as those that occurred in Montemolín (Badajoz) and Santa Olalla (Toledo) in June 1931. Yet, the corps demanded alongside any innocent civilian casualties, those Civil Guards that were wounded or killed in the course of duty should also be publicly recognized and honoured. In Montemolín, a lone civil guard had been a “victim of duty” after attempting to defend the local post office from a group of protesters. He was chased through the streets with “savage ferocity” after a scuffle and killed in the main square.<sup>56</sup> Not only should these sacrifices be publicly recognized, a front-article article printed in *La Correspondencia Militar* pointed out, but physical attacks on the Civil Guard should be punished severely and the authority of the corps protected.<sup>57</sup>

Nonetheless, instances of public hostility towards the corps continued to manifest themselves, to the discomfort of a government intent on maintaining the confidence and loyalty of its most numerous police force. A group of bystanders, reputedly angry participants from the recently repressed telephone worker strike, began to hoot and howl

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<sup>54</sup> “Servicios: La Comandancia de Toledo”, *RTGC*, No. 260 (October 1931), p. 456.

<sup>55</sup> “En honor y defensa de la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, No. 256 (June 1931), p. 291; “En honor de la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, No. 257 (July 1931), p. 342; “Leyendo la Prensa”, *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931), p. 550.

<sup>56</sup> “Guardia Civil: Olvidos injustos”, *LCM* (27 June 1931); “Servicios: Víctimas del deber. En Montemolín (Badajoz)”, *RTGC*, No. 257 (July 1931), p. 335.

<sup>57</sup> This article featured an excerpt from the daily newspaper *El Castellano*, which made exactly the same comments: “El honor de la Guardia Civil”, *La Correspondencia Militar* (10 July 1931).

as the contingent of Civil Guard passed during the official parade during the opening of the Cortes on 14 July 1931, in full view of the government. Other attendees, including some parliamentary deputies, attempted to drown out the hissing and booing with applause for the corps.<sup>58</sup> This incident did not go unnoticed by the Civil Guard itself. A series of articles in reaction to the events appeared in the military daily *La Correspondencia Militar*. The first of which explained that such displays of public hostility damaged morale, and that the sacrifices and hardships suffered in the months since the proclamation of the Republic should bring praise and a sense of gratitude. Those who applauded the corps “know how to thank and appreciate” the services provided by the *Benemérita*. They were characterized as “the true people” (*el verdadero pueblo*). Their detractors, the “so-called representatives of the people” were informed that their devious plans would never bear fruition whilst the “sons of Ahumada” were there to protect the public, warning them that they “shall not pass” (*esos no pasarán*).<sup>59</sup>

What also did not go unnoticed was the fact that such public displays of aggression towards the Civil Guard at an official event would not have been tolerated under previous regime, and the permissiveness of the new Republic for such outbursts was seen as disrespecting the sacrifices made by the *Benemérita* in defending it. Echoing the letter of the Barcelona garrison back in May, one article explained that the Civil Guard was “caught between two fires” in that their mission was staunchly to defend public order, but

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<sup>58</sup> “La apertura de las Cortes Constituyentes”, *LCM* (15 July 1931), Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, p. 169.

<sup>59</sup> “Guardia Civil: La reacción se impone”, *LCM* (16 July 1931), front page. An article that appeared a few days before the opening of parliament discussed the high volume of extraordinary services that the Civil Guard had to carry out in the month of May, noting that “certain extremist elements” were deliberately provoking disorder as part of a predetermined plan: “Guardia Civil: Servicios prestados en el mes de Mayo”, *LCM* (8 July 1931).

that this brought with it criticism and attacks from those who sought to disturb the peace. It was asserted that the Civil Guard will not “permit those series of attacks that are constantly launched against it by “riffraff” (*la canalla*), in what could be interpreted as a veiled criticism of the government, it was stated that they should not have to tolerate such public hostility.”<sup>60</sup> Another article appearing a few days later noted a planned Communist demonstration scheduled for 1 August, in which the dissolution of the Civil Guard was going to be demanded. The author of the article asked “for how long” this situation was going to be tolerated, stating that the time had come to impose respect for public order. Indeed, perhaps thinking of the about-face many Republicans made upon gaining power, it informed its critics – “these false apostles” – that there just may come a day in which they will seek the protection of the *Benemérita* from “the fury of their deceived coreligionists, who have yet to see their true face”.<sup>61</sup> This exasperation with the near-constant wave of disturbances, carried out largely by the CNT, and the concern about the damage they were committing to the Republic’s image, was shared by the government itself. Even the leader of the Socialist Left, Francisco Largo Caballero, was demanding that Interior Minister Maura take harsh measures to bring the anarcho-syndicalists to heel.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> El Duende Rural (pseudo.), “Guardia Civil: Entre dos fuegos”, *LCM* (20 July 1931). A later article claimed that accusations by extremist elements against civil guards simply for doing their duty only served to weaken their authority amongst the local population, even when these accusations are proven false: “Guardia Civil: Acusaciones falsas”, *LCM* (18 August 1931).

<sup>61</sup> “Guardia Civil: ¿Hasta cuándo?”, *LCM* (23 July 1931). For more articles expressing both their exasperation at the continual disorder, as well as calls for the government to take a harder line, see also, “Guardia Civil: En defensa propia”, *LCM* (28 July 1931); “Guardia Civil: Por una vez, de acuerdo”, *LCM* (29 July 1931); “Guardia Civil: Hay que impedir las insidias”, *LCM* (13 August 1931).

<sup>62</sup> Preston, *Coming of the SCW*, pp. 88-89.

That this desire for order on the part of the Civil Guard was related primarily to personal safety, as opposed to a lack of identification with the ideals of the Republic, was most clearly seen in relation to the issue of public violence, and more specifically, the proliferation of arms. The most important way in which Civil Guards demanded that the government recognize the sacrifices and dangers suffered by the corps in this period of transition and consolidation was the strict control of firearms. Demands for energetic measures to prevent the proliferation of arms emerged alongside the first bursts of public disorder in the wake of the change of regime. As one article explained, while the issue of arms control was important for everyone, “for the corps it is of extraordinary importance” as the very nature of the Civil Guard’s duty means that “it has to live in constant struggle with evildoers”. Weapons in the hands of “the ignorant” or “the wicked” compromised the “most sacrosanct of all human rights” of civil guards: the right to life.<sup>63</sup> The apparent increase in the proliferation of weapons was seen as a by-product of the loosening of controls brought about by the change of regime, and the possession of arms only encouraged social conflict as it undermined the one of the most important weapons in a Civil Guard’s arsenal: the monopoly of firepower. Given the massive imbalance of numbers between a local post of four Civil Guards and crowds that can number in the dozens, if not the hundreds, this was of capital concern for the corps.<sup>64</sup> It was incumbent on the government to tackle what was “the greatest danger that faces Spain at the moment”, and several articles held out the example of the disarming of the Moroccan tribes during the process of pacification in this colony as proof of the effectiveness of

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<sup>63</sup> “Guardia Civil: La recogida de armas”, *LCM* (21 May 1931).

<sup>64</sup> “Guardia Civil: La dotación de los puestos”, *LCM* (22 June 1931); R.M., “Guardia Civil: Revisión de licencias de uso de armas”, *LCM* (14 July 1931).

such a strategy.<sup>65</sup> Much in the same way that many workers were becoming frustrated with the sometimes ineffective application of its labour reforms, Civil Guards complained that the government did not actively enforce its own laws against the illegal possession of arms.<sup>66</sup> When the government did take action and defend itself and all of society from those “professionals of disorder” that were arming themselves to “carry out their disastrous and anti-Spanish work”, they received praise from the Civil Guard.<sup>67</sup> Likewise, extraordinary legislation such as the Law for the Defence of the Republic was also welcomed by the corps.<sup>68</sup>

It was felt amongst the Civil Guard that the “national will” still stood behind the Republic, and that most of the disorder resulted from extremist minorities (which were almost always characterized as “primitive” and “barbaric”). Given the superior firepower of the state, the violent tactics of the revolutionaries will always fail. As one article explained, “today a revolution can only be made through the ballot box, when the people make their unanimous desire for change to be known”.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, despite the many confrontations over the previous months and displays of hostility from the working classes, the Civil Guard press still maintained that the majority of workers were pacific in their disposition, being a potential force for strong government that rejected the actions of the violent minority of “degenerate hordes”.<sup>70</sup> Implicit in such opinions was the belief

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<sup>65</sup> “Guardia Civil: Insistimos”, *LCM* (30 July 1931); “Guardia Civil: Las armas clandestinas”, *LCM* (16 August 1931). Foreign examples were also cited in support of the effectiveness of a general policy of disarming the population: “Guardia Civil: El ejemplo de fuera”, *LCM* (21 August 1931).

<sup>66</sup> “Guardia Civil: Medida poco eficaz”, *LCM* (23 August 1931), front page; “Guardia Civil: Mirando al porvenir”, *LCM* (1 August 1931).

<sup>67</sup> P.N., “Guardia Civil: Acierto gubernamental”, *LCM* (28 August 1931).

<sup>68</sup> “Ley de defensa de la República”, *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931), pp. 518-519.

<sup>69</sup> “Guardia Civil: Fracaso de la violencia”, *LCM* (6 September 1931).

<sup>70</sup> “Guardia Civil: Siguen las agresiones”, *LCM* (9 September 1931).

that the disorder that Spain was suffering was largely due not to the nature of the regime itself, but rather to an apparent reluctance of the government to clamp down on these extremist elements. Despite the efforts by Ministers to deal with the disorder, the general impression amongst the Civil Guard was that the government was not doing enough. The Civil Guard decried a “crisis of the principle of authority”, but importantly did not link this to the Republic itself. Instead, the apparent constant disorder and confrontations that Spain was suffering through was due to the rapidity of the change of regime, but also due to the inexperience of the new rulers.<sup>71</sup> The price of the perceived shortcomings or incompetence of their political masters was the blood of Civil Guards, an impression reinforced in the military and conservative press.<sup>72</sup> Ominously for the Provisional Government, praise for the efforts of General Sanjurjo began to appear in the military and Civil Guard press. As one front page article exclaimed, Sanjurjo was “the type of man that Spain needs to consolidate itself while it sets off on its new direction”.<sup>73</sup> As another front page article pointed out, Sanjurjo had already proven himself a capable leader. He managed to disarm and pacify the Rif tribesmen, it was argued, and Sanjurjo and the Civil Guard could do the same in Spain itself, if he was given the adequate authority to do so.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> “Guardia Civil: Crisis del principio de autoridad”, *LCM* (2 September 1931).

<sup>72</sup> “Sucesos en Prat de Llobregat. La Guardia Civil es agredida”, *LCM* (2 August 1931), title in large print; “¿Hasta cuándo? El benemérito Instituto es nuevamente vejado por sus enemigos”, *LCM* (19 August 1931), front page; “Lo de todos los días. Desarmen a la pareja de la Guardia Civil y hieren a un guardia”, *LCM* (20 August 1931); “Lo de todos los días. Agresión a fuerzas de la Guardia Civil y de Seguridad”, *LCM* (28 August 1931), front page; “¿Hasta cuándo? Cuatrocientos hombres armados contra siete Guardia civiles”, *LCM* (6 September 1931).

<sup>73</sup> “Guardia Civil: El hombre del día”, *LCM* (4 July 1931); “El General Sanjurjo”, *RTGC*, No. 258 (August 1931), p. 347.

<sup>74</sup> “Guardia Civil: Medida poco eficaz”, *LCM* (23 August 1931); “Guardia Civil: Ecos de actualidad”, *LCM* (30 August 1931).



In the view of the Civil Guard, instead of staving off the revolutionary danger, the Ministers in the current government appeared to be no more than inadequate commanders in the ongoing battle between civilization and barbarism. Shortly before the April 1931 elections, concern was expressed about democratic politics and the dangers of demagoguery.<sup>75</sup> While the relative orderly transfer of powers after the April elections had alleviated partially such concerns, the disorder that followed the initial calm had allowed such fears to resurface. In the last instalment of his “Short Ethics Courses”, Captain Rodrigo Zaragoza of the Civil Guard Special Academy once again gave voice to such opinions. In his discussion of popular sovereignty, Rodrigo Zaragoza contrasts the negative extremes to a “balanced democracy”. One extreme would be that of a “dictatorship of the majority” that ignores or persecutes less numerous social groups. In what can only be seen as a not-so-thinly-veiled criticism of the government, he goes on to describe the other extreme:

An even worse effect is produced when the government directs almost all of its efforts to protect the needy or unruly classes, neglecting the true social equilibrium. In this case *demagoguery* subverts the social order and puts political society itself at risk. The *populism* that inspires these methods turns into a more vulgar form (*populachería*) that attempts to flatter the violent minorities who inflict through their actions a true affront to civilization.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Captain Manuel Rodrigo Zaragoza, “Cursillo de ética. Capítulo V: El orden social”, *RTGC*, No. 252 (1931), pp. 125-126

<sup>76</sup> Captain Manuel Rodrigo Zaragoza, “Cursillo de ética. Capítulo X y último: El Pueblo”, *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931), pp. 534-535

As they had done in other times of unrest and apparent government weakness, Civil Guards became increasingly likely to resort to force in the face of potential physical danger. During one incident in Barcelona in early September, a fire-fight broke out between Civil Guards and a group of protesters. While the account given states that it was impossible to determine who opened fire first, the contingent of Civil Guards were soon able to dominate the situation. Yet, the article accurately notes the sense of fear amongst the Civil Guards: “Panic soon overcame the Civil Guards, and as they have done in so many other occasions, they began to open fire crazily, attempting to kill the ghost of their own terror.”<sup>77</sup>

The Socialist leader Largo Caballero also noticed a change in the attitudes and actions of the Civil Guard, and how this linked to the political situation. He remarked to Azaña that “during the dictatorship the Civil Guard conducted itself in a proper manner with the workers and peasantry, without mistreating anyone as they frequently did beforehand”, yet “since the coming of the Republic, the Civil Guard has returned to its brutal ways.”<sup>78</sup>

An article appearing in *La Correspondencia Militar* noted a significant incident in Bilbao whereby an altercation between Basque nationalists and Republicans was resolved without force by the Civil Guard. This event was significant as the intervention of the *Benemérita* was greeted with applause by those present, for “one can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times since the change of regime that the presence of the Civil Guard was not received with demonstrations of hostility”. The article ended hoping that

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<sup>77</sup> “Guardia Civil: Si es una injuria al benemérito Instituto, la rechazamos indignadamente”, *LCM* (8 September 1931). As can be gathered from the title of the article, the Civil Guard rejected the negative aspects of this account, made in an unidentified civilian newspaper characterized as being part of the corps’ critics.

<sup>78</sup> Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, p. 425.

the day would soon come whereby such expressions of antagonism towards the corps would no longer occur.<sup>79</sup>

Despite such wishful thinking, there was little in the last few months of 1931 that could alleviate the rising sense of insecurity felt by many in the Civil Guard. As a reflection of this insecurity, as well as frustration and anger, Civil Guards began to become more aggressive towards those elements that they perceived to be fomenting disorder and undermining the corps' authority. In Motril (Granada) and Olvera (Jaén) Civil Guards attempted to provoke clashes with local Socialist organizations.<sup>80</sup> The Mayor of Manzanilla (Huelva) was publicly insulted and threatened by the local Civil Guard Commandant.<sup>81</sup> A similar incident occurred in Olvera (Cádiz) when a Civil Guard lieutenant, acting on orders of the provincial governor, arrested the deputy mayor and most of the town council after they sided with an apparently tumultuous strike. Pistol in hand, the lieutenant publicly insulted his prisoners as they passed through the streets.<sup>82</sup> In Bollullos Par del Condado (Huelva), the local Civil Guard Commandant harassed not only a Socialist councillor, but also an arbitration committee that was attempting to resolve a labour dispute.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> "Guardia Civil: Ya era hora", *LCM* (15 September 1931).

<sup>80</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 15, Miguel Sánchez, President of Maritime Union and Mayor of Motril [Granada] to Interior Minister (No. 1063, 24 September 1931); *Ibid.*, No. 16, Socialist Councillors of Olvera [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 390, 8 October 1931).

<sup>81</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 15, Sr. Madroñal, Mayor of Manzanilla [Huelva] to Interior Minister (No. 275, 06 October 1931).

<sup>82</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 15, Mayor of Olvera [Cádiz] to Interior Minister (No. 471, 9 October 1931). In the version published in the *RTGC*, the offending municipal officials were said to have participated in a revolutionary strike, during which the Civil Guard were fired upon:

"Servicios", *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931), p. 548.

<sup>83</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 15, Arbitration Comité (Comité paritario) in Bollillos Par del Condado [Huelva] to the Interior Minister (No. 891, 21 September 1931).

As tensions rose in the countryside, so did opportunities for violent confrontation. Amongst the more serious of these occurred in Palacios Rubios (Salamanca) in late September 1931. After an illegal rally in the town of Peñaranda de Bracamonte, also in the province of Salamanca, groups of unruly strikers began disturbing the peace and began attacking local bakeries. According to official reports, when a contingent of seven Civil Guards arrived on the scene, they were greeted with shouts of “death to the Civil Guard”, and then had rocks thrown at them. Reportedly shots from the crowd rang out, to which the Civil Guards fired a warning volley into the air. The crowd responded with more stones and attempted to disarm the guardias. In response, the Civil Guards opened fire upon the crowd, killing two and wounding four.<sup>84</sup> This event had profound repercussions. Whatever the official version of events, this clash was seen amongst working class organizations as an aggressive act by the *Benemérita* against desperate workers seeking social justice. As such, a number of telegrams from various parts of Spain arrived at the Interior Ministry protesting the “villainous aggression” committed by the Civil Guard against “our defenceless comrades”.<sup>85</sup>

As can be seen, Civil Guards were not the only ones that were adopting a more aggressive manner. While the Socialist leadership attempted to use their influence within the *Unión General de Trabajadores* to calm the anger of their members, fearing that too many strikes might undermine the Republic, the continued presence of three Socialists in

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<sup>84</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 18, Civil Governor [Salamanca] to Interior Minister (Nos. 1212 & 1226, 28 September 1931); Civil Guard District Commandant, Peñaranda de Bracamonte [Salamanca] to Director General of the Civil Guard and the Interior Minister (No. 1219, 28 September 1931).

<sup>85</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 16, La Directiva Sindicato Obreros Mineros, Linares [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 159, 4 October 1931); Ibid., No. 16, Diego Serrano & Guillermo Bravo, Torre del Mar [Málaga] to Interior Minister (No. 206, 5 October 1931); Ibid., No. 18, Sr. Alvares, Secretario Sección Mineros de Barruelo [Palencia] to Interior Minister (No. 162, 4 October 1931).

the government meant that expectations amongst the rank and file remained high. This in turn only led to increasing frustration, particularly among the landless labourers who constituted the bulk of the membership of the UGT's Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra. They were exasperated by the extent to which the legislation and directives coming from Madrid were proving difficult to enforce at the local level due the resistance of local agrarian economic elites.<sup>86</sup> During an ongoing acrimonious labour dispute in Gilena (in the eastern part of the province of Sevilla, near Estepa), the Civil Guard had detained a group of aggressive strikers and was transporting them back to town. When passing the local Workers' Centre, the guardias were set upon, and a corporal was killed and two guardias were wounded. Reinforcements arrived on the scene and dissolved the hostile crowd, resulting in three workers killed and five wounded.<sup>87</sup> In Jimena (Jaén), a strike was called by Socialist-affiliated workers in protest at being blacklisted by the local proprietor classes. This group of some 300 workers stood their ground when the Civil Guard arrived to disperse the crowd, and began hurling insults at the force and throwing stones. According to the account of the provincial Civil Guard commander, after hearing shots fired, the guardias opened fire themselves, wounding three protestors. After initially fleeing, the strikers regrouped in even greater numbers and attempted to overpower the relatively small number of *guardias*. The latter were obliged to retreat to the safety of their *casa-cuartel*. The resulting tensions required the provincial governor to send reinforcements repeatedly over the next several days.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> For the growing pressures within the Socialist Party and its organizations, see Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 91-94.

<sup>87</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 18, Civil Governor [Sevilla] to Interior Minister (Nos. 425 & 428, 9 October 1931).

<sup>88</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 16, Civil Guard Provincial Commander [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 360, 9 December 1931; No. 398, 10 December 1931); Civil Governor [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 348, 9 December 1931; No. 388, 10 December 1931; No. 415, 11 December 1931; No. 522, 14 December 1931).

Not surprisingly, workers' groups saw themselves as the victims as opposed to the aggressors, and complained to the Interior Minister for the "inhumane repression" carried out by the Civil Guard and the heavy-handed actions of the governor.<sup>89</sup>

These violent clashes were duly reported in Civil Guard press, which in turn called for greater vigour on the part of the government. It was felt, with little sense of exaggeration, that while Civil Guards were shedding blood defending the Republic and Spain from "an orgy of violence and criminality", the corps' press stated that "no government worthy of being called such" should tolerate the wave of "social indiscipline" provoked by the CNT and the Communists.<sup>90</sup> The general sensation amongst the corps was that things were getting worse, as seen by the greater amount of space dedicated to public disorder in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*. Moreover, this impression was reinforced by the right-wing civilian press, which consistently praised the Civil Guard for its efforts and echoed its concerns about the social and political situation. These articles were reprinted in the Civil Guard press.<sup>91</sup> The view expressed by the Civil Guard's internal press and journals was that constant disorder had characterized Spain since April 1931 and was the result of extremist elements attempting to exploit the weakness of the state, rather than working class frustration at the intransigence of the economic elite towards the Republican reforms. While understandable, given the front-line position of the rank-and-

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<sup>89</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 16, Vicente Velasco, Presidente del Congreso local Federación Obrero, Linares [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 671, 19 December 1931); Ibid., La Directiva de Sindicato minero "El Invencible", Linares [Jaén] to Interior Minister (No. 990, 28 December 1931).

<sup>90</sup> "Servicios", *RTGC*, No. 260 (October 1931), p. 456; "Impresiones y comentarios: La esterilidad de la rebeldía contra la República", *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931), pp. 512-513; "Servicios", *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931), pp. 548-549; "El orden público", *RTGC*, No. 262 (December 1931), p. 557; "Servicios", *RTGC*, No. 262 (December 1931), pp. 565-567.

<sup>91</sup> "Leyendo la prensa", *RTGC*, No. 261 (November 1931); p. 550; "Leyendo la prensa", *RTGC*, No. 262 (December 1931), pp. 567-568; "Sección no oficial", *BOGC* (20 December 1931).

file Civil Guards in the social battles taking place in parts of the southern countryside, this was an alarmist, not to say inflammatory, interpretation of events.

Likewise, the working class press, especially that of the FNTT, also reported on these confrontations, and similarly called for greater government intervention. Inevitably, the version of events to be found was diametrically opposed to that of the Civil Guard. Indeed, characteristic of nearly all reporting of these events is the sense of victimization on both sides. Official reports by the Civil Guard always stated that personnel only resorted to force in self-defence, often after being pelted with rocks or shot at by an uncontrollable mob riled up by degenerate agitators. Conversely, the version of events published in the working class press often told a very different story of pacific and unarmed workers being beaten and fired upon by brutal Civil Guards in the service of the local *caciques*.

It was in this atmosphere that the events of the small Extremaduran town of Castilblanco would eventually erupt on the national consciousness. Like much of the rural south, the province of Badajoz had been in a state of considerable tension for several months, if not before. On 29 November 1931, a group of striking workers in Almendralejo, frustrated after being blacklisted by local landowners, were harassing black-leg labourers that were hired from outside the district to get around the stoppage. This had been done illegally, and in contravention of the Decree of Municipal Boundaries which prohibited the import of labour from outside a locality while there were still workers unemployed there. The Civil Guard arrived on the scene, and was greeted with stones, leaving several of them

lightly wounded. In response, the *guardias* first fired a warning volley into the air, and when this did not prove sufficient to disperse the angry strikers, they fired into the crowd itself and then proceeded to arrest a number of people, including the mayor of Almendralejo, which only increased the already high state of tension in the locality. The continued detention of these men, and the energetic measures of the civil governor and of the provincial commander of the Civil Guard, Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Pereda Sanz, during a series of subsequent incidents led the local Socialists to call a province-wide two day strike and demand the dismissal of the two officials.<sup>92</sup> Expecting trouble, the civil governor, a member of Azaña's *Acción Republicana* party, successfully requested reinforcements.<sup>93</sup> While explaining the reasons for the strike, the provincial Socialist press also began to raise temperatures amongst its readers by highlighting aggressions committed by the Civil Guard in the province.<sup>94</sup>

The first day of the strike was not without its confrontations. In La Parra and Barcarrota, local Socialists complained of Civil Guards forcing them to abandon the strike and return

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<sup>92</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 14, Civil Governor [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1361, 30 November 1931; No. 95, 3 December 1931; No. 183, 7 December 1931; No. 258, 08 December 1931; No. 379, 10 December 1931); Ibid., Las Directivas, Casa del Pueblo, Almendralejo [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1370, 30 November 1931); Comité local Federación obrera, Almendralejo [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 617, 17 December 1931); Agrupación Socialista [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 677, 18 December 1931).

<sup>93</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 14, Civil Governor [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 938, 26 December 1931); Ibid., No. 14, Interior Minister to Civil Governor [Badajoz] (No. 724, 28 December 1931).

<sup>94</sup> "Nuestra posición", "Paro general", "Miserias y dolores de los obreros del campo", "Atropellos de la Guardia Civil en la provincia", *La Verdad Social* (25 December 1931); "Paro general popular, justificado y planeado reflexivamente", "Botones de muestra", *La Verdad Social* (28 December 1931). The mayor and town council of Villagonzalo protested to the Interior Minister about the "unjust Socialist campaign" against the governor and Lt. Col. Pereda: AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 14, Sr. Mancha, Mayor of Villagonzalo [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 967, 27 December 1931).



to work.<sup>95</sup> On the second day of the strike, 31 December 1931, several towns saw clashes of various levels of violence between Civil Guards and protesters,<sup>96</sup> yet the confrontation in the small, isolated village of Castilblanco stood out amongst these. The situation in Castilblanco was already volatile even before the strike was called. In the beginning of December, Civil Guard Corporal José Blanco wrote to one of his instructors soon after arriving to his new post. In his letter, Corporal Blanco tells of the hostile attitude of certain sectors of the population towards the corps.<sup>97</sup> Nonetheless, on the second day of the strike, a struggle broke out between the local Civil Guard and the initially peaceful demonstrators. The crowd of strikers was fired upon by the Civil Guard. One man was killed and two others wounded. Enraged, the crowd fell upon the Civil Guards and all four men of the local unit were brutally massacred.<sup>98</sup>

While parliament and the national press debated the exact causes and course of events in Castilblanco, such issues were quickly resolved in the minds of many Civil Guards. The events of Castilblanco spoke to their deepest fears of being overwhelmed and savagely killed by enraged, barbaric crowds. The version of events presented in the Civil Guard press was that of the virtuous Civil Guards attempting to reason with the amassed crowd, only to be met with anger and violence. In this reading, the confrontation represented the

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<sup>95</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 14, Casa del Pueblo, La Parra [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1099, 30 December 1931); Ibid., Comité huelga, Bancarrota [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1066, 30 December 1931).

<sup>96</sup> AHN, Ministerio del Interior, Serie A, Legajo 39A, No. 14, Civil Governor [Badajoz] to Interior Minister (No. 1178, 31 December 1931).

<sup>97</sup> Part of this letter was reproduced in "Por los mártires de Castilblanco", *RTGC*, No. 264 (February 1932), p. 62.

<sup>98</sup> A brief description of Castilblanco and the events leading up to it, see Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 74-75; Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 93-95. For a fuller account of events, including some imaginary conversations inserted by the author for dramatic effect, see Jesús Vicente Chamorro, *Año nuevo, año Viejo en Castilblanco* (Madrid, 1985).

struggle between civilization and barbarism that had engulfed Spain since the change of regime. Since the common view amongst the corps was that confrontations between Civil Guards and workers were almost always the work of agitators, many immediately jumped to the conclusion that the murder of the four Civil Guards was the outcome of a predetermined plan by the “enemies of order”, which now included the Socialists as well as the usual suspects of the CNT and the Communists.<sup>99</sup>

This perception was justified seemingly by events at the regional and national level. Between April and December 1931, the government of the Republic had evolved from one that contained a broad spectrum of social and political interests to one with a marked left-wing character. Indeed, for several months the Radical Republican Party, which had come to represent the Centre-Right of the Republican middle classes (as well as many former monarchists), had been alleging that Spain was in the grip of constant disorder, blaming much of this on the “sectarianism” of the Socialists. In his efforts to force the Socialists out of government, and hopefully provoke a new round of elections in which his party could increase their representation, the Radicals’ leader Alejandro Lerroux had pulled his party out of the government and into the opposition. This move by the largest and oldest republican party created a sense of justification amongst those conservative sectors that resented the influence of the Socialist Party.<sup>100</sup> To add to the growing perception amongst Civil Guards that the increasingly partisan nature of the government

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<sup>99</sup> Lieutenant Vicente Santiago Hodsson, “Vista a Castilblanco”, *RTGC*, No. 264, pp. 56-58; Cándido Gallego Pérez, *Lucha contra el crimen y el desorden: Memorias de un teniente de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1957), p. 171. This view still persists in Civil Guard historiography: Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, pp. 273-275.

<sup>100</sup> Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic* (Brighton, 2000), pp. 88-104.

worked against the forces of order, in November 1931, Sanjurjo alleged that a group of Socialist deputies from the rural south established a commission to collect evidence of abuses carried out by the Civil Guard.<sup>101</sup>

It was these very perceptions amongst the corps that were given voice by Sanjurjo, a close friend of Lerroux, in the wake of the events of Castilblanco. At the funeral of the four murdered guards, he blamed the Socialists, who, he claimed, had created “an office of information against the Civil Guard”, for the tragic events of 31 December. Sanjurjo attributed particular responsibility to one of the PSOE deputies for the province and an outspoken critic of the *Benemérita*, Margarita Nelken, implying that she was a foreign agent sent to instigate discord and revolution in Spain. Sanjurjo was not the only one who felt that Nelken bore special responsibility for the events at Castilblanco. One of Nelken’s fellow Socialist deputies for Badajoz, the moderate Manuel Muíño, accused her of inflaming the passions of the workers, thus making such incidents more likely.<sup>102</sup> In an interview a few days later, Sanjurjo ominously stated that “Spain is deliberating whether or not it will transform itself into a Soviet regime or into a disciplined Republic, civilised and progressive”.<sup>103</sup>

Tensions continued to rise as a series of confrontations across the country followed in the wake of Castilblanco. While the recourse to force by Civil Guards during these days has

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<sup>101</sup> Paul Preston, *Doves of War: Four Women of Spain* (London, 2002), p. 323.

<sup>102</sup> “Habla Sanjurjo”, *El Debate* (5 January 1932); Preston, *Doves of War*, pp. 324-325. Nelken was later called before a military court on charges of incitement against the Civil Guard. It was the reluctance of parliament to waive her immunity that ultimately kept her out of prison. Preston, *ibid.*, pp. 328-329.

<sup>103</sup> “Declaraciones del general Sanjurjo”, *Ejército y Armada* (7 January 1932).

been attributed solely to a desire for revenge for Castilblanco,<sup>104</sup> and this desire did certainly exist amongst sectors of the corps,<sup>105</sup> the reality was probably more complicated. Taken in the broader context, the actions of Civil Guards during this heady period were probably motivated as much by fear as by any sentiment for revenge. The increasing tensions amongst both workers and Civil Guards by the end of 1931, and the fear amongst the latter that at any moment a demonstration could turn into a violent riot were only heightened by the events of Castilblanco. These elements came to a head in the bloodiest of those clashes immediately following that of Castilblanco: Arnedo. In this small industrial town in the province of Logroño, after one guardia was apparently shot and believing that they were about to be assaulted, a contingent of Civil Guards opened fire on the group of protestors, killing 11 and wounding 30.<sup>106</sup>

The subsequent outrage at this incident soon overtook that of Castilblanco and caused the second national scandal in the space of one week. The Civil Guard itself had felt that nothing untoward had occurred in Arnedo, and believed that the force had acted in self-defence. Instead, they felt that the Socialists were manipulating the facts for their own ends. The difference in the perception between what occurred in Castilblanco and Arnedo is evident in the attention given to the two events in the February issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*. While three pages were dedicated to the events of Castilblanco, those of Arnedo, despite the publicity they produced, were only briefly mentioned amongst other incidents occurring in January. Moreover, a major anarchist

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<sup>104</sup> Julián Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain, 1931-1939* (London, 2005), p. 24; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 75-76; Townson, *Crisis of Democracy*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>105</sup> Gallego Pérez, *Lucha contra el crimen*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>106</sup> The most detailed account of the events in Arnedo is provided in Carlos Gil Andrés, *La República en la Plaza: Los sucesos de Arnedo de 1932* (Arnedo, 2002).

insurrection that lasted several days in some parts of the country, also received little notice in this issue.<sup>107</sup> Sanjurjo, in a circular published on 7 January 1932, advised his men that it was their obligation to “denounce before the proper authorities ... whatever attacks are directed against us, most especially those emanating from the sectarian press ... and those incitements to the working masses to confront us that are made during meetings and gatherings”.<sup>108</sup> A book was later published under the title *La verdad sobre la Guardia Civil* to counter what was seen as the “flurry of insults and [false] claims” by “the employees of sedition” against the *Benemérita*, which was portrayed as being synonymous with civilization itself.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the defence of the corps made by Prime Minister Azaña in parliament, many Civil Guards were incensed that once again their own dead were forgotten so quickly while attention shifted to those killed at Arnedo and criticisms of the corps abounded. Indeed, a sense of near paranoia generated by months of unrest and displays of public hostility towards the corps was beginning to show. Moreover, the fulsome support for the *Benemérita* in the right-wing and military press made these criticisms appear to be the work of extremist elements. Given that the Socialists were amongst these critics, and also part of the government, anger over the lack of respect for the sacrifices and services of the *Benemérita* and the frustration at the continual unrest began to focus on the government itself. Within certain Civil Guard garrisons, according to one officer, the state of opinion was that the current government had lost its legitimacy and

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<sup>107</sup> “Guardia Civil: La causa por los sucesos de Arnedo”, *LCM* (3 February 1932).

<sup>108</sup> “Orden general del Cuerpo del día 7 de enero 1932”, *BOGC* (10 January 1932), p. 33.

<sup>109</sup> “El Vigía de la Torre” (pseud.), *La verdad sobre la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1932).

should be overthrown.<sup>110</sup> Rumors of conspiracies within the Civil Guard persisted through out the month of January.<sup>111</sup> Due to Sanjurjo's inflammatory public statements, which in themselves constituted a veiled threat against the administration, it was decided that he should be relieved of his command as soon as circumstances permitted. Given that such a move would have been interpreted by most Civil Guards as the work of the Socialists, great care was taken beforehand in case his removal sparked a rebellion amongst the corps.<sup>112</sup> When General Miguel Cabanellas replaced Sanjurjo as Director General, he repeatedly urged his men to maintain discipline and avoid involving themselves in politics.<sup>113</sup> As General Cabanellas was a well-known mason and Republican, his appointment was seen as politically motivated,<sup>114</sup> even though he, like Sanjurjo, had close ties to the Radical Party.

While the change of command in the Civil Guard was effected without incident, the damage had been done. Sanjurjo, outraged by what he felt was a politically motivated demotion to Director-General of the Carabineros (Customs Guard), actively joined the ranks of those conspiring against the Left-Republican-Socialist government. Amongst

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<sup>110</sup> Gallego Pérez, *Lucha contra el crimen*, pp. 175-178. In his biography of Sanjurjo, Emilio Esteban-Infantes, the aide-de-camp and close friend of the General, stated that the entire force was ready to rebel against a government that they blamed for the events of Castilblanco: Emilio Esteban-Infantes, *General Sanjurjo: Un laureado en el penal del Dueso* (Barcelona, 1957), p. 177.

<sup>111</sup> Azaña, *Diarios completos*, pp. 437-438, 440-441, 453-454.

<sup>112</sup> Azaña, *Diarios completos*, pp. 437-438, 454.

<sup>113</sup> "Orden General de la Dirección General de la Guardia Civil del día 4 de febrero de 1932", *BOGC*, (10 February 1932), p.130; "El general Cabanellas habla de la Guardia Civil", *Ejército y Armada* (7 March 1932).

<sup>114</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, pp. 285-286. Aguado Sánchez underlines this point by noting that Cabanellas was the first *general de division* to hold the post of Director General of the Civil Guard since 1873, as this position was normally awarded to an officer of the rank of lieutenant general. Yet, as the rank of lieutenant general was abolished by Azaña, leaving only four officers with that rank amongst the active lists (Sanjurjo being one of them), this act was perhaps less political than it seemed. In fact, Cabanellas had requested personally to Azaña back in the beginning of August 1931 that the latter reserve for him the command of the Civil Guard whenever Sanjurjo vacated his post, that is, long before the events of January 1932: Azaña, *Diarios completos*, p. 206

his former charges, there was little to endear them to the current government, as disorders continued into the summer of 1932. Indeed, despite his political reputation, General Cabanellas appeared to have contacts amongst the conspirators. Given the importance that was placed on the sympathies of the Civil Guard, this was seen by the plotters as a significant gain, despite the fact that Cabanellas was at best lukewarm in his enthusiasm for the conspiracy.<sup>115</sup> The various plots to topple the Azaña government were given an air of legitimacy as the leader of the Radicals, Lerroux, gave a series of speeches and statements criticising the administration. The most important of these was on 10 July 1932 in Zaragoza, in which he seemingly recommended that the government resign or risk a military rebellion. Given that Lerroux was in contact with Sanjurjo, amongst others close to the conspiracy, this appeared to be more than an empty statement.<sup>116</sup>

One month after Lerroux's speech in Zaragoza, the expected rebellion broke out. Poorly-coordinated, the rebels were quickly defeated in Madrid, with units of the Civil Guard participating in its suppression. In Sevilla, the other focal point of the rebellion, Sanjurjo managed to mobilize the majority of local security and armed forces behind him, including the Civil Guard. Yet, given the failure of the uprising elsewhere, as well as the reluctance of his men to engage in battle with loyal troops, Sanjurjo was obliged to leave the Andalusian city and was captured on his way towards the Portuguese border.<sup>117</sup>

Cabanellas, who was suspected of involvement in the conspiracy and had disregarded a

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<sup>115</sup> Joaquín Arrarás, *Historia de la segunda República española*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1970), p. 479; Townson, *Crisis of Democracy*, p. 131.

<sup>116</sup> For a discussion of Lerroux's role in the build up to the military rebellion of August 1932, see Townson, *Crisis of Democracy*, pp. 102-145.

<sup>117</sup> For a description of the military conspiracy and rebellion of 1932, see Payne, *Politics and the Military*, pp. 277-291; Gabriel Cardona, et al., "La sanjurjada", *Historia 16*, No. 76 (1982), pp. 43-67. For the events in Sevilla, see Arrarás, *Historia de la segunda República española*, I, pp. 505-526.

direct order from the Interior Minister, Santiago Casares Quiroga, to disarm the Sevillian Civil Guard garrison, was dismissed as Director General.<sup>118</sup> He was replaced by General Ceclio Bedia de la Cavallería who, like Cabanellas, was an opponent of Primo de Rivera and more of a bureaucrat than a man of action. Given the problems that Azaña had with his more politically-active predecessors, General Bedia seemed the perfect choice at a moment when Azaña was going to attempt to tame the Civil Guard.<sup>119</sup>

While the vast majority of the Civil Guard did not participate in the rebellion, Azaña took advantage of the event to diminish the autonomy of the corps. Azaña suppressed the National Directorate of the Civil Guard, located in the Ministry of War, reconstituting it as a National Inspectorate (*Inspección General*) – with all the reduction of competencies inherent in the change of title – within the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>120</sup> The abolition of this ‘independent castle of stone’ (*‘castillo roquero independiente’*) was no small event, as Prime Minister and Minister of War Azaña noted in his diary: ‘The petty despots (*caciques*) and bossy meddlers (*mangoneadores*) of the Civil Guard are astonished by the suppression of the National Directorate. They would never have believed it could happen.’<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, on 4 September 1932, Civil Governors were given powers of inspection over those Civil Guard units within their province.<sup>122</sup> In March 1933, following upon the incorporation of the command of the Civil Guard into the Interior Ministry and further limiting the corps’ autonomy, a Technical Secretariat was set up to

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<sup>118</sup> Azaña, *Diarios completos*, pp. 592, 595, 597.

<sup>119</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, p. 320.

<sup>120</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, IV, pp. 319-21; Fernando Rivas Gómez, ‘La Guardia Civil del siglo XX’ in José Sanz Muñoz (ed.), *La Guardia Civil Española* (Madrid, 1994), pp. 219-220.

<sup>121</sup> Azaña, *Diarios Completos*, pp. 596-8.

<sup>122</sup> Manel Risques and Carles Barrachina, *Procés a la Guàrdia Civil: Barcelona 1939* (Barcelona, 2001), p. 20.



better coordinate the services of both the Interior Ministry police and the Civil Guard.<sup>123</sup> Finally, amongst the most important, yet often overlooked, reforms was the granting of policing competencies to the Catalan regional government (the *Generalitat*). Despite the strong opposition of the military, the *Generalitat* was given control of all of those police forces located within its jurisdiction, including the very symbol of Spanish centralism: the Civil Guard.<sup>124</sup>

These reforms followed the gradual efforts of the Republicans to reduce the independence of the Civil Guard and bring it under greater civilian control, as well as the regime's dependence on the force. In terms of the former objective, it was necessary to first dismantle the parallel military administration that evolved under the monarchy. The abolition of both the Captaincies-General and the Military Governorships in June 1931 left the provincial Civil Governors as the maximum authority outside of Madrid.<sup>125</sup> The second goal was to reform and strengthen the Interior Ministry police. The most important aspect of this policy was the establishment of a well-disciplined and elite unit within the Security Corps. From its inception, this force, called the Assault Guard, did not enjoy the autonomy of the Civil Guard and was completely under the command of the Interior Minister and his subordinates.<sup>126</sup> The explicit purpose of the Assault Guard, to diminish the Republic's reliance on the methods and men of the Civil Guard, was clear: just as its creation followed the church burnings of 10-11 May 1931, its personnel was

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<sup>123</sup> Julio de Antón, *Historia de la Policía Española* (Madrid, 2000), p. 281.

<sup>124</sup> Armando Oterino Cervelló, 'La Guardia Civil al servicio de la Generalidad de Cataluña', *Revista de Estudios Históricos de la Guardia Civil*, No. 19 (1977), pp. 39-122; Risques and Barrachina, *Proces a la Guàrdia Civil*, pp. 23-32.

<sup>125</sup> Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London, 1993), p. 78.

<sup>126</sup> Alejandro Vargas González, 'La Guardia de Asalto: Policía de la República', *Cuadernos Republicanos*, no. 53 (2003), pp. 41-8; Manuel M. Correa Gamero, Vicente Cabo Meseguer, Miguel A. Camino del Olmo, *Policía Española. Notas e imágenes* (Barcelona & Madrid, 1999), pp. 65-66.

increased by 2500 men in January 1932 after the events of Castilblanco and Arnedo,<sup>127</sup> and then again by another 2500 men after the failed military coup of August 1932.<sup>128</sup>

By the summer of 1933 the government had at its disposal a sufficient number of assault guards to be able to abolish the two mobile anti-disturbance units within the Civil Guard as part of a general reorganization of the latter force, which included a reduction of 1448 men in its personnel.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, the Assault Guard was continually strengthened throughout the Republic, as were the other sections of the Interior Ministry police. On the eve of the Republic, the *Cuerpo de Seguridad* numbered 5603 men, while the Civil Guard numbered nearly 28,000.<sup>130</sup> By the outbreak of the Civil War, the Security Corps numbered 17,660 men (of which nearly 10,000 were assault guards), a growth of over 300 percent, while the Civil Guard numbered 32,458 men, a growth of just 15 percent.<sup>131</sup> A similar pattern can be seen in the budgets for the two corps. In 1931, the Security Corps possessed a budget of just over 64 million pesetas, while the Civil Guard enjoyed a budget of 119 million pesetas, nearly twice the size. By 1936 the budgets for the two forces reached near parity, with the Security Corps enjoying a budget of 153 million

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<sup>127</sup> Archivo del Congreso de los Diputados, Comisión de Gobernación (hereafter ACD-CG), leg. 484, exp. no. 6.

<sup>128</sup> ACD-CG, leg. 484, exp. no. 34.

<sup>129</sup> Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, Vol. V (Madrid, 1984), pp. 45-8. In place of the two mobile anti-disturbance divisions, a *tercio* was created to monitor the national rail network.

<sup>130</sup> González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, p. 46; Real decreto-ley de 14 de junio de 1921, establishing the number of personnel (*plantilla*) of the Security and Surveillance Corps. The numbers of personnel established in 1921 remained the same until the Republic. My thanks to Martín Turrado Vidal for supplying me with this information.

<sup>131</sup> Vargas González, 'La Guardia de Asalto', p. 44; Rivas Gómez, 'La Guardia Civil del siglo XX', p. 224. It is important to note that most, if not all, of the increase in Civil Guard personnel was effected under the period of Center-Right rule.

pesetas, a 139 percent increase, while the budget for the Civil Guard grew to only 166 million, a 40 percent increase.<sup>132</sup>

Despite these reforms, the Azaña government offered carrots as well as sticks to the Civil Guard. In a public ceremony on the 22 July 1933, the government awarded insignias of the Order of the Republic to the 27th Regiment for their loyalty and actions during the August 1932 rebellion.<sup>133</sup> The issue of loyalty and service to the Republic was a sensitive one for the Civil Guard, who often felt underappreciated by their new political masters. Indeed, in the wake of the August 1932 rebellion (and subsequent reforms), an official committee was set up on 5 September 1932 to distribute the sizeable public donations made to the widows and orphans of those Civil Guards killed in the line of duty “since the advent of the Republic”.<sup>134</sup> As part of the July 1933 reforms, which saw a slight reduction of personnel, a small pay raise was awarded to those on the active lists, whilst those who were displaced by the reform were given a fairly generous compensation.<sup>135</sup> Given the constant comments in the Civil Guard press about how an increase in pay would improve the “interior satisfaction” of the “workers of order” (*trabajadores del orden*),<sup>136</sup> this was a wise way of taking some of the sting out of the less popular aspects of the 1933 reform. As many of these articles noted the pay difference between the favoured Interior Ministry police and that of those men “who perhaps are not very popular in this moment” but still sacrifice themselves for the good of

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<sup>132</sup> Budget figures taken from Cardona, *El poder militar*, p. 270.

<sup>133</sup> “Imposición de insignias de la Orden de la República”, *BOGC* (10 August 1933)

<sup>134</sup> *BOGC* (10 December 1932), pp. 1030-1035.

<sup>135</sup> *BOGC* (10 August 1933), pp. 615-617.

<sup>136</sup> “Las reformas”, *RTGC*, No. 276 (February 1933), pp. 55-56; Corporal Eladio Urien, “Trabajadores del Orden”, *RTGC*, No. 277 (March 1933), p. 110; “La equiparación de haberes”, *RTGC*, No. 278 (April 1933), pp. 132-133; “Las reformas”, *RTGC*, No. 279 (May 1933), pp. 169-170.

the nation and regime, a pay raise of some sort was crucial. Moreover, to explain better the intentions of the reform, Interior Minister Casares Quiroga granted an interview to the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*. In this interview, the Minister stated his admiration for the Civil Guard, as well as his recognition of its services to the Republic. He also made clear that he had no intention of reforming the moral and disciplinary foundations of the corps: “the *Cartilla* and the Regulations of the Civil Guard are admirable things ... It is impossible to change even a comma”.<sup>137</sup> This was of great importance to the Civil Guard, for while they were amenable to certain organizational reforms, they were adamant in their opposition to any changes to the *Cartilla*, which was linked to the military discipline and values that most felt intimately linked to the spirit and efficiency of the corps.<sup>138</sup>

Despite the efforts of the Azaña government to fulfil their reformist agenda, they were never quite able to win the sympathies of the Civil Guard. The corps chaffed at certain aspects of their reforms, and did not believe that these were carried out solely to rationalize the structure of the corps. Bitter memories of the lack of confidence and appreciation for the *Benemérita* (which was often mutual) was underlined as the Civil Guard was replaced as the primary security force of the Spanish state by the “Republican” Assault Guards. This situation was made worse by the on-going social conflict. The “holocaust of the social peace” (*holocausto de la paz social*) brought on by anarchist insurrection of January 1933,<sup>139</sup> also eventually undermined popular confidence

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<sup>137</sup> “Cuarenta y cinco minutos de charla, sobre la Guardia Civil, con el Excmo. Sr. D. Santiago Casares Quiroga, Ministro de la Gobernación”, *RTGC*, No. 282 (August 1933), pp. 281-284.

<sup>138</sup> “¿Debe reformarse el Reglamento de la Guardia Civil?”, *RTGC*, No. 264 (February 1932), pp. 54-55.

<sup>139</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, No. 276 (February 1933), pp. 50-54.

in the government, particularly in the wake of the Casas Viejas scandal. With the government apparently morally bankrupt, and a Centre-Right promising “rectification” and greater public order, which included a greater appreciation for the *Benemérita* and willingness to take the “necessary measures”, Civil Guards looked forward to what seemed to them a more promising future.

## CHAPTER FIVE

While the Azaña government was bolstered by the failure of the *sanjurjada*, enabling it to pass a series of previously log-jammed legislation, within the space of a few months it again found itself facing a new crisis, one that would prove terminal. The year 1933, like 1932, started off with another policing scandal. This one occurred in the midst of the suppression of a revolutionary insurrection carried out by elements of the CNT. While the insurrection, poorly planned and poorly co-ordinated, was easily repressed by the security forces, an incident in the small town of Casas Viejas was converted into a national scandal that dominated politics for the next couple of months and undermined the government. The Socialists, already under increasing pressure from their rank and file to quicken the pace of reforms, found that their endorsement of harsh measures against the anarcho-syndicalists did not resonate well with their working-class constituencies. Moreover, while the government was criticised from the Left for its heavy-handed response to the insurrection, its enemies on the Right were only too happy to take advantage of the situation to join the bandwagon in a virtuoso display of hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup>

For the Civil Guard the anarcho-syndicalist insurrection of January 1933, despite its somewhat limited impact, was a “holocaust of the social peace” that resulted in six civil guards killed and twenty-two wounded. The greatest numbers of incidents reported were in Barcelona, Valencia, Murcia and Andalucía. As reported in the *Revista Técnica de la*

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of the insurrection, and its consequences, see Julián Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain, 1931-1939* (London, 2005), pp. 68-72; Paul Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 108-110; Jerome R. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994), Chapters 12-16.

*Guardia Civil*, in many places the various civil guard posts were confronted and attacked by well-armed revolutionaries. Indeed, there were numerous reports of discoveries of bomb and weapons caches. Also present was that danger ever present in the minds of civil guards: that of being outnumbered by hostile and aggressive crowds. In one such incident in Cádiz, a group yelled out “*a ellos que son pocos*” in coming upon a small contingent of civil guards. Conversely, the most infamous incident of the January 1933 insurrection, that of Casas Viejas in the same province of Cádiz, received relatively little attention. In the four-and-a-half pages dedicated to the January 1933 insurrection the Civil Guard was reported to have responded with “courage and serenity”, “with neither leniency nor cruelty” and “inspired by the humanitarian sentiments of protection and philanthropy” in the face of those dangers presented by the failed revolutionary attempt.<sup>2</sup> These purported latter qualities were highlighted in a later article about a Civil Guard, Pablo Escudero López, who was wounded in Barcelona during the insurrection. While still recuperating in the hospital, an Army officer – wounded by “criminals” – was in need of a blood transfusion. Despite his own delicate condition, Escudero López offered his own blood to the fatally wounded officer.<sup>3</sup>

In light of the importance given to the anarcho-syndicalist insurrection, and the “heroic” deeds of the Civil Guard in its repression, it is somewhat curious that it did not receive top billing in the February 1933 issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*. This honour was awarded to an article on a public tribute paid to the Civil Guard in Barcelona’s massive Teatro Olimpia on 31 December 1932. This event, supposedly the

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<sup>2</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 276 (February 1933), pp. 50-54.

<sup>3</sup> J.O.P., “Virtudes de la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, no. 279 (May 1933), p. 168.

largest ever homage to the Civil Guard in its history, was seen as “*un paso muy marcado que el pueblo español da hacia [la Guardia Civil]*”. This demonstration of gratitude for the services and sacrifices of the Civil Guard was deemed more important than the suppression of the January 1933 insurrection itself, for the article on the ceremony took up the first three pages of the February 1933 issue, while the uprising itself was reported in the normal section dedicated to services carried out by the corps.<sup>4</sup>

Despite this apparent “significant turn”, the energy showed by the Azaña government in repressing the January 1933 insurrection and the attention given to the economic needs of civil guards in the July 1933 reform, confidence in the Left Republican-Socialist coalition would experience a steady erosion amongst the corps. This would occur largely due to two interrelated factors: the continued, and perhaps increasing levels of disorder,<sup>5</sup> and the belief that the Azaña government had lost its authority and was unable to stop the perceived disorder, or perhaps even that elements within the government were encouraging it. While the right-wing press had decried persistently the “rampant disorder” since very nearly the beginning of the Republic, within the Civil Guard’s own professional journal, the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*, it is possible to get a glimpse of the rising concern over levels of “social indiscipline”. In the “Servicios” section of the March issue, it was reported that in Cáceres, always a conflictive province, hungry day labourers had carried out widespread invasions of farms, “abusive plowing” (*roturaciones abusivas*) and “other outrages”, with the detention of hundreds of

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<sup>4</sup> “Homenaje a la Guardia Civil en Barcelona: La razón y la justicia se abren camino”, *RTGC*, no. 276 (February 1933), pp. 41-44.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the reasons behind the rise in social unrest in Andalucía during the winter, spring and summer of 1933, see Mario López Martínez, *Orden público y luchas agrarias en Andalucía* (Madrid, 1995), pp. 291-308. More generally, see Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 107-111.



trespassers (*intrusos*). Despite this apparently worrying scenario, the majority of the other incidents reported that month involved common and gang-related crime. The section ended with a tallying of those services carried out in 1932, and upon revising the “fabulous action of the Civil Guard”, the author exclaimed: “What would Spain be like without the Civil Guard?”.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, if the final days of winter were relatively quiet, the Civil Guard was increasingly nervous about rising social conflict and worker unrest. The April issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* reported various incidents of labour disputes and land invasions. One such incident, in Luna (Zaragoza) on 18 March 1933, the five civil guards who were attempting to control a group of angry workers found themselves greeted with stones and then gunshots, resulting in the death of one guard. Returning to the conflictive province of Cáceres, the Civil Guard captured a radical leader who was supposedly involved in the production and storage of bombs and weapons, and in doing so struck a major blow to the “terrorist hydra” that existed around the town of Navalmoral de la Mata.<sup>7</sup> This trend continued in the May 1933 issue, which reported not only several incidents of political conflict, but also an increase of Communist activity.<sup>8</sup> The June 1933 issue painted a similar portrait of disorderly elements attempting to spread havoc, reporting various incidents involving “extremists”, “anarcho-syndicalists”, “communists” and aggressive strikers.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 277 (March 1933), pp. 92-94.

<sup>7</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 288 (April 1933), pp. 133-135.

<sup>8</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 289 (May 1933), pp. 171-172.

<sup>9</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 280 (June 1933), pp. 208-209.

Interestingly, in spite of these developments, these elements were still viewed as relatively marginal, and a series of articles appeared in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* counselling restraint in dealing with disorder and stressing the importance of civil guard's actions in terms of relations with the public. One letter published in the March 1933 issue noted that respect and prestige were not gained simply through a military bearing, but also through one's conduct.<sup>10</sup> Following on the issue of personal conduct, another letter, appearing in the May 1933 issue, discussed the need to avoid "disastrous abuses" (*extralimitaciones funestas*) in controlling disorder. In particular, the author of this letter advised caution in resorting to the practice of discharging rifles into the air as a technique in crowd control. Noting that this could cause innocent victims, the author went on to state that civil guards "do not have the right to fire at random, 'hitting whomsoever gets hit' (*pegue a quien pegue*)".<sup>11</sup> The author of this second letter, Civil Guard Sergeant Manuel Martín Rubio, was granted a special section in the following month's issue dedicated precisely to the need to avoid the use of unnecessary force. Aware that an increase in social tension also brings with it an increasing temptation amongst civil guards to resort to more forceful methods, Martín Rubio set out those regulations concerning relations with the public, noting the absence of any official source that allows or suggests the practice of firing warning shots into the air. He ends his piece reminding the reader that they "should not forget that this Institution is essentially charitable and protective".<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Guardia móvil Francisco García Hortelano, "Ecos: Buscando el prestigio", *RTGC*, no. 277 (March 1933), p. 111.

<sup>11</sup> Civil Guard Sergeant Manuel Martín Rubio, "Ecos: La conservación del orden público", *RTGC*, no. 279 (May 1933), pp. 175-176.

<sup>12</sup> Civil Guard Sergeant Manuel Martín Rubio, "La conservación del orden público", *RTGC*, no. 280 (June 1933), pp. 214-215.

This concept of the Civil Guard *al servicio del pueblo*, and thus diminishing the conflict of interests that often arose between the working classes and the *Benemérita*, was still emphasized in official publications. A letter written to Inspector-General Bedía from the Workers' Section of the town of Pilar de Jarabia (Almería) praising the generosity of the Station Commandant of Pulpí, Corporal Juan Leal Romero, was published in the *Boletín Oficial de la Guardia Civil* in May 1933.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the instances of symbolic identification of the Civil Guard with the working class, evident in a series of references since the proclamation of the Republic, could still be found. In discussing the widely-held desire for a pay raise, one civil guard noted that the Socialist-affiliated UGT referred to all public functionaries as “workers”, and that the Civil Guard could rightly be considered “*trabajadores del orden*”. He went on to cite approvingly the phrase “uniformed workers” used by a former Civil Governor of Barcelona during the public tribute given in the Catalan capital in December 1932.<sup>14</sup>

If many within the Civil Guard believed that the Left Republican-Socialist government of Manuel Azaña was overly partisan and increasingly incapable of dealing with Spain's pressing political and social problems, by the summer of 1933 disaffected elements of the *Benemérita* could look to a fairly broad sector of public opinion that shared this view. The scandal of Casas Viejas had dogged the government throughout the winter and spring of 1933. By the summer, a perceived rise in social unrest and disorder had

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<sup>13</sup> *BOGC*, VIII, no. 13 (May 1933), pp. 342-343.

<sup>14</sup> Civil Guard Corporal Eladio Urién, “Trabajadores del Orden”, *RTGC*, no. 277 (March 1933), p. 110.

brought further criticism of the administration.<sup>15</sup> While columns on “social indiscipline” had been a regular feature of rightist and conservative papers since the summer of 1931, in mid-1933 the centrist, liberal and pro-republican daily *El Sol* also began running frequently columns titled “In search of public order” and “The extremists”, largely focussing on the activities of the CNT and FAI. Two other important pro-republican dailes, *El Progreso* and *Luz*, also had withdrawn their support for the administration.<sup>16</sup> Also in July 1933, Miguel Maura, who was highly regarded within the Civil Guard, withdrew his small party from the Cortes, blaming the government for the “political and social chaos” that was undermining the whole republican project.<sup>17</sup> A week later, he gave a closing speech at an assembly of the Conservative Republican Party outlining these same charges in greater detail.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the month, front-page article in *El Sol* talked of political instability and a “vast conspiracy”, and named the “intransigence of the Socialists” as being one of the principle causes of the crisis.<sup>19</sup> Almost as if on cue, the Socialist leader, Francisco Largo Caballero, gave a speech in which alongside stating that the Republic needed the Socialists and called for discipline and unity, he also declared that if the Socialists were prevented from gaining power through legal mechanisms, they were willing to conquer power through other means.<sup>20</sup>

The month of July also brought other potential sources of disaffection towards the government, and the Socialists in particular, amongst the Civil Guard. The trials of

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<sup>15</sup> Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics Under the Second Republic, 1931-1936* (Brighton, 2000), pp. 170-173.

<sup>16</sup> Townson, *Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 171-172.

<sup>17</sup> *El Sol* (16 July 1933).

<sup>18</sup> *El Sol* (25 July 1933). Excerpts from his speech were printed on the front page.

<sup>19</sup> *El Sol* (22 July 1933); *El Sol* (25 July 1933). This plot was denounced by the government as part of an “alarmist campaign”, after a variety of preventative measures were taken: *El Sol* (25 July 1933).

<sup>20</sup> *El Sol* (25 July 1933). Excerpts from his speech were printed on the front page.

Sanjurjo for his role in the August 1932 rebellion and those officially charged for the massacre of the four civil guards in Castilblanco were held, the latter being defended by the Socialists Luis Jiménez de Asúa and Juan-Simeón Vidarte. Proceedings also began against the Civil Guard sergeant held responsible for the deaths of four workers in Palacios Rubios in September 1931. Sergeant Jiménez Cuesta, a corporal at the time of the event, was charged with four counts of homicide and another four of wounding (*lesions*). The prosecuting attorney was José Andrés Mansó, president of the Sindicatos de Trabajadores de la Tierra and POSE deputy for Salamanca in 1933 and 1936, while his legal defence was in the hands of the Salamantine lawyer and leader of the authoritarian Catholic party, the CEDA, José María Gil Robles.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, articles regularly appeared in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* reporting ceremonies whereby republican flags were donated to local Civil Guard posts, thus allowing lukewarm and pseudo-republican elements to appear to be loyal to the regime – presented as “respectable opinion” and “*gente de orden*” – and grateful to the *Benemérita* for its services and sacrifices for the Republic.

Of even greater impact on the attitudes of civil guards was another outburst of unrest that erupted at the end of the summer and into the autumn. Reports in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* tell of social conflict, armed robberies, a wave of crop burnings, stealing of livestock, and discovery of bomb and weapons caches.<sup>22</sup> These incidents appeared to intensify in tandem with political developments. With the dismissal of the Left

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<sup>21</sup> “Por los sucesos de Palaciosrubios: Comienza el Consejo de Guerra contra un sargento de la Guardia civil y once paisanos”, *El Sol* (16 July 1933).

<sup>22</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 283 (September 1933), pp. 329-331; “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 283 (October 1933), pp. 369-372.

Republican-Socialist government in the beginning of September and its replacement by Radical-led administrations, and the calling of new elections for November 1933, ongoing social and political conflicts rose ever more to the surface as control of the state administration went up for grabs. This situation was decried in the “Servicios” section of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*, which stated that during the month of October, personnel of the Institute had to “suffocate an infinity of tumultuous demonstrations”. The majority of these lay within the provinces of Extremadura and Andalucía, particularly Jaén. These continued into November and the election day itself.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps out of frustration and exhaustion after months of increasing social conflict, perhaps out of an identification of the Socialists as contributing to this situation, it would seem that civil guards in these regions were willing to lend a helping hand to those political parties that represented the “forces of order” and promised to impose respect for authority. According to Socialist sources, civil guards harassed rural workers during the elections, a claim that was largely absent in the elections of 1931.<sup>24</sup>

Alongside the struggle for political, economic and social power existed another important conflict that often put civil guards at odds with the civilian population and arguably was intrinsic to the “republicanisation” of Spanish society: the competition between “popular” and “jurist” concepts of law and justice. As mentioned in Chapter One, in rural villages and towns there was a disdain for outside interference in local affairs, and national laws and institutions were judged more on pragmatic grounds than on any conversion to liberal creeds on what constituted the most just and rational regulation of society. One of the

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<sup>23</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 285 (December 1933), pp. 460-463.

<sup>24</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, p. 119; López Martínez, *Orden público y luchas agrarias*, pp. 321-329.

principle tasks of the Republican regime was to change such attitudes towards the state; that is, convince the lower classes that they had a stake in a liberal democratic society, and demonstrate to the traditional economic and social elites that they were not above the law – as they often were under the monarchy – but rather subjected to it. The “rule of law” (*imperio de la ley*) was a key social value for the Civil Guard, a liberal institution *par excellence*, as it was the very basis of its personnel’s authority and differentiated it from local institutions, making it, in their minds, superior and a force for civilization and progress. An example of this is the satirical cartoon of rural life that featured occasionally in the Civil Guard’s professional journal. One such cartoon features two crafty petty criminals as they outmanoeuvre various other municipal and national policing bodies, all the time keeping “an eye out for the ‘ceviles’ [sic]”, who are presented as the most effective (and thus feared) force.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps of greater importance was the Civil Guard’s intervention during episodes of “popular justice”. While issues of an economic nature probably featured more prominently in the minds of the lower classes when considering such interventions, there were other types of incidents that fell outside the conflict between the proprietor and labouring classes. Coincidentally or not, during the tense months of the late summer of 1933, incidents of attempted lynching suddenly gained attention in the Civil Guard press. On 31 July 1933, civil guards prevented the lynching of a murderer in Canillas de Aceituno (Málaga); in Jabalín (Murcia) on 1 August a well-known delinquent was also spared a hanging by angry crowds after murdering a teacher; on 3 August in Talavera de la Reina, civil guards intervened to prevent the lynching of a heavy-handed municipal

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<sup>25</sup> Diego de Gracia, “¡Ojo a los ceviles!”, *RTGC*, no. 278 (April 1933), pp. 130-131.

guard (*guardia urbano*) who had roughed-up and shot at a local man; in Las Corts (Barcelona) the Civil Guard was impeded in the transfer of an armed mugger by the local population, who sought to impose “popular justice” on the miscreant – it was thanks to the protection of the Civil Guard that he was not strung up.<sup>26</sup> A chauffeur in Fuencarral (Madrid) was almost lynched on 10 August after causing an accident that resulted in the injuring of several people. His life was saved thanks to the protection provided by the local contingent of civil guards.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the most extreme example of such an incident, demonstrating how important submission to the law was to the ethos of the Civil Guard, involved the murder of a civil guard’s sister in early April 1934. As the local population gathered to lynch the killer, the report tells us that this particular civil guard swallowed his own pain and desire for revenge to protect the murderer of his sibling from the angered crowds. His devotion to duty and the due process of law was held up as an example to all civil guards.<sup>28</sup>

The Radical-led governments from September 1933 onwards had as their motto the imposition of the rule of law and restoration of authority that supposedly had been undermined by the previous Left Republican-Socialist administration. They would do this through a process of “rectifying” those reforms passed under the Azaña government. Among these were measures that were supposed to improve the “interior satisfaction” within the Civil Guard and Interior Ministry police, building upon the long-standing

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<sup>26</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 283 (September 1933), pp. 330-331.

<sup>27</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 284 (October 1933), p. 369. Three other near-lynching incidents during the months of September and October 1933 were mentioned in “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 286 (December 1933), pp. 460-463.

<sup>28</sup> Comandante Lara, “Notas del mes: Entre el Deber y el Dolor, venció el Deber”, *RTGC*, no. 291 (May 1934), pp. 205-206.



campaign by the Radicals and their erstwhile political allies to demonstrate their concern for the needs and prestige of the *Benemérita*. This policy dove-tailed with the desire of Lerroux, who believed he was unjustly kept from the reigns of power by upstarts, to maintain the Radicals in a dominant position – through opportunistic alliances or through more traditional means of co-opting the coercive forces of the state.

In terms of the political hue of the command structure of the Interior Ministry police, on 23 September 1933 – that is, during the short-lived first Lerroux government – the hard-line right-wing (though republican) Lieutenant Colonel Agustín Muñoz Grandes was named commander of the Security Corps (which included the Assault Guard), while José Valdivia y García-Borrón was named Director-General of Security.<sup>29</sup> José Valdivia was a close confidant and Secretary to a previous Director-General of Security, Arturo Menéndez López, the latter being an Artillery captain and politically linked to Azaña, but at some point gravitated towards Lerroux.<sup>30</sup> While the government of Diego Martínez Barrio, Lerroux's second-in-command, was ostensibly more honest in its intentions to hold free and fair elections, within days of its constitution, Martínez Barrio, Valdivia and Interior Minister Manuel Rico Avello inspected the Cuatro Caminos Civil Guard garrison in Madrid. Whilst there, they distributed Crosses of Military Merit for the officers present, and chevrons for the NCOs and ranks.<sup>31</sup> On 19 October 1933, a proposal was

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<sup>29</sup> José Caamaño Bournacell, *La policía a través del tiempo, 1908-1958* (Madrid, 1999), pp. 176-177.

<sup>30</sup> Santos Martínez Saura, *Memorias del secretario de Azaña* (Barcelona, 1999), p. 229. Azaña also remarks that Valdivia was an “*hombre de confianza*” of Menéndez: *Obras Completas*, p. 755. Valdivia reputedly was involved in a supposed assassination plot against Azaña in the autumn of 1933: Santos Martínez Saura, *ibid.*, pp. 229 & 247-248

<sup>31</sup> *El Sol* (15 October 1933). Manuel Rico Avello was a politically-independent republican lawyer from Asturias who served as a parliamentary deputy as a member of the *Al Servicio de la República* grouping: Joaquín Arrarás, *Historia de la Segunda República Española*, Vol. II (Madrid, 1970), p. 217; Townson,

submitted by the government to the Cortes for the establishment of an additional credit to the annual budget to cover some of the extra personnel costs of the Civil Guard, a motion that was supported by Maura and opposed by the Socialists.<sup>32</sup> A month earlier the Minister of Justice, Juan Botella Asensi, announced that he was prepared to amnesty all of those state functionaries who had seen their careers put on hold (*postergados*) by the Azaña governments. On 15 October 1933, it was announced that this was to include those Interior Ministry police who saw themselves subjected to any type of investigative or disciplinary proceedings for their zealous service under the monarchy (or lack thereof under the Republic), potentially returning back into the ranks personnel of dubious loyalty to the regime.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, on the same day, the Minister for War, Vicente Iranzo Enguita received a delegation of right-leaning and right-wing generals (including former Inspector-General of the Civil Guard, Miguel Cabanellas) and announced a review of all those military officers who felt “wounded” (*lesionados*) by the previous administration for political reasons.<sup>34</sup> That these “rectifications” were done under an all-Republican cabinet (though largely without any representatives of the republican Left), and echoed the previously stated opinions within the Civil Guard of not punishing personnel for their service to the monarchy, made the republican vision of the Azaña governments seem all the more partisan. Indeed, Lerroux’s oft-stated aim of reconciling the non-republican Right with the regime would have resonated amongst the Civil Guard.

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*Crisis of Democracy*, pp. 183-184. Evidently, Lerroux blamed both Martínez Barrio and Rico Avello for not providing the Radicals with a majority after the elections: *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>32</sup> *El Sol* (20 October 1933).

<sup>33</sup> Arrarás, *Historia de la Segunda República*, II, p. 207; Martín Turrado Vidal, *La policía en la historia contemporánea de España, 1766-1986* (Madrid, 1995), p. 195. Juan Botella Asensi was a deputy for the Radical Socialist Party.

<sup>34</sup> *El Sol* (15 October 1933). Vicente Iranzo Enguita was a doctor from Teruel and politically independent: Arrarás, *Historia de la Segunda República*, II, p. 204.

Despite the contentment probably felt amongst many civil guards with the results of the elections and the formation of more friendly Centre-Right governments, there was initially not any noticeable praise for the new political leaders of the nation. On 18 October 1933, Rico Avello announced that he planned to reform the administrative structure of the General Inspectorate.<sup>35</sup> In the face of various announcements of the Interior Minister to effect new reforms and “rectify” some previous ones, official opinion within the Civil Guard, while receptive to reform, was highly sceptical of those proposals coming from outside the corps. One lengthy article appearing in the December 1933 issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* began with a discussion amongst several long-serving officers in the force about the series of reforms that had been implemented and proposed that year. One such officer responded, “Reorganization you say? The better word for it would be ‘deformation’.” The article goes on to state that while the Civil Guard accepted the need for reform, it should be done in consultation with technical experts from within the corps. Indeed, it criticizes Rico Avello for this lack of consultation, exclaiming that as a civilian minister he did not fully understand the workings and needs of the Civil Guard, “which, for the perfection of its functioning and the esprit de corps imbued in it by its founder, has been admired by Spaniards and served as a model for foreign gendarmeries for over eighty years”. The article then goes into some detail about those reforms that its author feels are the most necessary.<sup>36</sup> By the time Rico Avello was replaced by Martínez Barrio in the end of January 1934, this message from the Civil Guard had been noted, and the proposals put forward by the Interior Minister on 13 February 1934 were warmly received in the corps’ journal, as

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<sup>35</sup> *El Sol* (19 October 1933).

<sup>36</sup> “Las reformas”, *RTGC*, no. 286 (December 1933), pp. 453-456.

these conformed to those criticisms expressed by the editors of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* “about the efficiency of the absurd administrative organs that were created in the celebrated reforms” [of 1933]. The piece then went on to outline further recommendations for “rectification”.<sup>37</sup>

One of the major reforms of the Azaña government that was implemented by the Radical-led governments was the transfer of competencies to the Catalan Generalitat, including those of public order. In the lead up to the transfer, it was announced that those who did not wish to serve under the Catalan government could request to transfer outside of Catalonia.<sup>38</sup> Amongst the Interior Ministry police, the offer was taken up by the majority of personnel.<sup>39</sup> Amongst the Civil Guard, on the other hand, the response was rather muted, despite the significance of this change for a force explicitly designed to foster a sense of national unity – a change characterised as “a revolutionary novelty for the corps” by one historian.<sup>40</sup> In one article discussing the transfer of competencies, the decision of many Interior Ministry police to leave Catalonia was mentioned. Noting the potential problems that the transfer could create within the Civil Guard, it decided to take a positive tone, in that the service of the corps under the Generalitat demonstrated the irreplaceable nature of the *Benemérita* and the apolitical nature of its duty.<sup>41</sup> The author of this article reported his satisfaction with the attitudes of the Catalan authorities towards the Civil Guard when he visited the Catalan capital several months later, and how the

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<sup>37</sup> “Las reformas”, *RTGC*, no. 289 (March 1934), pp. 119-120.

<sup>38</sup> *El Sol* (21 October 1933).

<sup>39</sup> *El Sol* (22 October 1933); Arrarás, *Historia de la Segunda República*, II, pp. 249-250.

<sup>40</sup> Manel Risques and Carles Barrachina, *Procés a la Guàrdia Civil: Barcelona, 1939* (Barcelona, 2001), p. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Comandante Lara, “Notas del mes: El traspaso de los servicios a la Generalidad”, *RTGC*, no. 287 (January 1934), p. 31.

former had attended to the needs of the corps, particularly that of the construction of new and larger garrisons, which would form a ring around Barcelona.<sup>42</sup> Despite the unpopularity of the corps amongst the general population due to its association with the centralized state as well as its repressive functions, it appears that a positive relationship did exist between the Catalan authorities and the Civil Guard under its command. Claudi Ametlla, a Catalan journalist and parliamentarian who served as Civil Governor of Gerona and Barcelona commented in his memoirs on the efficient and obedient nature of the institution.<sup>43</sup> While the Generalitat could not interfere with the internal structure of the corps nor in the selection of the personnel stationed in Catalonia, the Civil Guard was required to present itself in dress uniform and fly the *senyera* during Catalan holidays, and its men were recommended to learn the Catalan language.<sup>44</sup>

In terms of the views within the corps itself, the left-leaning republican Casares Quiroga was still praised on equal if not greater terms than his Radical successors. In a ceremony held in February 1934 the former Interior Minister was presented with a plaque by the corps for his “constant defense of the Civil Guard and for the extraordinary interest he placed in improving the economic situation” of its personnel.<sup>45</sup> The Galician was praised again in an another article published in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*, which commented on the various Ministers and Under-Secretaries of the Interior of the Republic up to that point. Alongside Miguel Maura, Casares Quiroga (and his under-secretary,

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<sup>42</sup> Teniente Colonel Lara, “Notas del mes: La Guardia Civil al servicio de la Generalidad”, *RTGC*, no. 296 (October 1934), p. 397.

<sup>43</sup> Claudi Ametlla, *Memòries polítiques, 1918-1936* (Barcelona, 1979), pp. 134-135. Ametlla comments are quoted in Risques and Borrachina, *Procés a la Guàrdia Civil*, pp. 30-32.

<sup>44</sup> Risques and Barrachina, *Procés a la Guàrdia Civil*, p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Comandante Lara, “Notas del mes: Entrega de una placa”, *RTGC*, no. 289 (March 1934), p. 117.

Carlos Esplá) received the greatest amount of praise. Their actions and defence of the corps in a difficult period for both the Civil Guard and the Republic – with, again, special mention being made for the improvements in pay gained under the 1933 reforms – were applauded, particularly as they were seen as having the courage to support and defend the corps when their colleagues apparently pandered to public prejudices for reasons of political partisanship and expediency. As the article explained, “they served amongst those well-known political elements who dealt with the Civil Guard publicly in a manner that was both mistaken and unjust, all the while in private they were the first to recognize” the virtues of the discipline of the *Benemérita*.<sup>46</sup>

The issue that had brought the Civil Guard closer to the Radicals and their right-wing allies was their common interest in “restoring” order and respect for authority. This concern was brought to the fore in ever-greater urgency in the year following the 1933 parliamentary elections. The first major incident that highlighted the advertised threats to the political and social harmony of Spain was the anarcho-syndicalist insurrection in December 1933, the third of its kind in the past two years. Like previous attempts, it lacked the unanimous support of the various sections of the CNT, not to mention that of the Socialists, was poorly organised and thus did not constitute a serious threat to the regime and was suppressed fairly easily.<sup>47</sup> Like with the January 1933 insurrection, it received considerable attention in the Civil Guard press despite its limited scale. In total, eleven civil guards were killed and forty-five were wounded – significantly more than any previous confrontation, but considerably less than the loss of life the corps would

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<sup>46</sup> Comandante Lara, “Notas del mes: Ministros y subsecretarios de Gobernación”, *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), pp. 163-164.

<sup>47</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain*, pp. 74-78; Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 130-132.

experience in later incidents. The revolutionary movement, which “shook all of Spain”, was kept in check, as the corps’ press reported, through the efforts of the *Benemérita*. Six pages of the “Services” section of the January issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* were dedicated to detailing the main events of the insurrection, though this account was described by its reporter as being incomplete. There were several notable characteristics of this account which mark the increasing disquiet amongst the Civil Guard about the perceived revolutionary threat facing Spain (and themselves in particular), echoing those concerns voiced after the January 1933 insurrection but in even more vivid language, and would serve as indicators to perceptions of future events. Amongst these was the familiar image of a relatively small contingent of civil guards besieged by well-armed and numerous revolutionaries, and the “heroic resistance” carried out by the former in the face of the “unbridled avalanche” of the masses. Reports of many discoveries and captures of arms deposits before, during and after the events only heightened the sense of physical danger presented by working class radicalism. Moreover, the feared ubiquitous presence of Bolshevism was apparent, as insurgent groups were described as either “communists”, “extremists”, “revolutionaries”. Despite the fact that the insurrection was organized by sections of the CNT, the anarcho-syndicalist organization was not mentioned by name.<sup>48</sup>

This image of an assault on civilization was made more implicit in the commentary in the article that followed the above account. The Civil Guard was presented as the symbol

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<sup>48</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 287 (January 1933), pp. 25-30. Furthermore, a detailed two-page account of the events in Valderrobles (Teruel) was published two months later: Guardia Segundo Manuel Galvéz, “Los heroicos Guardias de Valderrobles”, *RTGC*, no. 289 (March 1934), pp. 140-141. Additional details about the events in Asensio (Logroño) were published in the “Servicios” section of the same issue.

and bastion of civilization, while the revolutionaries were portrayed as cruel and barbaric. The 11 civil guards killed in the insurrection were not just another group of “martyrs” who had given their lives in the line of duty, but were described as being “hunted by savage hordes, who are unworthy of having been born in Spain”. It was not just the men of the Civil Guard who were at risk in such events, but also their innocent families. While decrying the poor state of the defences of the average *casa-cuartel*, the ability to resist attack was largely down to the “MEN behind its walls, ready to die for society, while their children – innocents! – were hidden in those corners less damaged by the constant battering” of what constituted their homes.<sup>49</sup> While such florid language indicated the traditional deep-seated fears of many civil guards, it clearly sets out a Manichean clash between anarchic, savage barbarism and the fundamental symbols of civilized society: manly virtue, the family and order. Conceived in such terms, this was a battle that demanded resolution on the part of the authorities and a harder line against those who were seen to apologize for, or provoke disorder and discontent.

As the Civil Guard was seen by certain sectors, and themselves, as one of the principal defenders of civilised society, its efforts defending it during the December insurrection were praised by both the corps’ supporters and the government. Importantly, the Civil Guard was not presented as having protected a Centre-Right government whose legitimacy and agenda was under considerable suspicion by the Left, but rather as

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<sup>49</sup> Comandante Lara, “Notas del Mes: La más gloriosa, de entre las gloriosas páginas del libro de oro de la Guardia Civil, estará escrita, de por vida, en las fechas que comprenden del 8 al 15 de diciembre de 1933”, *RTGC*, no. 287 (January 1934), pp. 31-32. For a further depiction by Comandante Lara of the “chasm” that separated the indifference and inhumanity of “the political extremists whose passions blind them” to the bloody consequences of their actions and the self-sacrificing and humane civil guard, see “Notas del Mes: Unas páginas de honor para la historia de la Institución”, *RTGC*, no. 292 (June 1934), p. 229.



defending the Republic against its enemies. An article in the February 1934 issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* mentioned the praise given to the corps in various newspapers for the actions of its personnel during the December 1933 insurrection, and reprinted an article appearing in the *El Defensor de Cuenca* (23 January 1934) admiring the virtues of the Civil Guard. Echoing the language often employed in the Civil Guard press, particularly since the advent of the Republic, it noted the humble social origins of the average civil guard, and ended by calling them “proletarians of honor” (*proletarios del honor*).<sup>50</sup> On 20 March 1934, a special mass was held in Palencia Cathedral at the behest of the Bishop in homage to those civil guards who lost their lives during the December 1933 insurrection and to pray for their souls.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, for their services to the regime during the anarcho-syndicalist insurrection, the Lerroux government awarded the Great Cross of the Order of the Republic to the Inspector General of the corps, General Bedía, as well as two other high ranking officials (it was noted in the Civil Guard press that the father and grandfather of Vicente Santiago, one of those awarded, had both served in the corps). As Bedía noted in a letter published in the *Boletín Oficial de la Guardia Civil*, the government awarded him the highest honour of the regime in a gesture of appreciation for the efforts and service of all civil guards.<sup>52</sup> This gesture was considered by the Civil Guard to be of such importance that a general collection was held to pay for a large banquet for the presentation of the honour. Held on 16 June 1934 in the Interior Ministry, the then current Interior Minister, Rafael Salazar Alonso, who presided over the event, praised Bedía and all of the corps for their

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<sup>50</sup> “Leyendo la Prensa”, *RTGC*, no. 288 (February 1934), p. 56.

<sup>51</sup> “Miscelánea: Homenaje a la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), p. 175.

<sup>52</sup> Comandante Lara, “Notas del Mes: Homenaje”, *RTGC*, no. 289 (March 1934), p. 117.

services to the Republic, stating that “the Republic symbolizes justice, and justice is that General Bedía [and by extension, all of the Civil Guard] be rewarded for his services”.<sup>53</sup>

A further expression of this gratitude was the quantity of 76,900 pesetas granted by the Interior Minister (as the result of public donations) to the dependents of those guards killed during the insurrection, as well as to those civil guards who served with distinction during the events of December 1933.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, a civil guard wrote in a letter published in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* of the *Benemérita*’s blood sacrifices to the defence of order and the Republic, in unprecedented amounts in his view. Echoing the barbarism versus civilization rhetoric, the author states how the valiant men of the Civil Guard foiled the plans of the revolutionaries to replace the Republic for a social ideal “that can find space only in insane minds, frenzied with greed”, and thus, “through a thousands vicissitudes” and “in common cause with the people of order (*el pueblo del orden*)”, struggle towards the goal of gaining justice for all (*lograr [...] el imperio de la Justicia*).<sup>55</sup>

If the Interior Minister Salazar Alonso had expressed his recognition of the importance of the Civil Guard and his appreciation for its services, the corps certainly had high hopes for their new ministerial commander. Unlike his moderate predecessors since September 1933, Diego Martínez Barrio and Manuel Rico Avelló, who had sought to maintain a measured response to public order, Salazar Alonso was a hard-liner who pursued a strategy of confrontation and conquest. Although a member of the Radical Party, Salazar

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<sup>53</sup> Comandante Lara, “Notas del Mes: La Guardia Civil y su Inspector General”, *RTGC*, no. 293 (July 1934), pp. 269-270.

<sup>54</sup> The full text of the General Order, complete with the individual quantities distributed, can be found in Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, Vol. V (Madrid, 1984), pp. 363-364.

<sup>55</sup> J. Pérez Castillo (rank not given), “Ecos: Saldo del Deber”, *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), p. 168.

Alonso felt a great deal of sympathy for the positions of the CEDA, whose leader was instrumental in engineering his nomination as Interior Minister.<sup>56</sup> Salazar Alonso's tenure of the Interior Ministry on 3 March 1934 was greeted warmly by the Civil Guard, who, unlike the Spanish Left, did not view Salazar Alonso as a tactical ally to the enemies of the regime, but rather a "prominent republican" who quickly demonstrated his "talents as a liberal, democratic, understanding, energetic and virile statesman".<sup>57</sup> The first interview Salazar Alonso held upon assuming his post was with Inspector General Bedía. According to the former, Bedía informed him that morale was low amongst his men. The reason for this was the "friction" between civil guards "and many local authorities", and "the forced inactivity in the face of certain events". Salazar Alonso requested a detailed list of such tensions and incidents, and assured Bedía that he would respect the traditions and concerns of the Civil Guard.<sup>58</sup>

Salazar Alonso was true to his word and within days of assuming his post he presented a motion to parliament on 7 March 1934 to increase the personnel of the Civil Guard by 1200 men, effectively undoing the reduction instituted in the reform of July 1933, as well as requesting an increase in the budget to cover the greater costs. While making his argument, he mounted a stubborn defence of the Civil Guard and noted that the Republic owed a debt of gratitude towards the corps.<sup>59</sup> Some of the autonomy of the Civil Guard was also restored on 10 March 1934 with the abolition of the Technical Secretariat

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<sup>56</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, p. 142; Townson, *Crisis of Democracy*, pp. 221-223.

<sup>57</sup> Comandante Lara, "Notas del Mes: Ministros y subsecretarios de Gobernación", *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), p. 163, "Notas del Mes: El Ministro de la Goibernación en los cuarteles del Instituto, en Madrid", *RTGC*, no. 291 (May 1934), p. 205.

<sup>58</sup> Rafael Salazar Alonso, *Bajo el signo de la Revolución* (Madrid, 1935), pp. 34-35.

<sup>59</sup> *Diario de la Sesiones de Cortes* (*DSC* hereafter), 07 March 1934; "El Cuadro Orgánico", *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), p. 86.

created a year earlier, which had coordinated services between the corps and the Interior Ministry police.<sup>60</sup> Salazar Alonso also began to undo other aspects of the reforms of the Centre-Left governments, and incorporate some of the suggestions proposed in the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*. This “counter-reform” was warmly welcomed in the Civil Guard press, which criticized the 1933 reforms as “revealing the most absolute ignorance of the real needs of the corps”.<sup>61</sup> Given the concerns voiced about the small number of personnel in isolated and vulnerable rural stations in the wake of the December 1933 insurrection,<sup>62</sup> Salazar Alonso announced a proposal in May 1934 to increase personnel by another 2000 men, alongside other “counter-reforms” and improvements.<sup>63</sup> When finally set before parliament on 3 July 1934, in the wake of the peasants’ strike the month before, he requested an even larger increase of 4037 new personnel, alongside other reforms.<sup>64</sup>

The “counter-reforms” of the Radical-led governments, as well as their much-publicized efforts to broaden the definition of republicanism and reach out to those sectors either alienated by the previous leftist character of the regime or yet still to be won over to republicanism, were applauded by most civil guards (most of whom fit into these two categories). Moreover, the continued exclusivist conception of the Republic by the Left Republicans and the Socialists only drove deeper the wedge between these two groups

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<sup>60</sup> “Negociado de ‘Intervención de Armas y Explosivos y de Coordinación y Enlace con los Servicios de Orden Público’”, *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), p. 192.

<sup>61</sup> “Las Reformas”, *RTGC*, no. 293 (July 1934), p. 280; “La contrareforma”, *RTGC*, no. 291 (May 1934), p. 209; Comandante Lara, “Notas del Mes: ¿Reformas?”, *RTGC*, no. 292 (June 1934), pp. 229-230; Comandante Lara, “Notas del Mes: Las reformas”, *RTGC*, no. 293 (July 1934), p. 271.

<sup>62</sup> Ramón Vázquez Díaz, “Ecos: Tema de actualidad”, *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), p. 167.

<sup>63</sup> “Proyecto de aumento de 2000 hombres para reforzar los Puestos, y otras mejoras”, *RTGC*, no. 292 (June 1934), pp. 240.

<sup>64</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 57.

and the corps.<sup>65</sup> After the December 1933 insurrection, alongside the growing conflict and tension that began earlier in that year, the revolutionary threat seemed all-to-real for many civil guards, who felt that confrontation, not reconciliation – or, as they saw it, “flattering violent minorities” – was the strategy needed to impose order and respect for authority.

In particular, the hardening of attitudes within the Civil Guard was bringing into greater conflict with the Socialists, whose own attitudes were experiencing a hardening of sorts. Over the course of the Republic up to this point, in the eyes of the Civil Guard, the Socialists had gone from being a “disciplined force supporting the regime” to a menace to the regime. The apparent shift (often more apparent than real) on the part of the Socialists from a movement counselling moderation to a more belligerent stance was the product of a number of factors. The Socialists’ position was characterised by both their struggle to balance their generally reformist traditions with the high expectations of their constituencies, as well as their fears over the possibility of the emergence of fascism in Spain. Nevertheless, given that the Civil Guard was on constant lookout for the “Bolshevik menace”, the “bolshevisation” of the Socialists (however rhetorical) would have been seen as a dangerous development, particularly given the characterization of the Socialists as such by the right-wing and Catholic press. Moreover, Interior Minister Salazar Alonso had singled the Socialists out as the most important revolutionary threat to the Republic, a threat that had to be eradicated.

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<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that certain sectors of the Centre and Centre-Right were also wary of the Radical Party’s tactical alliance, and increasing reliance, on the non-republican Right.

The Socialists' position towards the Civil Guard had hardened since the beginning of 1931 as a result of the corps' role in undermining reformist initiatives in the countryside. At the PSOE Congress of October 1932, a motion to propose a law to dissolve the Civil Guard in parliament was approved overwhelmingly with 20,048 votes in favour and only 2217 votes against.<sup>66</sup> Thus, after a brief interlude, they had reverted back to their previous position of wanting to abolish the Civil Guard. Beginning in December 1933, a series of executive meetings were held to discuss the movement's plan of action regarding the new political situation, and a series of programmes were presented, in which the dissolution of the Civil Guard figured alongside what constituted the organisation of the security forces on a blatant political basis.<sup>67</sup> While this policy, if it was ever implemented, would have created many more problems than it would have resolved, it reflected a long history of latent and open confrontation with the Civil Guard, both before and during the Republic, as well as the Socialists' exasperation at the residual strength of the traditional elites after the fall of the monarchy. Moreover, in the wake of the elections and December 1933 insurrection, civil guards were increasingly resorting to heavy-handed measures in their dealings with workers.<sup>68</sup> While this increase in "preventative brutality" was symptomatic of the Civil Guard's own anxieties about the levels of social and political conflict, it could only increase the Socialists' own sense of persecution by the Radical-led governments. The history of antagonism with the Radicals meant that the Socialists even accused moderates such as Martínez Barrio and Rico Avello (the latter not even being a member of the Radicals) of a deliberate policy of

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<sup>66</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 7-8.

<sup>67</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 131-138. For the various proposals, see Juan-Simeón Vidarte, *El bienio negro y la insurrección de Asturias* (Barcelona, 1978), pp. 88-97.

<sup>68</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 134-136.

persecuting the Socialist movement.<sup>69</sup> This exaggeration soon became a reality when Salazar Alonso assumed the post of Interior Minister.<sup>70</sup>

Adopting a clear attitude of hostility towards the Civil Guard, the Socialists resisted all efforts to strengthen a force they saw antagonistic to them and that generally was hated by their constituencies. Moreover, after the scandal provoked by the massacre at Casas Viejas in January 1933, the Socialists sought to distance themselves with heavy-handed methods towards extremist actions, even if this was carried out against their rivals in the CNT. This was evident in their criticism of the repression of the December 1933 insurrection in parliament, in which allusions to Casas Viejas were made in an effort to give the Radicals a taste of their own medicine and also score points with those workers angered by their sectarian attitudes towards labour disputes. In terms of the Civil Guard specifically, they opposed (unsuccessfully) both of Salazar Alonso's attempts to increase the personnel and budget,<sup>71</sup> a position that would have done little to endear the *Benemérita* towards them.

Indeed, according to the Socialist-affiliated press, the Civil Guard continued to demonstrate its antipathy for its members, particularly in those areas of high social tension. In February of 1934, the Socialist mayor of Puebla de Don Fadrique (Granada) was replaced by a retired army officer who had decided that he was going to make an example of the local Socialist "agitators". He had the local Casa del Pueblo emptied of

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example, *DSC*, 16 & 17 January 1934.

<sup>70</sup> Gabriel Jackson notes that Salazar Alonso was actually on friendly terms with much of the Spanish Left in the 1920s, a situation that had suffered a radical reverse in the 1930s: *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (Princeton, NJ, 1965), pp. 135-136.

<sup>71</sup> *DSC*, 7 March 1934; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 57.

its members, who were then beaten by civil guards and the hired thugs of the local proprietors. In April a hunger march in Fuente del Maestre was confronted with violence by the Civil Guard, resulting in four workers killed, several wounded and dozens of arrests.<sup>72</sup>

Contrary to the complaints of the Socialists about the partisanship and brutality of the Civil Guard, the corps described a volatile situation in which the members of the *Benemérita* acted with great humanity and discipline. On 7 February 1934 in La Almeda (Ciudad Real), the Civil Guard contained a “subversive movement” of “extremist character”, acting “with skill and conscientiousness”. The following day, in Colmenar Viejo (Madrid), during a food/subsistence riot in which various persons were assaulted, the Civil Guard “worked with such great prudence and tact” that they gained the obedience of the crowd and re-established the public peace. In Sestao (Bilbao), an “imposing mass of men and women” gathered in what converted into bread riot. Local civil guards were able to calm the situation through “patience, vigilance and danger (presumably to themselves)”. The *Benemérita* also had to confront “massive and tumultuous demonstrations” in Canillas (Logroño) on 14 February and faced off against the “mobs of strikers” threatening stores in Torrelvega (Santander) five days later. As to be expected, the more ominous developments came from the conflictive lands of the *latifundista* south. In the areas surrounding Bujalance (Córdoba), the scene of a violent confrontation between civil guards and revolutionaries during the December 1933

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<sup>72</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 148-150. The Civil Governor for Granada, Manuel Asensi Mestre (Radicals), denied that the beatings in Puebla de Don Fadrique occurred, but admitted that the Casa del Pueblo was subjected certainly to constant vigilance and its members were often stopped and searched by civil guards: López Martínez, *Orden público y luchas agrarias*, p. 352n7.



insurrection, massive deposits of arms and explosives were found after a series of determined searches throughout the month of January. In the province of J  en, another burst of activity resulted in the capture of “the most dangerous delinquents against property”, who were reportedly causing terror in the area.<sup>73</sup>

While the growing mood of confrontation in the wake of the November 1933 elections and the anarcho-syndicalist insurrection the following month undoubtedly provoked a move towards more heavy-handed methods amongst the Civil Guard, it appears that the humanitarian self-image evident in the accounts given above did have some actual resonance amongst the corps. As in other articles appearing in previous years, a debate of sorts was initiated about the correct manner to deal with peasant unrest. While such concerns were voiced by what was probably a minority, the fact that they were published in the semi-official professional journal of the Civil Guard indicates, at the least, a nominal concern in reducing the near-constant tension between personnel and the working classes. In one such article, a corporal of the corps queries the proper response to peaceful land occupations when the invading landless labourers ignore the “benevolent invitation” of civil guards to desist and respect the right of private property. While a small group can be easily removed without much force, the author of this article, who portrays these pacific trespassers in a fairly positive light, notes that the problem becomes difficult with large groups. The quandary appears to be absolute: the civil guards must fulfil their duty to protect private property, and while their regulations allow the recourse to force if their instructions are not obeyed, in the absence of any aggression it would seem cruel to resort to lethal force to evict the much more numerous invaders. The

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<sup>73</sup> “Servcios”, *RTGC*, no. 289 (March 1934), pp. 121-123.

normal recourse in such a situation, though not sanctioned by the corps' regulations, would be the firing of a warning volley into the air, which also was ignored by the obstinate, yet still peaceful, peasants.<sup>74</sup>

Although the author promised to answer the riddle in a future article which never appeared, the first instalment clearly shows the central dilemma of the public relations of the Civil Guard, often mistakenly believed by scholars to be its military bearing. Instead, it is the unenviable position of being caught in the middle of a three-way struggle between the liberal state, the proprietor classes and the working classes, all of whom are determined to impose their own vision onto society. The advent of the Republic raised the stakes in this tension, and events were making the situation all the more acute. Nonetheless, given that the principle physical threat to civil guards came from the working classes, this reinforced the need, from their perspective, to bolster the authority of the state, an objective shared by the proprietor classes – though, of course, with the caveat that state power revert back to protecting their economic interests – and thus making them, once again, the natural allies of the *Benemérita*.

Further complicating the issue of public order was intra-class violence. While much of the hostility of the working class organisations was directed at their “class enemies”, a good portion of their animus was reserved for their competitors. The history of confrontation, only periodically broken by short periods of cooperation, between the two largest workers' movements – those of the Socialists and the anarcho-syndicalists – had

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<sup>74</sup> Francisco Carmona, “Ecos: Intervención de la Fuerza en delitos sociales incruentos”, *RTGC*, no. 288 (February 1934), pp. 57-58.

hardened as their approaches to the advancement of working-class interests came into open conflict. The Socialists' willingness to collaborate (though, not always with great enthusiasm and at times with mixed emotions) with the constituted authority, which often targeted the CNT, created considerable bad blood between the two groupings. Indeed, first under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and then during the first two years of the Republic, the Socialists had little compunction in colluding, if not encouraging, the governments of the day to take a hard line against their anarcho-syndicalist rivals. In turn, the majority of the anarcho-syndicalists saw little to gain from co-operating with the Republican state, despite the presence of working-class representatives in the government. After two years of increasing confrontation, the political situation caused some violence to erupt at the local level during the November 1933 elections.<sup>75</sup> While the increasing radicalization of working class opinion did little to soften the position of the CNT – though the strategy of “revolutionary gymnastics” had been largely discredited by 1934 – it did cause a certain shift in that of their Socialists rivals, who demonstrated greater concern, at least publicly, about the repression of the December 1933 insurrection.<sup>76</sup> Nonetheless, this at times bloody rivalry (not to mention other, smaller working class organisation also competing fiercely for members) added another layer to the issue of public order and “republicanising” social and labour relations, and in its own way, served further to harden attitudes of civil guards towards the working class movement as a whole. Indeed, almost paradoxically, while the working class movement

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<sup>75</sup> The attempts by the right-wing Popular Action to gain recruits for its own trade union, Workers' Action, only added to intra-class friction. For a description of the conflictive situation in western Andalucía during the 1933 parliamentary elections, see Francisco J. Carmona Obrero, *Violencia política y orden público en Andalucía occidental, 1933-1934* (Madrid, 2002), pp. 43-67.

<sup>76</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 15-27; 74-119; Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 8-9, 13-17, 26-27, 37-57; Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain*, pp. 1-89 *passim*; Chris Ealham, *Class Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (London, 2005).

was becoming ever more fragmented, the tendency amongst the Civil Guard was increasingly to group them all together as part of a single enemy.

If anything, despite the change in government and the sporadic efforts of the various administrations to curb the power of the trades unions, these seemed only to grow stronger, thus making the dire warnings of Interior Minister Salazar Alonso and his like-minded allies in the CEDA seem all the more true. Indeed, despite the repressive measures against the CNT in the wake of the December 1933 insurrection, the anarcho-syndicalists managed to hold a six-week strike in Zaragoza in the spring of 1934, which ended with a victory for the union. Notably, despite the rather fumbling efforts of the civil governor of the province to exacerbate the divisions between the CNT and the UGT in order to break the strike, the two rival unions resolved to join forces in the face of the “obstinacy of the bourgeoisie”.<sup>77</sup> This successful action by the unions was portrayed by the Civil Guard press as little more than a dangerous nuisance by unruly workers:

“During the days of the Zaragoza general strike, the Civil Guard rendered numerous services with no time to rest, carrying out arrests of the rebels (*revoltosos*) and collecting constantly bombs and arms.”<sup>78</sup> At the same time as the general strike in Zaragoza, three major strikes broke out in the nation’s capital: one by printers of the right-wing press, another by construction workers, and a metallurgy strike that last until 1 June. The government declared a state of alarm, and closed down the centres of the Socialist Youth, the Communists and the CNT. While the printers’ strike was broken – thanks largely to

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<sup>77</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain*, pp. 86-88;

<sup>78</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 292 (June 1934), p. 255.

the efforts of the youth organization of the CEDA, the *Juventudes de Acción Popular* – the latter two strikes ended on terms favourable to the workers.<sup>79</sup>

Alongside these larger strikes, the Civil Guard press related a series of alarming developments involving “extremists” and communists. In Cádiz, on 20 March 1934, three “dangerous Communists” who were planning a “vast revolutionary plot” were arrested. On 5 April, a clandestine Communist meeting in Hospitalet (Barcelona) was discovered and dispersed by civil guards, though only after some exchange of fire. In Crevillente (Alicante) an unauthorized Communist demonstration was broken up, also after a firefight. While reports of common and organized crime still dominated those sections dedicated to detailing the services carried out by civil guards, even these were fraught with danger as these criminals were almost always reported as being armed and violently resisting arrest. Indeed, during the months of March and April, large arms and bombs caches were reported to have been discovered in Belmez (Córdoba), Mieres (Oviedo), Riotinto (Huelva), Vallecas (Madrid), Espinosa de los Monteros (Burgos) and Vigo.<sup>80</sup> The working class demonstrations commemorating the First of May only underlined how the apparent lack of arms control and social unrest could often spell danger for civil guards. In Tauste (Zaragoza), Villafranca de los Barros and Fuente del Maestre (both in Badajoz), the Civil Guard reported violent confrontations in which members of the corps were fired upon. In Alfaro (Logroño), “a great brawl” broke out between enemy political factions, in which the Civil Guard and the police suffered some

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<sup>79</sup> Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, p. 194; Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>80</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 290 (April 1934), pp. 171-174; “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 291 (May 1934), pp. 213-216.

wounded whilst re-establishing order.<sup>81</sup> Give the long-standing concerns voiced by the Civil Guard in its press about the proliferation of arms, and the threat this represented to its personnel, these were worrying developments.

Yet, the biggest confrontation was still yet to come. In the wake of the increasing undermining of the legislation passed during the first *bienio* to safeguard workers' rights, in particular, the repealing of the Law of Municipal Boundaries, the Socialist-affiliated rural workers' union, the FNTT, decided to call a general strike in protest. The Socialist leadership tried to discourage this action, and the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Agriculture and Labour attempted a series of conciliatory gestures of to avert the strike. Nonetheless, the provocative actions of Interior Minister Salazar Alonso, who had been planning for such a showdown with the Socialists with Inspector-General Bedía and Director-General of Security Valdivia, overrode the legal petitions of the rural unions to strike and declared the harvest a "national service". Moreover, the incendiary rhetoric and naïve revolutionary dreams of the *caballerista* elements of the FNTT (who had just formed an alliance with the CNT in Andalucía), meant that the proposed strike went ahead despite its lack of legal authorization. Despite an apparently disadvantageous position, the FNTT strike was the largest rural strike in Spanish history, and yet still a devastating failure as the government undermined and then clamped down on the strikers.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> "Servicios", *RTGC*, no. 292 (June 1934), pp. 254-256.

<sup>82</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 147-153; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 196-199; Townson, *Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 246-248.

This massive show of force by the FNTT was, in the minds of civil guards, the first major manifestation of the growing threat posed by the Socialists. Alongside the increasingly belligerent rhetoric of the Socialist press, reports of incidents explicitly involving Socialists began to seep into the Civil Guard press alongside the regular suspects of “extremists” and Communists. On 2 April 1934, the Civil Guard of Corrales (Santander) went to inspect (*registrar*) the local Casa del Pueblo. Upon their appearance, the Secretary of the Casa del Pueblo attempted to flee and was stopped by the guards, who inquired about a suspicious package he was carrying. He refused and attempted to hide the package, which was discovered later and contained six pistols and “many cartridges”. Afterwards, the civil guards returned to the Casa del Pueblo, where they found more weapons and carried out several arrests.<sup>83</sup> Another such incident was described in a lengthy account of events in Arroyo de San Serván, in the ever-conflictive province of Badajoz, in the month of May. During a routine patrol, three guards walked into a trap reportedly organized by the Socialist ex-Mayor and Socialist Ex-Municipal Judge. One of the guards was fatally wounded, and the town was plunged into darkness as the ambushers had cut all the electricity and telephone wires. Upon the arrival of reinforcements, a search party set out to find the “aggressors”, seven of whom were captured alongside a small cache of weapons. Further activity resulted in the arrest of other suspects and “an infinite amount of arms, a formula for making explosives and flammable liquids”.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps more spectacular was the discovery of weapons in the

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<sup>83</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 291 (May 1934), p. 214.

<sup>84</sup> “Servicios”, *RTGC*, no. 293 (July 1934), pp. 277-278.

house of the Socialist parliamentarian Juan Lozano in Madrid, and an even larger collection of arms destined for storage in Lozano's residence.<sup>85</sup>

As to be expected, the events of the peasants strike dominated the Civil Guard press, as did reports of other incidents involving confrontations with workers. In the province of Badajoz, after a violent clash with the "rebels" (*revoltosos*), in which one Civil Guard corporal was "stabbed in a cowardly fashion" the *Benemérita* restored peace "with tact and valour" to the town of Alconchel. In the neighbouring province of Cáceres, "an enormous mass of Socialists" in the town of Santiago del Campo rioted during a protest of five individuals arrested for holding a clandestine meeting, during which they attacked the Civil Guard barracks with a "hail of stones". Civil Guards in the town of Pedro Muñoz (Ciudad Real) were also stoned by peasants, as was another patrol in Toro (Zamora). Various incidents were reported in the province of Jaén: in Santo Tomé the local *casa-cuartel* was fired upon, while in Sabiote the Civil Guard had to intervene to prevent the burning of crops. The untiring efforts of the Civil Guard in the provinces of Sevilla and Málaga were also praised.<sup>86</sup> In the following two months of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*, while common crime began to occupy greater space in the "Services" sections, reminders of social conflict and the revolutionary threat were still to be found, with reports of deposits of arms and explosives, subversive pamphlets and acts of arson, in which the province of Jaén figured prominently.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Jackson, *Spanish Republic and Civil War*, p. 138; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, p. 209.

<sup>86</sup> "Servicios", *RTGC*, no. 293 (July 1934), pp. 278-280.

<sup>87</sup> "Servicios", *RTGC*, no. 294 (August 1934), pp. 318-320; "Servicios", *RTGC*, no. 295 (September 1934), pp. 359-360. For a recompilation of these events, and others, see Agaudó Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 67-71.



If all of these events, alongside the demagogic rhetoric of the Largo Caballero and his followers in the Socialist media, were not enough to convince civil guards that a revolutionary plot to seize power was in the making, the efforts of the Socialists to garner support amongst the corps during their piecemeal preparations for a potential showdown with what they saw as the Fascist threat did much to reinforce this perception. The director of the committee to make these preparations was Amaro del Rosal, whose most significant contact was with a Socialist lieutenant in the automobile depot (*Parque Móvil*) of the Civil Guard, Fernando Condés Romero. Lt. Condés had an illustrious tour of duty in the Army of Africa in Spanish Morocco, during which he became a member of the Socialist Party. Upon returning to Spain in 1928, he joined the Civil Guard, though this did not signify a change in his ideology. He was remembered to have frequently remarked that “I may make mistakes in my position as a Captain of the Civil Guard, but never as a Socialist for, in my opinion, the workers are always right.”<sup>88</sup> After being transferred to Madrid in 1933, Lt. Condés made the acquaintance of the Socialist deputy Margarita Nelken, and the two became close friends.<sup>89</sup> In the summer of 1934 Nelken put him in contact with Del Rosal. Condés and his small coterie of sympathetic civil guards were meant to lead a more numerous group of Socialist militiamen dressed in Civil Guard uniforms and occupy the Interior Ministry and a radio station located in its vicinity. They evidently were also meant to take control of the Parque Móvil, where Condés was stationed, and thus obtain the vehicles and weapons stored within.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ian Gibson, *La noche en que mataron a Calvo Sotelo* (Barcelona, 1982), p. 104; José Luis Cervero, ‘El capitán Fernando Condés’, *Guardia Civil*, No. 686 (2001), pp. 79-80.

<sup>89</sup> It was later rumoured that the two were lovers, though in truth their relationship remained within the boundaries of friendship: Paul Preston, *Doves of War: Four Women of Spain* (London, 2002), pp. 351-352.

<sup>90</sup> Sandra Souto Kustrín, “Y ¿Madrid? ¿Qué hace Madrid?” *Movimiento revolucionario y acción colectiva, 1933-1936* (Madrid, 2004), pp. 217-218; Amaro del Rosal, *1934: Movimiento Revolucionario de*

To foment indiscipline amongst the ranks of the Civil Guard, Condés and his fellow-travellers were to distribute a series of pamphlets in favour the “people’s cause” (i.e. that of the Socialists). The text of one such pamphlet read:

The orders are given. First patience. In the event of the declaration of the revolutionary strike, we shall remain in our barracks and our stations! We will not be the fodder for cannon nor for dynamite. The red flag about our barracks will be the definitive signal. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April we were the guards of the Republic. The next 14<sup>th</sup> of April we will be the guard of the revolution. Down with the black dictatorship! Long live the Civil Guard at the service of the people’s liberties!<sup>91</sup>

The commander of the Madrid Civil Guard garrisons, Colonel Pedro Pereda Sanz, and Inspector-General Bedía attempted to stamp out such propaganda activity. Alarmed by the proliferation of the seditious material, Bedía circulated a General Order in which he stated his confidence in the discipline of the personnel of the corps, their rejection of the efforts of “extremist elements of these or other ideas” that are preparing “revolutions for partisan ends”, and that they all be aware that “the true Spanish people are on their side”.<sup>92</sup> Despite these concerns by the hierarchy of the Civil Guard, the actual success of the Socialists to gain adherents amongst the corps unsurprisingly was limited. This was

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*Octubre* (Madrid, 1983), pp. 216-228; Margarita Nelken, *Por qué hicimos la revolución* (Barcelona, 1936), pp. 116-117, 150-151.

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *La Guardia Civil en la Revolución de Octubre* (Madrid, 1972), p. 63. For examples of other seditious pamphlets, see *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66; Salazar Alonso, *Bajo el signo de la Revolución*, pp. 222-225; Eduardo Comín Colomer, *Historia del Partido Comunista de España*, Vol. II (Madrid, 1967), 205-206;.

<sup>92</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 71-73. The full text of the General Order of 27 August 1934 can be found on pages 365-366.

not only because of the on-going conflicts that routinely put the Socialists and the Civil Guard on opposing sides, but also the contradictory nature of the Socialist propaganda, which promised to attend to the material and professional interests of the corps, yet at the same time fiercely criticized the “enemies of the people” and proposing the dissolution of the *Benemérita*.<sup>93</sup>

Indeed, Socialist propaganda very likely had the opposite consequence than desired in that it made the feared Bolshevik menace all the more real. Given the numerous commentaries made by Civil Guard in its press since the advent of the Republic about revolutionaries attempting to weaken the *Benemérita* in order to leave the state defenceless against their deviant plans, Socialist efforts largely had the effect of increasing their association with Communism in the minds of many civil guards. Indeed, as much as the Socialists were ever-wary about the (occasionally exaggerated) fascist threat from conservative and right-wing sectors, civil guards had been vigilant about the (often exaggerated) communist threat since 1917. For both groups, the danger these two movements represented to the material and physical well-being of their men explains their heightened concerns.

By September, the situation was one of crisis and looming confrontation, a perception encouraged by the political situation as the collapse of the Samper government – the fourth in less than a year – was only a matter of time. A rally of agrarian associations was held in Madrid on 8 September. A joint action by the Communists, CNT and the Socialists to disrupt the meeting resulted in violent clashes with the police. The next day

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<sup>93</sup> Souto Kustrín, “*Y ¿Madrid?*”, p. 217.

the JAP held a belligerent mass rally at Covadonga, a place replete with symbolism as it was traditionally held to be the starting point for the 700 year *reconquista* of the peninsula from the Moors. Members of the UGT and the CNT attempted to disrupt the rally. Less than a week later, the Socialist Youth held their own rally, in conjunction with the Communists, itself full of aggressive language.<sup>94</sup>

September also saw increased activity on the part of the Civil Guard and the police in searching for hidden arms deposits. The spark for this particular burst of activity was the interception of the ship *La Turquesa* off the Asturian coast on 10 September 1934, which contained a significant cargo of arms which was to be collected by four Socialist deputies, amongst these Prieto and the future prime minister Juan Negrín. In the following days, a large depot of arms was discovered in the Casa del Pueblo in Madrid, another arms delivery was intercepted in the University City in Madrid, and the Socialist ex-deputy Gabriel Morón was arrested after “a real arsenal of acid and dynamite for the construction of bombs” was discovered in his house.<sup>95</sup> Indicative of the fears amongst the security forces of an armed insurrection by the “Bolshevized” Socialists, fuelled by these widespread discoveries of weapons caches, were rumours that Trotsky and even Lenin (despite his death some 10 years previously) were in Spain in order to help prepare the revolution.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 164-170; Townson, *Crisis of Democracy in Spain*, pp. 262-264; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>95</sup> Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, pp. 214-216; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, p. 210. The Civil Guard press tells of discoveries of arms deposits in Alza (Guipúzcoa), La Felguera (Oviedo), Almedinilla (Córdoba) and Monforte (Lugo), besides that of *La Turquesa*: “Servicios”, no. 296 (October 1934), pp. 399-400. Reports of these searches and discoveries, though with a sense of suspicion, in *El Socialista* (15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28 and 29 September 1934).

<sup>96</sup> *El Socialista* (25 & 27 September 1934).

Rumours of coups and insurrections had been fairly constant since the advent of the Republic, and these intensified by the late summer of 1934, giving a sensation of a political order that was under constant threat. With another governmental crisis on the horizon and the supposed forces of revolution appearing to be in possession of massive quantities of arms, parallels with Russia in the autumn of 1917 must have crossed the minds of many civil guards. Had they not come to such a conclusion themselves, declarations in the Socialist press (meant more to threaten than predict) would have led them there. As *El Socialista* declared on 27 September 1934: "Next month could be our October". Nine days later, the Socialists' bluff and bluster was put to the test as the CEDA, whom the Socialists had always regarded as a Trojan Horse for fascism in Spain, was allowed to occupy three ministerial posts in a new government. The events that followed not only changed the course of politics in pre- Civil War Spain, but also had a profound effect on the mentalities of the Civil Guard.

## CHAPTER SIX

On the morning of 4 October 1934 the entry of three members of the CEDA party into the government was announced. While initially it was hoped by President Alcalá Zamora to limit their presence to one ministerial portfolio and thus diffuse the likely backlash from the Socialists, Gil Robles insisted on three, precisely to provoke that backlash.

Nonetheless, the CEDA were kept out of the most sensitive ministries – those of the Interior and War – and the combative Salazar Alonso was compelled to leave the Interior Ministry as part of the deal. Regardless of the Ministries selected or of the identities of the specific CEDA members chosen to head them or these efforts to minimize the looming political confrontation, the Socialists felt obliged to honour their long- and oft-stated threats to call a revolutionary general strike if the authoritarian-leaning Catholic party joined the government. The threat had been made in the hope of persuading the President to call new elections. While most members of the national executive, most notably Largo Caballero, balked at this calling of their bluff, at the more local level Socialists launched their futile attempts to “save” the Republic from the perceived fascist threat. This lack of proper organization and central coordination meant that the insurrection was bound for failure, as it probably would have anyhow as it meant confronting a government in full control of the coercive apparatus of state.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic* (London, 1994), pp. 161-175; Stanley Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936* (New Haven, 2006), pp. 70-78, 82-86; Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain: Centrist Politics under the Second Republic, 1931-1936* (Brighton, 2000), pp. 264-270.

The areas where the Socialists enjoyed their greatest success were in Vizcaya, La Rioja, Palencia, León and Asturias – perhaps because these areas had been largely untouched by the repression that followed the peasants’ strike four months earlier. It was in this last province that the revolutionaries saw their greatest success, largely due to the relative unity of the working-class organizations and the fact that they had previously devised a plan of action. The first phase of this plan was the neutralizing, if not elimination of the Civil Guard stations in the coalfields, which was then to be followed by an attack on the capital city of the province, Oviedo.<sup>2</sup> The assault on the Civil Guard in the mining districts gave rise to the most violent episodes of the revolution, and the capture of each post – as well as of other establishments housing weapons deposits – allowed the revolutionaries to add further arms to their arsenal. The bloodiest of the confrontations occurred in the towns of Campomanes and Sama de Langreo. In the latter clash, Civil Guard Captain José Alonso Nart had a contingent of seventy men under his command, alongside a small group of Interior Ministry police under the orders of Lieutenant César García Iglesias. As the neighbouring posts fell, the revolutionary forces began to converge on Sama. Refusing the invitations of the revolutionaries to surrender, but facing certain annihilation with the increasing loss of men and ammunition, Nart eventually ordered his remaining forces to stage a strategic retreat, in which those who could escape were to head for the mountains and wait for the expected reinforcements from Oviedo. While some civil guards did manage to survive the encounter, described as the “scene of one of the cruellest battles” by the Socialist Juan-Simeón Vidarte,<sup>3</sup> thirty-eight lost their lives, including Nart himself. In Campomanes, twelve civil guards were

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<sup>2</sup> Adrian Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain: The Coal Miners of Asturias, 1860-1934* (Urbana & Chicago, 1987), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Juan-Simeón Vidarte, *El bienio negro y la insurrección de Asturias* (Barcelona, 1978), pp. 268-269.

killed and seven wounded after another vicious confrontation that symbolized the aura of hostility which permeated the region. After occupying a pastry factory where some of the civil guards had attempted to take refuge, the revolutionaries mutilated the corpse of one of the dead officers, exploding a stick of dynamite in his mouth. In Asturias as a whole, the Civil Guard suffered eighty-six dead and seventy-three wounded.<sup>4</sup> This total reflected more than just those civil guards normally stationed in the region, but also those sent there in the wake of the repression. One such man was Julián Diosdado Rodríguez, who belonged to the small post of Rascafría in the province of Madrid. Civil Guard Diosdado was killed during his emergency posting to Asturias.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the physical effects of the events in the Principality reached far beyond its borders.

Indeed, while Asturias was the scene of the heaviest fighting, and consequently the focus of most subsequent attention, the events of October 1934 touched nearly every province of Spain. In the relatively peaceful province of Albacete (and thus one with relatively few civil guards), the towns of Villarrobleto and Tarazona de la Mancha were scenes of revolutionary violence. In the former, revolutionaries set fire to the town hall, and when the local contingent of five civil guards arrived they were fired upon and forced to retreat to their barracks where they put up a determined defence of their post and of their families within, surviving three attempts to overrun them. In Tarazona, one civil guard was killed during the defence of the town hall, and another in the town of Caudete.<sup>6</sup>

Violent confrontations could and did break out in areas with a limited Socialist presence,

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<sup>4</sup> Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *La Guardia Civil en la revolución roja de Octubre de 1934* (Madrid, 1972), pp. 135-155, 431.

<sup>5</sup> *El Debate* (30 December 1934), weekly supplement.

<sup>6</sup> José Aparicio Albiñana, *Para qué sirve un gobernador* (Valencia, 1936), pp. 95, 104-114.



such as in the province of Zaragoza, one of the strongholds of the anarcho-syndicalist movement. In the town of Uncastillo the Socialist mayor, Antonio Planta, led the call for a revolutionary general strike. As elsewhere, the local post of civil guards was requested to surrender their arms and their post. The station commandant, Sergeant Victorino Quiñones, refused and a fire fight begun in which three out of the seven guards were killed and another two seriously wounded at the outset. The two remaining guards defended the post and their families within for ten hours until reinforcements arrived and lifted the siege.<sup>7</sup>

The Socialists' rebellion was echoed in Barcelona by the forces of the Catalan *Esquerra* within the Generalitat. Bereft of widespread support amongst the general population and security forces, the Catalan rebels were forced to surrender after declaring a "Catalan State within the Spanish Federal Republic".<sup>8</sup> The local garrisons of Civil Guard had little sympathy for this regionalist revolt against the central state whose sovereignty it was their primary duty to defend. As the rebellion was suppressed, civil guards and soldiers embraced in celebration, with cries of "Long Live United Spain" (*Viva España única*), in response to earlier shouts of "Long Live C  talon  " by regional nationalists.<sup>9</sup> In total, the events of October 1934 cost the Civil Guard 111 dead and 182 wounded across Spain.<sup>10</sup> This constituted the single greatest loss of life by the corps in peninsular Spain in all of its history prior to the Civil War of 1936-1939.

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<sup>7</sup> Aguado S  nchez, *La Guardia Civil en la revoluci  n roja*, pp. 366-370.

<sup>8</sup> Payne, *Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 86-88; Federico Escofet, *De una derrota a una Victoria: 6 de octubre de 1934 – 19 de Julio de 1936* (Barcelona, 1984), pp. 69-88.

<sup>9</sup> *El Debate* (7 October 1934); Hilari R  guer, *El general Batet. Franco contra Batet: cr  nica de una vengaza* (Barcelona, 1996), p. 173.

<sup>10</sup> For a provincial breakdown of casualties, including the names of all those killed and wounded, see Aguado S  nchez, *La Guardia Civil en la revoluci  n roja*, pp. 425-432.

This considerable casualty rate left in its wake a profound psychological impact amongst the corps. The leading article in the November 1934 issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* presented the corps' view of the events of the previous month. These included some of the familiar characterizations used during previous working-class insurrections. Yet, newer, more novel phrases began to become common currency, reflecting the importance attached to the October 1934 insurrection. It was seen as Spain's own October 1917, but unlike its Russian counterpart, the government – with the staunch support of the Civil Guard and the Army – was able to prevent the feared Bolshevik revolution from taking hold. Indeed, the *Benemérita* adopted some of the Left's own terminology about the CEDA and, to a lesser extent, the Radicals – neither of whom were seen as a threat by Civil Guards – and applied it against the Socialists and their allies. These latter groups were now seen as “[t]he enemies of the Republic and of legality”. Noting the revolutionaries' strategy of targeting the various Civil Guard posts and how the corps' personnel became the principal obstacles to the spread of the insurrection, it highlighted the human cost of the October insurrection amongst the *Benemérita*. “Heroic” civil guards faced off against “the cowardly ferocity of the blood-thirsty hordes”, the latter being well-armed and civil guards forced to hold them off from behind the walls of the weak fortifications of their *casa-cuarteles*. The article closes by stating that the “Civil Guard, as the vanguard of the Army, vigorously resisted the first attacks in those places of greatest danger, in those most bitter hours of the insurrection, its men offering generously their lives in this holocaust for the Fatherland”.<sup>11</sup> The next several pages were dedicated to those killed “in the holocaust of the Fatherland” as well

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<sup>11</sup> “Loor a ‘La Benemérita’”, *RTGC*, no. 297 (November 1934), p. 425.



Illustration 1: Front cover of November 1934 issue of *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*.

as those men wounded, breaking down this latter group down by province, demonstrating the broad nature of the revolutionary threat as well as the great personal sacrifices made in service to the regime and the nation.<sup>12</sup>

Sacrifices were also made by the wives and children of civil guards, trapped inside besieged *casa-cuarteles* and helping in whatever way they could in the defence of their homes.

This image was graphically represented in a drawing by a Civil Guard Major, which was used as the cover illustration of the November

1934 issue of *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*.<sup>13</sup> [see Illustration 1]

Various episodes that occurred during the events of October 1934 insurrection were recounted every month for the next year, reflecting a more general obsession with its significance amongst all sectors of Spanish society and the outpouring of monographs, eyewitness accounts and commentaries on the topic.<sup>14</sup> In these accounts, the

<sup>12</sup> “¡Gloria a los heroes!” & “Heridos”, *RTGC*, no. 297 (November 1934), pp. 426-428.

<sup>13</sup> Lt. Col. Lara, “Notas del Mes”, *RTGC*, no. 297 (November 1934), p. 429.

<sup>14</sup> J.O.P., “Hechos gloriosos de la Guardia Civil: Así fue la epopeya de Uncastillo”, *RTGC*, no. 300 (February 1935), pp. 53-55. See also the “Notas del Mes” sections from December 1934 to December 1935

characterization of the revolutionaries – and by extension, the Socialists, Catalan nationalists and their leftist allies – as the “enemy” begins to appear for the first time, reflecting the use of this term by those very same groups when referring to the “enemies of the people” (i.e. the Civil Guard) or the “enemies of the Republic” (i.e. the forces of reaction, most notably the CEDA, and by implication, the Civil Guard). In one letter submitted to and published by the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*, the term “facciosos” (rebels) was repeatedly used to describe the revolutionaries.<sup>15</sup>

The theme of a handful of heroic civil guards facing off against hundreds, if not thousands of barbarians was repeated over and over again. The frequent accompaniment of pictures of those guards who were killed or wounded in battle, those who displayed acts of courage, as well as the frequent mention of their families were meant to show the deeply human side to the sacrifices made by the men of the *Benemérita*. Moreover, not unlike the dehumanizing representations of the Civil Guard that were traditional amongst leftist artists and commentators, the supposedly deviant revolutionaries, “*sin contemplaciones humanas*”, now were compared in the Civil Guard press to such things as “reptiles”.<sup>16</sup> This terminology can also be found in a monograph titled *Espisodios de la revolución*, written by former Civil Guard and erstwhile columnist Jenaro Geijo. In this work, the revolutionaries are referred to as “hyenas” and their calls as “the howl of the revolutionary pack of hounds”. Moreover, he employs rhetoric common amongst civil guards in describing outburst of working-class discontent: a mad wave of savage

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issues of the *RTGC*. For a treatment of the extensive contemporary literature on the Asturian Revolution, see Sarah Sanchez, *Fact and Fiction: Representations of the Asturian Revolution, 1934-1938* (Leeds & London, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> “Notas del Mes: En Infiesto”, *RTGC*, no. 300 (February 1935), pp. 57-62.

<sup>16</sup> Corporal Juan Lara Gómez, “Miscelánea: Guardias civiles”, *RTGC*, no. 302 (April 1935), pp. 162-163.

destruction instigated by agitators that threatened to engulf all of society and convert Spain into “a Soviet paradise *a usanza rusa*”. In this, he attributes blame principally to the Socialists, and to the seditious propaganda of Largo Caballero and Prieto.<sup>17</sup>

October 1934 reinforced the perception amongst the Civil Guard that the Socialist Party was now the principal source of social agitation and a Trojan Horse for Bolshevism. Despite the somewhat positive image of the Socialists presented in the Civil Guard press back in 1931, events such as Castilblanco and Arnedo had elevated local frictions between civil guards and Socialists up to the national consciousness. This marked the point whereby the growing hostility between the Civil Guard and the Socialists became markedly more open, and alongside a series of issues in which the two groups were on opposing sides, the year of 1934 had served only to worsen an already tense relationship. From the perspective of the Civil Guard, it had seemed that the Socialists were no longer a “party of common sense and sound judgement” that “rejected violence” but now were the handmaidens to Communist revolution. However erroneous this perception was, it was not difficult for the Civil Guard to find examples to vindicate this view. The PSOE’s refusal to issue an absolute condemnation of the anarcho-syndicalist insurrection of December 1933, the “illegal” landworkers’ strike of June 1934 and the revolution of October 1934, not to mention a series of high-profile weapons seizures between the latter two events, erased whatever positive image of the Socialists gained by their collaboration with the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and their moderation during the initial stages of the Republic. The fact that the principal leader of the Socialist movement would soon be referred to as the “Spanish Lenin”, regardless of the inappropriateness of such a moniker,

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<sup>17</sup> Sanchez, *Fact and Fiction*, pp. 138-142.

and the publication of the inflammatory pamphlet *Octubre – segunda etapa* by the bolshevising wing of the party did little to dispel the image of the Socialists as working towards the creation of a Soviet Spain. Indeed, it could be argued that Largo Caballero's refusal to counter the Spanish Communist Party's (PCE) claim to have played the principal role in the October Revolution, which was the product of Socialist policy, would only have reinforced this notion.<sup>18</sup>

The spectre of the Communist phantom was prevalent in Civil Guard's view of the source and possible trajectory of the social conflict that characterized Spain periodically since 1917 and fairly consistently since 1931, much in the same way the Left – particularly amongst the working-class organizations – was vigilant for any possible manifestation of fascism. The best bulwark against the supposed Bolshevik threat, it was believed, was the imposition of social discipline whilst the political situation was still in a state of fluidity.

The opening article of the December 1934 issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* set out the argument for this position. Authored by Baltasar Rull, a jurist who frequently contributed articles about issues of jurisprudence to the journal, it noted the dangers of “pathological influence of strong currents of destabilizing forces” (*influencia patológica de grandes corrientes de fuerzas disolventes*) during the current period of political experimentation in the form of the State. “Spain”, he diagnosed, “is extremely gravely sick with indiscipline”. The basis of social and political organization, the family,

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<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the internal debate within the Socialist movement over the events and significance of October 1934, see Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 211-238; Helen Graham, *Socialism and War: The Spanish Socialist Party in power and crisis, 1936-1939* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 15-33.

was being undermined by “poorly digested and malicious ideas’ (*ideas mal digeridas y peor intencionadas*). The consequence of this was a weakening of the rule of law, the rigorous application of which would constitute, in the opinion of Rull, “the greatest revolution that Spain could make, the only and authentic revolution”. The Civil Guard, as the symbol of the law and its efficacy has, in consequence, has been the primary target of these “destabilizing forces”.<sup>19</sup> This theme of the links between the Civil Guard, the rule of law and legality was picked up again in a later article on public order. The “prestige” and “moral force” of the Civil Guard is meant to be an inspiration for the general population, and as such it serves as “the cement of society, the bastion of the law and the fear of those who live on the margins of it”. The lack of respect for the law in Spain obliges the Civil Guard to have to defend it with the force of arms, in contrast to other countries – such as England, Germany, France and the United States – where this “fundamental principle” for the law and those charged with its enforcement has been successfully inculcated.<sup>20</sup>

The events of October 1934 were seen as the height of both this lack of respect for the law as well as the Communist threat. The almost inevitable result was recourse to “preventative brutality” by civil guards enraged and frightened by the casualties inflicted upon them by the revolutionaries. The very symbol of this backlash was Major Lisardo Doval, who was in charge of the repression in Asturias in the wake of the revolution and to who, according to the Socialist Vidarte, was responsible for “mass murders and pre-emptive executions”. Indeed, Vidarte stated that the military commander of the region,

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<sup>19</sup> Baltasar Rull, “Valor de símbolo: En elogio a la Guardia Civil”, *RTGC*, no. 298 (December 1934), pp. 521-522.

<sup>20</sup> Corporal Enrique Luque, “Sobre Orden Público”, *RTGC*, no. 303 (May 1935), pp. 190-191.

General López Ochoa, claimed that even he had difficulty keeping Doval and his men in check.<sup>21</sup> Doval had had considerable previous experience in counter-insurgency and interrogation, as well as an intimate familiarity with the area, as he served in Gijón from 1917 to 1922, and in Sama de Langreo from 1926 to 1931. At the time of the October Revolution he was stationed in Morocco – only having been recently returned to active service thanks to the amnesty of those involved in the attempted military coup of August 1932 – and was sent to Asturias under the expressed wishes of General Franco, who himself was made a special advisor to the Minister of War during the insurrection. Doval was returned to his prior mission in Morocco, where he was participating in re-organization of the *mehaznías* soon after the capture of the revolutionary leader Ramón González Peña on 3 December 1934. Despite the brevity of Doval's stay in Asturias, his notoriously heavy-handed techniques provoked a public uproar and he and his lieutenants, Manuel Bravo Montero and Nilo Tella y Cantos, gained a sort of infamy amongst the Spanish Left.<sup>22</sup>

Given the passions raised by the events of October 1934, perhaps a pause is necessary to consider several issues. While the harshness of Doval's methods are beyond doubt, a certain care must be taken when characterizing these as typical of all civil guards. As mentioned before, Doval was specifically nominated by Franco as a special governmental delegate in charge of post-revolutionary operations in Asturias and León. As Doval, and his reputation, was already well-known to Franco – both were natives of El Ferrol, they studied together at the Infantry Academy in Toledo and had served together on several

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<sup>21</sup> Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, pp. 284, 342-343, 361.

<sup>22</sup> Jesús Mendoza, "Las andanzas del coronel Lisardo Doval", *Historia 16*, no. 261 (1998), 26-29; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 116-119.



occasions – the latter knew what to expect from the Civil Guard Major. Franco was himself a hard-liner who was frustrated by the more moderate and humane attitudes of Generals López Ochoa and Batet towards the insurgents in their respective commands of Asturias and Catalonia.<sup>23</sup> As such, his nomination of Doval was not only deliberate in its intentions, but also implied that he did not believe those local Civil Guard commanders stationed in Asturias would be as “thorough” in carrying out this task. Moreover, as Vidarte noted, Doval was considered extreme even by his own colleagues in the Civil Guard, who gave him the nickname “the Jackal”.<sup>24</sup> That being said, undoubtedly few of them would have raised any qualms about his tactics in the wake of the revolutionary violence perpetuated against them during the insurrection. Indeed, the semi-official history of the corps, published nearly fifty years after the event, still takes a benign view of Major Doval, claiming that he – and the Civil Guard as a whole – was the victim of a smear campaign by the Spanish Left and their foreign sympathizers.<sup>25</sup>

The cruelties perpetuated by Doval and his subordinates have led, perhaps, to a certain exaggeration of the repression and a corresponding downplaying of the culpability of the revolutionaries. While sectors of the Right had a certain appetite for harsh measures against the revolutionaries, the Socialists and, by extension, the whole of the Spanish Left, the Lerroux government itself and a significant group of the Radical Party did not display such a hunger.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the government, embarrassed by the harshness of Doval’s actions, sent a police inspector to investigate the claims made against the Civil

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<sup>23</sup> Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London, 1993), pp. 103-106; Raguer, *El general Batet*, pp. 142, 146, 155-156, *passim*.

<sup>24</sup> Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>25</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 118-121.

<sup>26</sup> Townson, *Crisis of Democracy*, pp. 271-279.

Guard Major. Doval unceremoniously despatched the inspector back to Madrid but the government transferred “the Jackal” at the earliest possibly opportunity.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, instead of protecting him from public clamour, investigative proceedings were brought against Doval and in July 1935 he was left without command (after being given the command of the Civil Guard and the police in Spanish Morocco only three months earlier), attached to the Salamanca Civil Guard garrison.<sup>28</sup>

The number of 40,000 prisoners purported by Socialist sources may be an overestimate. Official Civil Guard bulletins register a total of 22,367 detentions for the months of October and November. The Civil Guard historian Francisco Aguado Sánchez claims that 12,000 of these were for common crime, leaving about 10,000 persons detained for “political or revolutionary reasons”. By December 1934 the number of persons detained fell to 4354. While this figure is considerably higher than those detained in the following the FNTT strike of June 1934, it is only slightly more than those arrested in the wake of the anarcho-syndicalist insurrection of December 1933, which was much smaller in scale and cost significantly less loss of life.<sup>29</sup> Even if we can question the official figures, it is unlikely that the number of unregistered detentions would have been two or three times the official total during peacetime conditions.

Nor should it simply be assumed that the government, and the Civil Guard, had exaggerated the revolutionary threat into a phantom menace. According to the data

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<sup>27</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 118; Townson, *Crisis of Democracy*, pp. 277, 278.

<sup>28</sup> Though, to sweeten the pill somewhat, Doval was recompensed for pay lost during his expulsion from the Civil Guard due to his activities during the August 1932 coup: Mendoza, “Las andanzas del coronel Lisardo Doval”, p. 29.

<sup>29</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 127.

released by the Interior Ministry in early 1935, the Civil Guard recovered 3158 muskets, 6756 long rifles (*fusiles*), 836 carbines, 73 rifles (*rifles*), 1913 shotguns, 63 automatic rifles (*fusiles ametralladores*), 811 revolvers, 593 pistols, 5934 various arms, 4056 cartridges of dynamite, 16,561 rifle cartridges and 943 hand grenades.<sup>30</sup> Even Socialists such as Vidarte admit that in places such as Vizcaya “the workers possessed a considerable amount of arms”,<sup>31</sup> and these figures are in addition to those seized in the months prior to the October Revolution. Given the Civil Guard’s concerns over the proliferation of weapons – the dangers of which had just been amply demonstrated – and the reluctance of the workers to surrender all of their arms, it was inevitable that its personnel would be active in the recovery of all weaponry and would remain anxious to stamp out all the embers of the revolutionary fire.

Experience had taught the Civil Guard that the revolutionary threat was difficult to eliminate, and that there was no room for complacency. Indeed, despite all of the precautionary actions taken, as well as repressive actions taken after the fact, each major working-class uprising was larger than the next, with October 1934 being the largest and most violent of them all. This deep concern over such future threats, and also the desire to learn the lessons of past revolutionary insurrections, was reflected in the almost immediate prescriptions for how best to deal with them. In the December 1934 issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* two measures that had been previously suggested received renewed attention. One was the installation of radio transmitters in all Civil Guard posts and vehicles, which would not only help coordinate efforts when dealing

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<sup>30</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 119. *The Times* (5 February 1935) reported roughly the same figures.

<sup>31</sup> Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, pp. 264-265.

with common criminals, but also would be crucial in “moments of national danger” as the instant communication it would provide would allow for a more efficient collective response to attacks on individual posts.

This particular issue inspired a second article on the numbers of personnel assigned to a given station. “The recent storming of various *casa-cuarteles* by revolutionary mobs” had highlighted the dangers – “greater every day” – and the inadequacies of the defensive position of small posts and the lack of mobility amongst their personnel to react quickly to snuff out any revolutionary movement before it could gain momentum. Most *casa-cuarteles* were not custom-designed and built for their purpose – many being buildings constructed for other uses and then ceded to the Civil Guard by a municipality or private institution – and their defense made all the more untenable by the small number of personnel in any given post. As such, besides the need for more automotive transportation, the article recommends purpose-built accommodations (including one, or several machine guns) and a minimum of fifteen or twenty men at every station to ensure that absence of personnel carrying out their normal duties does not weaken the overall defensibility of their garrison.<sup>32</sup> Also linked to the matter of the defense of their *casa-cuarteles* was another article suggesting the installation of a warning bell in each post, a useful tool “above all in turbulent times”.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps most indicative of the footprint left by the events of October 1934 were two articles dealing with Asturias titled “El problema de su seguridad”, based on the

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<sup>32</sup> “Miscelánea”, *RTGC*, no. 298 (December 1934), p. 537.

<sup>33</sup> Civil Guard Luis Paz Arroyo, “El timbre de alarma en las casas-cuarteles”, *RTGC*, no. 300 (February 1935), p. 72.

experiences of a Civil Guard officer stationed in the area for three years alongside the lessons learned from Major Doval whilst he was stationed there. The “problem” of public order in Asturias was seen as endemic, as certain conditions made the province of Oviedo “more favorable for disorder” (*más propicia al disorden*). Geography was one such factor, but perhaps more important were the nature of work in the area and the local working-class organizations. “Work in the mines”, the author informs us, “has attracted a flood of people full of ideas adverse to the austere and tranquil life of the peasant”. These “people”, that is, working class militants, were seen as implacable and as constantly inciting the general population. The strength of the working-class organizations facilitated the mobilization of the miners, and the reverses they suffered only served to stiffen their resolve and imbue them with the hope of greater success for the next confrontation. As such, it was the task of the local Civil Guard to “maintain permanently the necessary defensive precautions”. The author suggests not only better fortified garrisons in strategic locations stationed with anywhere from 25 to 100 men, but also heavily-armed “vanguard units” that could be sent out quickly to smash any future revolutionary movement before it has a chance to spread. These vanguard units, very likely based on the special units set up by Doval to “clean up” the province in the wake of the October Revolution, received the most attention in these two articles, which also suggested the formation of similar units to be based in Madrid, Sevilla and Barcelona, as well as in Oviedo.<sup>34</sup> These articles, and the attitudes expressed in them, reflected a siege mentality amongst those civil guards stationed in areas of high tension, now heightened

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<sup>34</sup> Major J. España, “Asturias: El problema de su seguridad”, *RTGC*, nos. 300 & 301 (February and March 1935), pp. 70-72 (part I) and 104 (part II).

even further by the events of October 1934, which in turn hardened attitudes towards the related issues of labour conflict and public order.

This evolution echoed attitudes in Spanish society in general, as both leftist and conservative forces continued preparing themselves for the political and social battles ahead. Furthermore, neither side saw October 1934 as conclusive. There was little in the public discourse that would have moderated in any way those attitudes being formed in the Civil Guard. Indeed, events served to further ally the *Benemérita* with the “forces of order”, and consequently deepen the canyon that separated the Civil Guard from those on the Left, whose own view of the corps as being nothing more than the armed force of reaction became ever more entrenched. The Civil Guard’s view of itself as the defender of civilization and the Republic was not just the product of self-aggrandizement, but an image encouraged and reinforced by both the governments and parties of the Centre-Right in their press and in a host of public ceremonies. Such praise was, as to be expected, dutifully reported in the Civil Guard press: “With the rapid pacification of the country, an explosion of enthusiasm and admiration towards the defensive forces of the legitimate authority could be seen in all towns of importance”.<sup>35</sup> This gratitude would continue to be demonstrated over the next year, in which the Civil Guard’s defense of the “legitimate authority” was frequently emphasized.<sup>36</sup> The image of the corps as the defender of the regime, as opposed to a threat to it, was the theme of the anniversary

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<sup>35</sup> “Homenaje a la fuerza pública”, *RTGC*, no. 297 (November 1934), p. 428.

<sup>36</sup> “Notas del mes: Doble homenaje simpatiquísimo”, *RTGC*, no. 301 (March 1935), pp. 96-100; “Miscelánea: La bandera del Puesto de Villanueva de San Juan (Sevilla)”, *RTGC*, no. 302 (April 1935), pp. 161-162; “Uncastillo reacciona: Homenaje a unos héroes”, *RTGC*, no. 303 (May 1935), pp. 180-183; “Homenaje a la Guardia Civil de Ventas y La Concepción (Madrid)”, *RTGC*, no. 306 (August 1935), p. 317. For a detailed account of one such ceremony, in the province of Albacete, see Aparicio Albiñana, *Para qué sirve un gobernador*, pp. 164-178.

celebrations of the proclamation of the Republic on 14 April 1935. Phrases such as the “explosion of enthusiasm” and “delirious ovations” were used in describing the reception civil guards received “in all of the provinces of Spain” when they marched passed during celebratory parades. This sense of gratitude was not presented as limited to those conservative elements traditionally linked to the *Benemérita*, but rather as the expression of “the people”, of “all social classes”, further contesting the Left’s conception of the insurrection October 1934 and the Civil Guard’s role in it.<sup>37</sup> Such descriptions were also given in the conservative press, which noted the special attention and affection the corps received in many parades.<sup>38</sup>

While the Civil Guard portrayed their admirers as coming from all social sectors, it was those of the Right that were most vocal in drumming up support and expressing interest in the trials and tribulations of the corps. The Catholic daily, *El Debate*, served as one of the leading voices. In a front page editorial it echoed an interpretation frequently expressed by the Civil Guard itself: that there were times when the use of force by the corps was an unfortunate necessity, not the actions of killers. The declaration of martial law protected them as they protect Spain, sometimes at the cost of their own lives, from the revolutionary danger.<sup>39</sup> In recognition of the sacrifices and services of the *Benemérita*, the newspaper announced that it would run a series of articles as part of a campaign on behalf of the Civil Guard both to educate the general public about the corps

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<sup>37</sup> Lt. Col. Lara, “Notas del mes: Nuestros desfiles en el pasado 14 de Abril”, *RTGC*, no. 303 (May 1935), p. 184.

<sup>38</sup> *El Debate* (16 April 1935).

<sup>39</sup> *El Debate* (25 November 1934).

– and hence enhance its prestige – and also to lobby the government about its needs and grievances.

The first of these articles was dedicated to the need for motorized transportation to improve the efficacy of the force, particularly in mobilizing its units in times of emergency.<sup>40</sup> Another discussed the need for central heating (*calefacción*) in Civil Guard barracks.<sup>41</sup> A lengthy piece was dedicated to the “best gendarmerie in the world” as part of a Sunday supplement. Echoing earlier efforts it and other conservative newspapers to put a human face to those described by Lorca as “having souls of leather”, it was titled “The Daily Life of the Civil Guard” (“*Cómo vive la Guardia Civil*”). It served as an exposé of the hardships of a post in the province of Madrid, discussing the cramped and somewhat inhospitable living conditions, the lack of proper modes of communication and transport. It even mentioned how during the heavy snowfalls the men of the post of Robregordo had to climb up their chimney in order to exit their *casa-cuartel* and carry out their normal duties. References were made to the events of October 1934 and their personal impact on the guards. The relationship between these two issues was made in the leading article in which it stated that to invest the necessary funds in the men of the *Benemérita* “is to save money”, noting the ruinous costs of any revolutionary attempt if it was not suffocated in time by the Civil Guard and the police.<sup>42</sup>

In an attempt to alleviate the penury and hardships of the corps’ personnel and their families, *El Debate* not only announced public donations for the Civil Guard and Interior

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<sup>40</sup> *El Debate* (15 December 1934).

<sup>41</sup> *El Debate* (16 December 1934)

<sup>42</sup> *El Debate* (30 December 1934).



Ministry police, but also served as a channel for such monetary gifts.<sup>43</sup> One such charity effort was carried out during *la Fiesta de los Reyes* on behalf of the orphans of those heroic civil guards “who gave their lives for society and for the Fatherland”. The relevance of this act was clear: “The recent tragic and bloody events of the attempted revolution had increase, sadly and considerably, the number of orphans of those martyrs to their duty.”<sup>44</sup> Within in a few days some 340 toys were donated for those orphans housed in the Young Guards College and orphanages in Valdemoro (Madrid), which were presented to the children by the “Three Wise Kings” with much fanfare on 5 January 1935.<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps even more significant than the moral and financial backing received from conservative sectors of society was the official governmental sanction of the Civil Guard’s views of the events of October 1934, the threat from the Left, and the corps’ role in defense of the Republic and legality. During the summer of 1935, several of the local tributes paid to the Civil Guard were attended by high ranking government officials, particularly, though not exclusively, by those belonging to, or linked to the Right. Perhaps the most high-profile of these was the homage paid to the *Benémerita* in Salamanca on 24 June 1935. As it coincided (perhaps intentionally) with a ceremony in honor of two prominent members of the CEDA, Gil Robles and Cándido Casanueva, Ministers of War and Justice respectively, this particular event was attended by the two ministers, Lerroux (Prime Minister), Portela Valladares (Interior Minister), Rafael Aizpún (Industry and Commerce), Manuel Marraco (Public Works), and General Miguel

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<sup>43</sup> *El Debate* (16 December 1934).

<sup>44</sup> *El Debate* (27 December 1934).

<sup>45</sup> *El Debate* (30 December 1934, 6 December 1935).

Cabanellas, who was now, for the second time, Inspector-General of the Civil Guard.<sup>46</sup>

The restitution of Cabanellas, a Radical parliamentary deputy since November 1933, was deeply significant. He had been dismissed as Director-General of the corps by the Left Republican-Socialist government for his ambiguous attitude during the failed rightist military coup of August 1932. His rehabilitation in itself can be seen as part of the Radicals' strategy to reach out to the critics of the Centre-Left governments of 1931-1933. As such, it was welcomed by the Civil Guard, who nonetheless subtly reminded their new commander of their distaste for the reforms of 1933 and all discussion of altering the Regulations and *Cartilla* of the corps.<sup>47</sup>

During the banquets held in connection with the two events, both Lerroux and Gil Robles made a series of speeches. After a series of warnings against any future revolutionary threat, the former drew a distinction between his "patriotic" position and those of the Left-Republican and Socialist opposition:

I was a revolutionary. I have not ceased to be so, but I am not a fanatic, overcome by a destructive rage. Upon the establishment of the Republic ... the rule of law for all was established. Since then, with the rule of law established, he who resorts to violence to install their ideals is a criminal.

Indeed, in contrast to the "partisan" agenda of the Left, the Radical leader affirmed his own pragmatism, which was not compromised by his own leftist ideals:

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<sup>46</sup> "Homenaje a la Guardia Civil en Salamanca", *RTGC*, no. 306 (August 1935), pp. 230-232; *El Debate* (16 June 1935).

<sup>47</sup> "El Excmo. Sr. D. Miguel Cabanellas Ferrer", *RTGC*, no. 301 (March 1935), p. 90. Cabanellas was returned to the command of the Civil Guard during a reshuffle of the upper military commands on 15 February 1935: Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 122.

I am not incompatible with anyone, not with those on the Right nor with those on the Left. I am incompatible with those who resort to violence when they find themselves outside of government, in order to install a left-wing or right-wing dictatorship.

If the audience was confused by what must have seemed an implied criticism of the party of its two guests of honor, Lerroux clarified that the real danger to the public peace came from the opposition: "It was to my enormous surprise that I encountered greater intransigence in the fanaticism of the Left than in that of the Right."<sup>48</sup> Such remarks, while partly reflecting Lerroux's efforts to paper over the tense relationship with his CEDA allies, echoed themes touched upon in previous speeches, and would be repeated again in later statements.<sup>49</sup> These views of the causes of the October insurrections were also reflected in the official account, *La revolución de octubre en España*, published almost immediately after the events themselves.<sup>50</sup> Given Lerroux's unquestionable republicanism, as well as his authority as Prime Minister, his words arguably held particular importance for those civil guards who were trying to find a place for themselves within the Republic, particularly after the events of the previous October.

The primary consequence of the insurrection of October 1934 was to solidify two opposing visions of the Republic, which made impossible any effort to "republicanise" the corps and, consequently, made the centrist position of the Radicals

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<sup>48</sup> See *El Debate* (25 June 1935) for the full text of the speeches given by both Lerroux and Gil Robles.

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, his earlier speeches of 17 and 29 December 1934, both reprinted in *El Debate* (18 & 30 December 1934). Extracts of his later speech in Pontevedra on 4 August 1935, was reprinted in the September issue of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*: "Notas del Mes", *RTGC*, no. 307 (September 1935), p. 364. For a discussion of the post-October 1934 tensions between the Radicals and their erstwhile CEDA allies, see Townson, *Crisis of Democracy*, Chapters 10 & 11.

<sup>50</sup> Sanchez, *Fact and Fiction*, pp. 121-123.

increasing untenable. Yet, given the smoldering hostility between the Civil Guard and the Left in the wake of October Revolution, the efforts of the republican and non-republican Right to attract the sympathies of the *Benemérita* were greatly boosted. Indeed, the contrast between the corps' vilification for its defense of a "disfigured Republic" by the Left and its celebration for the defense of the "legitimate authority" by the governments of October 1934 – February 1936 only blurred the idea of what constituted the Republic all the more and only increased the Civil Guard's identification with the Right. This had been sanctioned officially on 11 February 1935 when the corps was collectively awarded the sash of the Order of the Republic in recognition of "the innumerable heroic acts" carried out by its personnel and "the humanitarian and civic services that it has rendered Spain and the Republic in compliance with its duties". Upon receiving the honor, General Bedia, still Inspector-General, had stated: "The detractors of our Institute continue with their campaign against us. Nonetheless, the Civil Guard, which is a politically neutral corps, answers them with silence, honoring its principles of 'faith in Spain and in the Republic'."<sup>51</sup> Moreover, on the fourth anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic, President Alcalá Zamora, whose own identification with the regime was without question, awarded the Laureled Cross of San Fernando, Spain's highest military honor, to Generals Ochoa López and Batet, amongst others, for their "heroic and virile comportment in the face of the enemy".<sup>52</sup> As these two officers were in charge of the suppression of the Asturian and Catalan revolts, the identification of the Socialists (and their allies on the Left) and Catalans (or, at least those of the *Esquerra*) as the "enemies" of Spain and the Republic was unmistakable.

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<sup>51</sup> *El Debate* (12 February 1935); Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 121. The full text of the official statement can be found in Aguado Sánchez, *ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>52</sup> *El Debate* (16 April 1935).

Alongside these public eulogies of the Civil Guard, the governments of the Centre-Right enacted a series of reforms and material improvements that demonstrated the confidence that they placed in the corps. These had a contrary purpose to those reforms enacted by the Centre-Left governments of 1931-1933, which sought gradually to minimize the presence of the Civil Guard in the state administration. The first of these was an increase of personnel by some 3700 men, passed in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution.<sup>53</sup> A decree on 30 January 1935 militarized the Republican Forest Guard (*Guardería Forestal Republicana*) and linked it institutionally to the Civil Guard, naming one of the latter's officers as its commander.<sup>54</sup> In June 1935, another decree allowed for personnel of the Civil Guard to carry out their duties in plain clothes, in special circumstances.<sup>55</sup> While these "special circumstances" were left ambiguous, the probable intention was for civil guards to be able to carry out undercover work in rooting out criminals and political subversives. Many of the structural and material improvements were precisely those requested by the Civil Guard itself, several of these gaining an increased importance in the wake of October 1934. The personnel increase, for example, was carried out in order to raise the minimum number of men assigned to a post from four to seven. Moreover, in terms of radio transmitters, at the end of 1934, only 16 provincial capitals had this crucial means of communication. In the first days of 1935 the government sent out technicians to ensure that all 56 provincial and regimental commands possessed radio transmitters.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> "Aumento de fuerza", *RTGC*, no. 297 (November 1934), p. 429.

<sup>54</sup> "Militarización de la Guardería Forestal", *RTGC*, no. 301 (March 1935), pp. 132-133.

<sup>55</sup> *El Debate* (18 June 1935).

<sup>56</sup> *El Debate* (16 January 1935).

Another reform that proved popular amongst the Civil Guard, particularly given the loss of lives in October, was the awarding of a pension for the widows and orphans of the corps. This measure was seen as being of “extraordinary importance”, despite the apparently modest amounts that would be granted. Noting the poor remuneration of civil guards in relation to other state personnel, as well as the blood sacrifices of the *Benemérita* in mining districts Asturias and León in October 1934, this effort by Interior Minister Vaquero and Deputy Secretary of the Interior Benzo, “great admirers of the Institute” (*amantes del Instituto*), was warmly received by the corps.<sup>57</sup> Taken as a whole, the Civil Guard saw these reforms as indicative of a sense of appreciation by the governments of the Centre-Right, which was contrasted positively with their treatment by those of the Centre-Left. As the leading article of the January 1935 *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil* announced, “with the dawn of the Year 1935, a wave of optimism permeates the collective soul” of the corps. “The more than a hundred lives that the Civil Guard sacrificed for sake of duty have not been in vain”, it continued, “and the torrents of blood, spilt by the heroic defenders of the social peace and of the Republican State, testify the steadfastness of the posts of the courageous civil guards, that constitute the impregnable dike against which crash the crazed revolutionary masses, eager for death and desolation.”<sup>58</sup>

Conversely, those civil guards that were considered cracks in this impregnable dike against barbarity received little leniency. Strangely, the existence of this handful of civil

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<sup>57</sup> “Notas del Mes”, *RTGC*, no. 298 (December 1934), p. 523.

<sup>58</sup> “A Nuestros Lectores”, *RTGC*, no. 299 (January 1935), pp. 1-2.

guards whose actions were deemed as unbecoming of the honor of the corps was only mentioned briefly in the Civil Guard press. In contrast to those who gave their lives in defense of their duty, these blotches in the “golden book of the Civil Guard” remained nameless and worthy of pity, and whatever punishment the military courts deemed they deserved.<sup>59</sup> These faltering civil guards came in two types: those charged with negligent or dishonorable conduct, and those charged with military rebellion for their collusion with the revolutionaries. Often these were cases whereby personnel acted in self-preservation in light of the circumstances they found themselves. A Civil Guard sergeant was court-martialed and imprisoned for three years for failing to do his duty during an attack in Cádiz.<sup>60</sup> The two highest-ranking Civil Guard officers court-martialed for negligence were Colonel Juan Díaz Carmena, Commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Regiment (Oviedo) and Lieutenant Colonel Juan Moreno Molina, Provincial Commander of Oviedo. Their lack of initiative in heading off the insurrection was deemed to have contributed to its spread. The aged Díaz Carmena was sentenced to life imprisonment while Moreno Molina was sentenced to four years in a reformatory prison (*prisión correccional*).<sup>61</sup> The relative ease with which the post of Olloniego (Oviedo), which contained fifteen men at the time of its attack, fell to the revolutionaries meant that several of its personnel were court-martialed. The commanding officer was found guilty of negligence and sentenced to a month and a day of arrest. Two of the guards stationed there were charged with military rebellion and sentenced to life imprisonment. The two guards claimed to have

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<sup>59</sup> “Notas del Mes”, *RTGC*, no. 301 (March 1935), pp. 95-96.

<sup>60</sup> *The Times* (17 November 1935).

<sup>61</sup> Joaquín Arrarás, *Historia de la Segunda República Española*, Vol. II (Madrid, 1970), pp. 575-576, 576n1, 605; *The Times* (16 February 1935); Aguado Sánchez, *La Guardia Civil en la Revolución Roja*, pp. 110-111. Aguado Sánchez attributes Moreno Molina’s actions to his supposed sympathies for the Socialists.

cooperated with the revolutionaries only after the fall of their post, and even then only in order to await the right moment to escape. A third guard who made the same claim, but did manage to escape, was sentenced to six months imprisonment for negligence.<sup>62</sup>

A similar defense was employed by Lieutenant Gabriel Torrens Llompart, who was commander of the post in Ujo (Oviedo) and charged with passing over to the revolutionaries with the surrender of his post. Lt. Torrens maintained that he acted under duress, and that he had no links whatsoever with the Socialists. He surrendered his post only because his men were running out of munitions and he feared for the lives of the women and children sheltered inside. After convincing his men to surrender, Torrens stated that he was taken prisoner by the revolutionaries, who used the threat of murdering their prisoners – including the lieutenant himself – if he did not cooperate. Torrens was instrumental in gaining the surrender of the post of Carbonera, and acted as interlocutor of the revolutionaries in the attacks on the posts of Santa Cruz de Mieres and Boo, and his actions were considered to have caused the subsequent fall of Civil Guard positions in Cabañaquinta and Turón. Torrens also served as an emissary for the revolutionaries when the latter decided to seek terms of surrender from General López Ochoa. The prosecuting attorney maintained that Torrens surrendered when his position was still defensible, and that he was, in fact, treated well by the revolutionaries. As a result, he sought the death penalty for the lieutenant. Torrens was sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to life imprisonment.<sup>63</sup> In a sense the hardening of attitudes caused by

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<sup>62</sup> *El Debate* (14 February 1935); Aguado Sánchez, *La Guardia Civil en la Revolución Roja*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>63</sup> *El Debate* (24 & 25 November 1934); Vidarte, *El bienio negro*, pp. 280-283; Arrarás, *Historia de la Segunda República*, II, pp. 535-536; Aguado Sánchez, *La Guardia Civil en la Revolución Roja*, pp. 126-134. Aguado Sánchez, in agreement with the findings of the military court, maintains that Torrens was



the ferocity of battle and loss of life in Asturias, which left little place for those who were seen to be less committed to the fight against the revolutionary danger, presaged those attitudes seen later in the Civil War and under the Franco dictatorship.

There were cases that were more clear-cut. Lieutenant Fernando Condés Romero, who was a committed Socialist, a friend of Margarita Nelken and had participated in the preparations for the insurrection, was charged with military rebellion. All of Condés Romero's colleagues attested that he had "advanced ideas", engaged in "suspicious conversations" and activities. Perhaps most unforgivable for his colleagues, he was suspected "of having provided details to *El Socialista* for its damaging campaigns against the Civil Guard". Inspector-General Bedía also testified against the lieutenant and presented evidence against him. In the end, Condés was sentenced to life imprisonment and expulsion from the corps.<sup>64</sup>

Ironically, and certainly unintentionally, the whole counter-revolutionary structure that was erected in anticipation of and reaction to October 1934 was undermined by the very party that benefited most from the reigning atmosphere: the authoritarian CEDA. Its leader, Gil Robles, took advantage of the situation to undermine further the centrist position of the Radicals and gradually accumulate more power for his party and its

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won over to the Socialists. General López Ochoa stated that Torrens was a prisoner of the Mieres Committee (as opposed to a willing accomplice), whom the latter used to negotiate surrender with the General: Eduardo López de Ochoa, *Campaña militar de Asturias en Octubre de 1934* (Madrid, 1936), pp.159-163. Torrens was interviewed in 1992 by José Luis Cervero, a leftist officer and amateur historian within the Civil Guard, in which he admitted that he had made common cause with the miners. He later joined the Spanish Communist Party. José Luis Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 2006), p. 324.

<sup>64</sup> *El Debate* (30 December 1934); Ramón Salas Larrázabal, *Historia del Ejército Popular de la República*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1973), pp. 61-62; Ian Gibson, *La noche en que mataron a Calvo Sotelo* (Barcelona, 1982), p. 104.

fellow-travelers, with the goal of ultimately securing the prime ministry for himself. The first step was to secure a firm base of support amongst the military and security forces, which up to this point were largely in the hands of those sympathetic to the Radicals. Indeed, he personally attempted to prevent the transfer of Major Doval out of Asturias, going against the expressed sentiments of the majority of conservative opinion in the Principality, including that of several members of his party.<sup>65</sup> Probably due to pressure by the CEDA boss, the fifth Lerroux government named Doval the commander of the Civil Guard and security forces in Spanish Morocco, though once again continued public outrage over his actions in Asturias would mean that Doval would hold this post for only three months before being left without command.<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, throughout his tenure as War Minister, Gil Robles routinely appointed officers of known right-wing sympathies to key commands in the military.<sup>67</sup>

Gil Robles wanted to take things one step further, and attempted fully to militarize the police and transfer control of all the security forces – that is, the Civil Guard *and* the Security and Assault Guards – from the Ministry of the Interior to that of War, i.e. to himself, a move that was met with the determined opposition of President Alcalá Zamora.<sup>68</sup> It was an exasperated Alcalá Zamora who, suspicious of the CEDA leader's motives and anxious to expand his own presence within the political scene with the virtual collapse of the Radicals (which he helped to engineer), dismissed the government, promoting the formation of a new one under his ally Portela Valladares. This

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<sup>65</sup> José María Gil Robles, *No fue posible la paz* (Barcelona, 1998), p. 647n3.

<sup>66</sup> Mendoza, "Las andanzas del coronel Lisardo Doval", p. 29.

<sup>67</sup> Preston, *Franco*, pp. 109-110. Predictably, Gil Robles himself denies that his policies on promotions and placements were influenced in any way by political considerations: *No fue posible*, pp. 231-233.

<sup>68</sup> Alcalá Zamora, *Memorias*, pp. 378-379.

government would dissolve the *Cortes* and oversee new elections. Gil Robles was not only blocked from his ultimate goal, but was also not invited to continue as War Minister. As a result, he explored the possibility of a military coup to prevent the dissolution of parliament. Yet, his principal allies in the military, Generals Franco, Fanjul, Varela and Goded were reluctant to act given the likelihood that the Civil Guard and the police would oppose any military intervention.<sup>69</sup> As proof of the likely opposition of the Civil Guard to any attempt by Gil Robles to resist being dislodged from his post, contingents of the corps was sent to surround the War Ministry and the Madrid military garrisons and aerodromes.<sup>70</sup>

If these would-be military conspirators were doubtful of the support of the Civil Guard, Alcalá Zamora and Portela Valladares were not complacent about the corps' loyalty. Perhaps for this reason, General Cabanellas was dismissed for a second time on 7 January 1936 and replaced as Inspector-General of the Civil Guard by General Sebastián Pozas Perea. General Pozas was considered a close friend of Alcalá Zamora, and also served as the investigating magistrate during the military proceedings against Azaña that cleared the Left Republican leader for his supposed participation in the Catalan revolt of October 1934. A week after taking possession of his new post, Pozas issued a circular reminding his men that the corps' regulations stipulated that they should not accept any gifts from members of the public, as "these often come with strings attached", threatening severe punishment for any such infractions.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, in an effort to halt the growing

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<sup>69</sup> Preston, *Franco*, pp. 111-113; Gil Robles, *No fue posible*, pp. 355-359.

<sup>70</sup> Gil Robles, *No fue posible*, pp. 352-353.

<sup>71</sup> The text of the circular is reprinted in Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 369

politicization of the corps, all political and social commentary disappeared from the pages of the *Revista Técnica de la Guardia Civil*.

Counteracting these efforts to maintain the discipline of the corps was the programme and composition of the Popular Front coalition. One of the key planks of the Popular Front's campaign was the amnesty of all those imprisoned for the October Revolution of 1934. This would literally undo all the efforts made by the Civil Guard since then to capture those it considered enemies of the state and of society, as well as dishonor the memory of all those who were killed or wounded during the insurrection itself. Yet, given the immense popularity of such a move amongst their constituencies, the members of the Popular Front coalition could not have dropped this policy from their platform even if they had been disposed to do so.<sup>72</sup> Given the scale of hostility directed at the Civil Guard for its role in the repression, and the stated desire of the Socialists to abolish the corps, the sensation pervaded the corps that there would be no place for the *Benemérita* in the Republic of the Left, or that its members would be targets for revenge in the event of the victory of the Popular Front.

Perhaps even more ominous in the eyes of many civil guards was the inclusion of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in the coalition. Despite the friction that this caused within the coalition itself, the adoption of the Comintern-inspired name of Popular Front and the Communist press' endorsement of Left-Republican and Socialist candidates (which was, of course, the logical product of their electoral alliance) would have only

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<sup>72</sup> Helen Graham, "The Spanish Popular Front and the Civil War", in Helen Graham and Paul Preston (eds.), *The Popular Front in Europe* (Basingstoke, Hamps., 1987), pp. 108-109.

served to convince suspicious minds that the Popular Front was a Trojan Horse for Bolshevism.<sup>73</sup> The Republicans' and Socialists' alliance with a party whose opposition to the Republican regime was a matter of public record would have made their criticism of the Radicals' collusion with the CEDA seem somewhat inconsistent, if not blatant hypocrisy, to critical eyes.

The position of the much more significant Socialist Party did little to alleviate concerns over the presumed Communist threat. Not only were the Socialists tainted by their association with the October Revolution, the irresponsible rhetoric of the "Spanish Lenin" did little to dispel notions that the party had been "bolshevized". During one of his campaign speeches, published in *Claridad*, Largo Caballero stated that the left-wing of the Socialist Party and the PCE were not separated by "any great difference. What am I saying?! [Not] by any difference at all!"<sup>74</sup> Even the more moderate *El Socialista* felt at times to voice alarming statements. On 9 February 1936, the same day that the moderate republican Martínez Barrio was attempting to present the Popular Front coalition as something rather less revolutionary, the Socialist organ stated: "We are determined to do in Spain what has been done in Russia. The plans of Spanish socialism and of Russian communism are the same. Certain details may change, but not the fundamental decrees."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> This was the conclusion that military officers such as General Franco arrived at: Preston, *Franco*, pp. 111, 114.

<sup>74</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Republic, 1931-1936* (Madison, WI, 1993), p. 294.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Payne, *The Collapse of the Second Republic*, p. 167.

Even if such statements did not reflect the actual reality of the Popular Front coalition, for those looking for evidence that the coalition would usher in a Soviet regime, these constituted convincing proof of such a plot, an impression that the opposing right-wing coalition did everything it could to encourage in its own election propaganda. In this climate, it probably should come as little surprise that civil guards would collude with rightists at the local level to prevent the victory of the Popular Front. In the province of Granada, civil guards helped to prevent the distribution of left-wing propaganda and turned a blind eye to all sorts of abuses committed by local rightists. Similar activity was seen in the province of Badajoz, where Socialist Casas del Pueblo were kept closed illegally, and in various towns in the centre and south of Spain.<sup>76</sup>

Despite these efforts, the Popular Front managed to win the 16 February 1936 general election. As the election results became known, crowds gathered in the streets to celebrate while Gil Robles and various right-wing military officers, namely General Franco, worked behind the scenes to prevent the imminent change in government. During the course of his efforts, Gil Robles and Franco ran into the obstinate refusal of the Inspector-General of the Civil Guard to collaborate with any such plans. Franco, Chief of the General Staff at the time, approached Pozas after Prime Minister Portela Valladares (who was also Interior Minister) proved unwilling to declare martial law as requested by Gil Robles and Franco. When Pozas also proved unwilling to involve his men in what effectively was an attempt to overturn the results of the elections, Franco and a clique of fellow officers again attempted to pressure Portela Valladares to override his subordinate Pozas and order the Civil Guard out into the street. Uppermost in

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<sup>76</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 208-209.

Franco's mind was that the Civil Guard must act in concert with any military intervention, and not against it. While Franco and his collaborators had managed to get a state of alarm declared, and a decree of martial law to be held in reserve, the General felt immediate action was needed to stave off what he saw as a revolutionary threat. Accordingly, he exceeded his own authority and attempted to convince local commanders to declare martial law. While achieving his objective in a handful of provinces, most military commanders were unwilling to bring their men out into the streets if the compliance of the Civil Guard was not assured. As for this latter force, when several provincial commanders contacted Madrid to ascertain whether or not martial law had in fact been declared, they were curtly informed by Pozas that it had not. Indeed, increasingly aware of what was afoot, Pozas surrounded suspect military garrisons with Civil Guard units, and informed the Prime Minister that his men "will oppose any coup attempt". This effectively put paid on any attempt to cancel the election results through military fiat.<sup>77</sup> The course of events had also demonstrated that no matter how much most civil guards might have approved Franco's intentions, the chain of command had not broken down. Nonetheless, events over the next few months would undermine discipline within the corps.

Indeed, despite the attitude of their Inspector-General, many civil guards greeted the news of the Popular Front's victory with a sense of distaste, if not disgust. In Moreda (Oviedo), for example, a Socialist mayor who had been incarcerated for his activities during October 1934 was set free and organized a triumphant gathering of leftists in order to celebrate the election results. Upon receiving news of this, the local Civil Guard

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<sup>77</sup> Preston, *Franco*, pp. 113-119.

commander called the men under his orders to the central plaza of their station and asked for volunteers to dissolve the celebration. All thirty of his men stepped forward. The Lieutenant took seventeen of his men to confront the revelers, leaving thirteen behind to guard their *casa-cuartel* in case the situation escalated and they had to make a strategic retreat. On their way, they passed the makeshift Socialist club at the edge of the town, the old Casa del Pueblo now serving as the barracks for these same civil guards. Two of the guards entered the building and pulled down the red flag which the Socialists had raised, and ripped it to shreds. Upon reaching the outskirts of town, the Civil Guard commander ordered his men to fall into formation and prepare their rifles. The Lieutenant then informed the crowd that their gathering was illegal and that they must disperse. The Socialist mayor approached the officer and told the latter that he, as mayor, had authorized the meeting, and thus it was fully legal. Unmoved, the Lieutenant replied that either the gathering disperse or he would order his men to open fire. Fearing a bloodbath, the mayor managed to persuade those gathered to disperse. While the civil guards would have followed the orders of their commanding officer, despite their hostility towards the Socialists, few of them believed the drastic action conceived by the Lieutenant was called for, and felt a sense of relief that the situation was resolved peacefully.<sup>78</sup>

The newly established government under Azaña was not unaware of the series of clashes between their followers and civil guards during the days following the election, and on 19 February 1936 decreed the transfer of the provincial commanders of Oviedo, Valencia, Soria, Murcia, Badajoz, Ciudad Real, Tarragona, Orense, Huesca, Lérida, Cuenca,

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<sup>78</sup> Gabriel Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias del sargento Ferreras* (León, 2002), pp. 61-62.



Valladolid, Avila, Palencia, Cádiz, León and Guipúzcoa. These transfers were carried out not only to diffuse a situation due to confrontations between personnel of the *Benemérita* and members of the parties of the Popular Front. They were also used to disrupt the various military conspiracy cells. This policy was continued throughout the period, with the month of March alone seeing the transfer of eighteen provincial Civil Guard commanders, and by outbreak of the military rebellion in July, sixty-eight changes of command had been carried out (some provinces, like Ávila, had their *Jefe de Comandancia* changed several times) at what was probably the most important post in the chain of command within the corps. To put this in context, the average number of transfers in any given year was between fifteen and twenty. Moreover, some of these transfers went against established rules, such as the posting of officers to commands above that which their rank allowed – such as the handful of cases where majors were named as provincial commanders, a post reserved for lieutenant colonels. The lieutenant colonels of the corps were not the only rank to be forced to participate in this “dance”. In total, all of the colonels suffered the same fate, as did 99 out of 124 majors, 206 captains out of 318 and numerous lieutenants.<sup>79</sup>

The changes made in the commands of the police, Civil Guard and the military were seen by many civil guards as the politicizing of the public order apparatus, particularly because those officers of right-wing sympathies appointed under the previous administration would not have been seen as been politically-motivated nominations. One such change was the dismissal the Director-General of Security, Vicente Hodsson, a Civil

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<sup>79</sup> Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 143, 148, 151.

Guard Captain who was linked to the Radicals.<sup>80</sup> The amnesty and reinstatement of all leftist officers expelled from the army and security forces for their collusion in the events of October 1934 definitely would have been seen, correctly, as such. The infamous Lt. Condés Romero and Lt. Torrens Llompart were among those amnestied. Lt. Condés was raised to the rank of Captain and reintegrated into the Civil Guard. His return, and that of Lt. Torrens, was resented deeply by his colleagues, who would cold-shoulder him and refuse to recognize his promotion.<sup>81</sup>

Perhaps even more infuriating and insulting to the Civil Guard was the amnesty of all “political and social prisoners” by the Popular Front government. This was by no means the first amnesty – the second Lerroux government pardoned those involved in the August 1932 attempted coup – and despite the left-wing coalition’s well-publicized pledge to carry it out, the actual freeing of those seen as responsible for the deaths and injuries of so many civil guards would have been difficult to stomach. Adding salt to the collective wound of the corps was the amnestying of those imprisoned for the events of Castilblanco back in 1931, another sensitive and highly emotive topic within the Civil Guard. The fact that the Castilblanco prisoners committed their crime under the first biennium and were judged and imprisoned whilst the Centre-Left were in power, made nonsense of the idea that the amnesty was simply about the undoing the repressive policies carried out under the governments of the Centre-Right.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the Socialists,

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<sup>80</sup> Fernando Rivas, *El Frente Popular: Antecedentes de un alzamiento* (Madrid, 1976), p. 103. General Pozas, nonetheless, was left in charge of the Civil Guard.

<sup>81</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 135, 173.

<sup>82</sup> Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 101-102.

who led the call for their amnesty, treated them as heroes upon their release.<sup>83</sup> In contrast, the Popular Front government put on trial those military and Civil Guard officers who were in charge of the repression in Asturias and previously honored for their defense of the Republic. This included Civil Guard Captain Tella y Cantos, one of Doval's subordinates. If the contrast between the amnesty of Condés Romero and the prosecution of Tella y Cantos was not stark enough, one of the witnesses at the latter's trial was none other than recently-amnestied Lieutenant Torrens Llompart. In fact, Torrens Llompart's participation in the trial of Tella y Cantos was not for political reasons, but rather because, having been imprisoned in Oviedo alongside those miners arrested for their part in the insurrection, he was a material witness to Tella's interrogation techniques.<sup>84</sup> Another civil guard, Sergeant Francisco Serna, who had killed a Socialist mayor was convicted and sentenced to twelve years in prison and a 15,000 peseta fine, apparently the first time this ever happened in the Civil Guard's history.<sup>85</sup>

Alongside these developments was an increase of social and political violence in the wake of the February elections. While strike activity did not start to take off until April, the numbers of those killed for political reasons were greatest in the first four months of the Popular Front, peaking in March 1936 with ninety-three deaths. Leaving aside those killed during the events of October 1934, more people were killed in acts of political violence during the February-July 1936 period than any entire year of the pre-Civil War

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<sup>83</sup> *El Socialista* (6 & 26 February 1936).

<sup>84</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 137; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>85</sup> Juan-Siméon Vidarte, *Todos fuimos culpables* (Mexico City, 1973), p. 103.

Republic, and there was no major insurrection during the Popular Front period.<sup>86</sup> As one study notes, over half of the victims were leftists, and the authors of the most killings were personnel in the security forces, with the Civil Guard causing more deaths than any other single group.<sup>87</sup> These figures, apart from the significance assigned to them by the author of this particular study, arguably demonstrate that the Civil Guard was more involved in the social and political conflict than any other single group. When compared to the (enforced) relative peace of the previous year, the contrast was noticeable. As one civil guard recorded in his memoirs:

Up to February 1936, in which the Left more or less legally won the elections, the public order was well maintained and the principle of authority was respected. Nonetheless, after [the Left's] victory, things changed direction and thus began the strikes, the social agitation, the lack of mutual respect ... In sum, civil coexistence began to crack.<sup>88</sup>

The traditional Civil Guard perception of the Left as agitators fed into the contemporary situation to create a potentially dangerous situation for the government. Azaña noted that the outburst of disorder that followed the elections served only to discredit the Popular Front's cause. "It is deplorable", he was recorded as saying in *El Sol*: "They are

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<sup>86</sup> For strike figures, see Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, p. 338. For deaths, see Payne, *ibid.*, pp. 360 & 362; Rafael Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo: República, rebellion y Guerra en la España de 1936* (Madrid, 2006), p. 167.

<sup>87</sup> Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo*, pp. 166-168. A number of qualifications must be made, though, about these figures. The most important of these is the fact that, unlike civilian militants, the Civil Guard, the Interior Ministry police and the Army caused their killings in confrontations in which they were involuntary participants. Indeed, civilian-authored killings made up 57 percent of the total, and of those that are identified, leftists were the worst offenders. The authors of forty-one of the deaths recorded by Cruz are unidentified, though it is reasonable to assume that the perpetrators of these were civilians.

<sup>88</sup> Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias del sargento Ferreras*, p. 61.

behaving just as though they had been paid by our enemies.”<sup>89</sup> At the beginning of the Republic, the primary troublemakers for the Civil Guard were the Communists and anarcho-syndicalists, whose extreme views and rejection of the Republic led to most of the confrontations with the apparatuses of the State. By October 1934 the Socialists had been seen to have joined this group. The Popular Front government not only justified these groups’ positions with the amnesty – which symbolized something of an about-face regarding the Republicans and Socialists’ attitudes towards extralegal activities – but also reintroduced back into society all of those “dangerous elements” that Civil Guard and police had managed to capture and incarcerate. The rhetoric of the working-class organizations did little to assuage concerns amongst the corps that all of this would drag Spain ever-closer to Bolshevik revolution.

If the PCE and the Socialists were in reality moderating their demands so as not to undermine the Popular Front, there was little evidence of this in the speeches of their members and the editorial lines followed in much of their press. On 25 February 1936 the Communist newspaper *Mundo Obrero* published the PCE’s demands, which included the abolition of the Civil Guard and the Assault Guard, and the arming of the workers. The massive change in commands was also seen by civil guards as being the consequence of Communist pressure, as *Mundo Obrero* had called for such measures.<sup>90</sup> In what could be interpreted as incitement, Dolores Ibárruri, one of the PCE’s leading spokespersons, declared in a speech to the International Red Aid on the day of the elections that the “people” had “called for the execution of their murderers”. She disparaged a legalistic

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<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Payne, *Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, p. 186.

<sup>90</sup> *Mundo Obrero* (25 February 1936).

approach to obtaining her party's goals and repeated these statements before a parliamentary body two weeks later.<sup>91</sup> Similar statements could be found in *Mundo Obrero*. Moreover, the PCE were amongst the most vocal in pressuring the government to prosecute all those involved in the repression of the Asturian Revolution, which gave the impression that the arrest of López Ochoa, Tella y Cantos and several other officers was carried out at the behest of the Communists. More threatening was the boldfaced statement on the front page of the 28 February 1936 edition of *Mundo Obrero*: "Those guilty for the mass murders of the Asturian miners have not been arrested yet? Their names are well-known."

The rhetoric of the Socialists was little better. For a party that desired to conquer the State, the Socialists pursued a losing strategy in terms of winning over its personnel to their cause. By following a (rhetorical) strategy of confrontation with the coercive instruments of the State, Socialists such as Largo Caballero demonstrated that they had learned none of the lessons that they should have in the preceding years, particularly those leading up to the disastrous showdown in October 1934. Given the internal conflict within the movement over the proper course of action, their position could at times appear schizophrenic. For example, while insisting that the workers should not cede an inch of ground in terms of what had been gained, the Socialist paper for rural landworkers advised its readers to "avoid confrontations with the security forces". Yet such confrontations were clearly expected as the very same edition of *El Obrero de la Tierra* also counseled its readers to form "People's Militias" in order to protect those

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<sup>91</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union and Communism* (New Haven & London, 2004), pp. 87-89.

“conquests” gained in the wake of the February elections. The Civil Guard in particular was characterized as being aligned with the enemies of the workers, as its personnel had been “disarming us for two years while leaving intact the arsenals of fascist elements”. Typically ignoring the reasons for their “disarmament”, the Socialists lumped the Civil Guard together with those groups identified as being the enemies of the rural workers, the former being “armed to the teeth”.<sup>92</sup> Equally alarming for civil guards were those prophecies of the imminent collapse of the current liberal democratic Republic. Luis Araquistain, the editor of *Claridad*, made a series of analyses in which he compared the situation in Spain to that of Russia in 1917, talking of a weak bourgeois state and an imminent showdown between fascism and socialism, in which socialism would triumph.<sup>93</sup> Around the same time, from the beginning of April, leaflets began to appear, presumably authored and distributed by right-wing provocateurs but claiming to be issued by the Socialist UGT and contained plans for a coming revolution, with lists of rightists to be eliminated.<sup>94</sup>

Indeed, the rhetoric of the working-class organizations, within the environment of tension, hostility and conflict, was playing into the hands of those who sought to overthrow the Popular Front government by force.<sup>95</sup> Anti-militarism and anti-police attitudes on behalf of the Left were antagonising Army and Civil Guard officers. Anti-militarism was not reserved exclusively for those officers publicly associated with the repression in Asturias, which, alongside the attempted prosecution of the moderate and

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<sup>92</sup> *El Obrero de la Tierra* (28 February 1936). These statements were repeated in the *caballerista* newspaper *Claridad* (2 April 1936).

<sup>93</sup> Payne, *SCW, the Soviet Union and Communism*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>94</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, p. 248; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 295-296.

<sup>95</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, p. 269, 271-272.

republican López Ochoa, created a sense of persecution amongst even the less right-wing officers. After an incident on 13 March in which a leftist officer was assaulted in the street by a group of leftist militants, War Minister Carlos Masquelet felt obliged to issue an internal note stating his “indignation over the unjust attacks” and urged his fellow officers not to let themselves be provoked by such acts. Masquelet also issued a public statement denying the existence of any military conspiracies against the government and declared that the military, “the firmest support of the Republic”, deserved more respectful treatment.<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless, knowledge about plotting amongst military circles and the disquiet felt amongst the armed and security forces were cause for enough concern amongst the government that more energetic measures were believed to be needed. Besides the continuous transfers of commands, a decree was issued on 21 March 1936 granting the Interior Minister the right to place on indefinite leave (*disponible forzoso*) any member of the police suspected of anti-Republican activities. Amongst the Civil Guard alone, this ministerial prerogative was employed against one colonel, one lieutenant colonel, four majors, six captains and three lieutenants.<sup>97</sup>

These disciplinary measures enacted by the government would be of limited effect as long as the general situation continued to sour relations between the Popular Front government and the Civil Guard. The government’s apparent refusal to take action against leftist groups was a source of great consternation amongst civil guards. In Toledo, the Civil Governor ordered local civil guards to retire from the scene of an incident after they restored order when a rightist was attacked. In Consuegra (Toledo) a

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<sup>96</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *Politics and the Military in Modern Spain* (Stanford, CA, 1967), pp. 316-317; Payne, *Spain’s First Democracy*, pp. 290-291.

<sup>97</sup> Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 149-150.



group of some 200 leftist hotheads took effective control of the town, carrying out searches of locals' homes. When the Civil Guard intervened and detained several of the ringleaders, they were obliged to release them "*por orden gubernativa*". In Cieza (Murcia), various workers' organizations (anarchists, communists and socialists) took over the town and searched the houses of local right-wingers. The Civil Guard was ordered to not to interfere. In Albacete, while local leftists burned and sacked local casinos and churches, the Civil Guard was ordered not to interfere, for their presence would "provoke the masses".<sup>98</sup> When civil guards did intervene and violence ensued, the usual result would be the reassignment of the commanding officer.<sup>99</sup> This also included when a civil guard was the object of violence. In Gijón on 25 March 1936, Civil Guard Manuel Vela Rodríguez was gunned down by a group of leftists in a drive-by shooting. There was a bit of a discrepancy over the route the funeral procession should take, as the authorities wanted to minimize the potential for confrontations while emotions were still running high, and in the end the route taken deviated from that dictated by the Civil Governor. The event degenerated into a confrontation between local right-wing and left-wing elements. As a result, the commanding officers of the local Civil Guard were dismissed from their posts. Three Falangists were arrested, yet no leftists were held accountable for outbreak of violence.<sup>100</sup>

Public instances of insubordination by the Civil Guard grew in reaction to what seemed to them to be alarming developments. When a Civil Guard officer, Second Lieutenant

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<sup>98</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 137-138. For a detailed account of a host of incidents during the end of March and beginning of April, see Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 166-170.

<sup>99</sup> Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 289 & 307; Payne, *Politics and the Military*, p. 316.

<sup>100</sup> Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 170-171.

Anastasio de los Reyes, was killed during a public parade celebrating the anniversary of the Republic in Madrid, the government tried to diffuse the situation by ordering that Reyes be given a discreet, private burial. His indignant colleagues disobeyed a direct order by the government and took the corpse of their killed comrade back to their barracks for a full military burial. When Inspector-General Pozas arrived at the scene and asked the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Florentino González Vallés, under whose authority he was acting, the latter answered:

with the authority of the whole Army and Civil Guard. We have determined to render a passionate tribute to our *compañero*, who was assassinated in a cowardly fashion. Seeing that the authorities, far from facilitating this pious wish, will not allow us to do so, we have decided to do it ourselves, in our own manner.

As such, Reyes' interment turned into a public display of defiance against the Popular Front and constituted a fracture in the internal discipline of the corps.<sup>101</sup>

To protect parliament in case the funeral procession – which was attended by *cedistas*, monarchists and Falangists, as well as by a slightly embarrassed Pozas – turned into a coup, Assault Guards were put on alert. Two groups of these were situated strategically near the Cortes, and were under the command of two captains, Faruado and Castillo, both known left-wing militants. Another 500 Assault Guards were on standby in the Pontejos barracks (also known for its left-wing sympathies) under the command of Major Burillo. When Vidarte snipped that all will be fine as long as the Civil Guard does not decide to

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<sup>101</sup> Quotation from Cándido Gallego Pérez, *Lucha contra el crimen y el desorden. Memorias de un teniente de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 1957), pp. 200-201. Reprinted in Ian Gibson, *La noche en que mataron a Calvo Sotelo* (Barcelona, 1982), pp. 33-35; and Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 178-179, though Rivas takes the actual wording with a pinch of salt. A detailed narrative of the killing and burial of Reyes can be found in Rivas, *ibid.*, pp. 173-184; Gibson, *ibid.*, pp. 29-53.

intervene, Azaña assured his skeptical Socialist friend that the corps was loyal to the regime. If their loyalty was wavering, the Prime Minister added, it was because “you [Socialists] with your hooting and hissing, such as during the parades on 14 April, are turning them against the Republic”.<sup>102</sup> Almost predictably, the event converted into a violent confrontation between leftist and right-wing supporters, resulting in six persons killed and many more wounded. Consequently, an alarmed government placed Lt. Col. González Vallés, four Majors, five Captains and ten lieutenants on indefinite leave as a result of their breach of discipline.<sup>103</sup>

The event played into the hands of the conspiratorial Right. Their visible support for the Civil Guard was in stark contrast to the apparent insensitivity of the government and the hostility of the Left. Moreover, the Right also shared the Civil Guard’s concerns over what they saw as rampant disorder and the revolutionary threat. Indeed, in the wake of the killing of Lieutenant de los Reyes, Calvo Sotelo and Gil Robles, the two key leaders of the Right (and both involved in the various plots against the government), read out in parliament a series of somewhat exaggerated statistics about the levels of disorder since the February election, ignoring the Right’s own role in this. The heated atmosphere in the streets was echoed in the parliamentary debates of 15-16 April in which threats and

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<sup>102</sup> Vidarte, *Todos fuimos culpables*, pp. 90-91;

<sup>103</sup> Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 189-190, 189n16; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 152. A number of right-leaning Assault Guard officers were also placed on indefinite leave. The British journalist Henry Buckley claimed that Anatasio de los Reyes was a fascist who held “some position of importance in the counter-revolutionary movement of the Right”. Buckley also asserts that all of the Civil Guard officers punished for the events surrounding Reyes’ burial were all fascists as well: *Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (London, 1940), pp. 200-201. This seems to be pure conjecture based on the fact that the funeral was attended by Falangists and several leaders of the Right.

talk of civil war abounded. Gil Robles warned the government that “A considerable mass of Spanish opinion which is at least half the nation will not resign itself to die.”<sup>104</sup>

Notwithstanding, the preparations of the principal military conspirators and their civilian allies were not going very smoothly. Besides numerous issues related to political posturing, the military conspirators found that opinion in the army was not yet at the point of supporting a major rebellion. As such, the initial date of April 20<sup>th</sup> went by without any action despite the atmosphere created by the killing of De los Reyes. Indeed, as Franco – considered the “traffic light of military politics” – noted a month later to a less temperate colleague,

You are really mistaken. It is going to be immensely difficult and very bloody.

We have not got much of an army, the intervention of the Civil Guard is looking doubtful and many officers will side with the constituted power, some because it is easier, others because of their convictions. Nobody should forget that the soldier who rebels against the constituted power can never turn back, never surrender, for he will be shot without a second thought.<sup>105</sup>

The support of the Civil Guard was deemed crucial for the success of any military coup. Given the corps’ strategic presence across the whole of the country, it would be an important component of any attempted coup. As such, it was agreed in the first meeting of the principal military conspirators in March that if, as feared, the Popular Front government abolished the Civil Guard, they would rebel immediately.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 253-254; Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, pp. 313-316.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Preston, *Franco*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>106</sup> Preston, *Franco*, p. 122.

As Franco surmised, the boiling point had not yet been reached for the conspirators to be able to count on the backing of the Civil Guard. In part this was because of the reasons that Franco outlined, and also the constant shifting of Civil Guard commands certainly made any efforts to establish secure links between garrisons problematic. Moreover, the change in government probably also had an effect on the willingness to rebel. After the impeachment of Alcalá Zamora and the ascension of Azaña to the Presidency, Casares Quiroga became Prime Minister on 13 May 1936. While Casares Quiroga's nomination as Prime Minister was felt to be less than optimal by those on the Left – and was met with hostility by the CNT, who considered him the “Casas Viejas Minister” – it would have been welcomed to a certain degree by the Civil Guard, as he was generally well-regarded amongst the corps.

If this was the case, events would have made this second honeymoon a short one, as confrontations continued and tensions grew ever deeper. Besides the infamous clash in Yeste (Albacete) on 29 May 1936,<sup>107</sup> one civil guard recounts a lesser-known incident in which one of his colleagues came across a large group of Socialists returning from hearing a speech given by Largo Caballero in Oviedo. This colleague was returning from visiting his girlfriend in another town and ran into the group coincidentally at the train station. The unfortunate guard was greeted with a series of insults, and when he attempted to react, the crown fell upon him, lynching him then firing two shots into his lifeless body. His fellow civil guards, upon realizing his absence and coming across his corpse, were overcome with anger and desired revenge. As the streets were empty – the

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<sup>107</sup> For an account of the incident at Yeste, see Manuel Requena Gallego, *Los Sucesos de Yeste, Mayo 1936* (Albacete, 1983); Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 275-286.

populace probably figuring a reckoning was coming and sought safety in their homes – the enraged civil guards went to the local Socialist Casa del Pueblo and began to pour gasoline around it with the intention of burning it to the ground. The arrival of the Regimental and Provincial Commanders prevented them from consummating the act. Nonetheless, when the principal authors of the crime were arrested, they were later released by the special magistrate sent to deal with the matter. A few days later men from this same post came across a group of young Socialist militiamen training in the countryside. After dispersing the youths, they were later fired upon whilst patrolling the area. As it was dark, they were unable to apprehend nor identify their attempted assailants.<sup>108</sup> In contrast to this judicial leniency towards the Socialists, during one confrontation between civil guards and workers in Oviedo that same month, five guards were arrested and prosecuted.<sup>109</sup> Given such incidents, and the political atmosphere, one historian computed that some fifty percent of the officer class was against the Popular Front by the end of May.<sup>110</sup>

The Right was not the only group mobilizing within the military and security forces. Indeed, one of the primary casualties of the period was the professionalism of the security forces, as they became increasingly politicized in tandem with the rest of society. Left-wing Civil Guard officers felt that reshuffling around personnel was not enough and they were dismayed by what they saw as the government's lack of will to tackle the military threat seriously. Some officers, especially Captain Condés and Captain (retired)

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<sup>108</sup> Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias del sargento Ferreras*, pp. 64-65. For other incidents occurring during the month of May 1936, see Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, pp. 241-246.

<sup>109</sup> Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, p. 342.

<sup>110</sup> The calculation is by Federico Bravo Morata, quoted in Rivas, *El Frente Popular*, p. 246.

Francisco Gálan began providing training for the Socialist and Communist militias.<sup>111</sup>

Captain Condés, and his friend Captain Manuel Uribarri Barutell, joined the *Unión Militar Republicana Antifascista* (UMRA), a group that attempted to band together all the loyal elements within the armed forces to counteract the efforts of the rightist *Unión Militar Española*, as well as keep the government informed of the conspirators' plans.<sup>112</sup>

Officers like Captain Uribarri were exasperated by what they felt was the Popular Front government's unwillingness to take energetic measure to counter the impending fascist/military threat.<sup>113</sup> Mirroring the attitude of their right-wing counterparts within the corps, they felt the situation was getting out of control and thus they had to take matters into their own hands.

In the afternoon of 12 July 1936, Lieutenant José del Castillo of the Assault Guards, a fellow member of the UMRA also active in the training of Socialist militias and a close friend of Captain Condés, was killed by right-wing youths. Lt. Del Castillo was the second UMRA officer to have been assassinated: Captain Carlos Faraudo having been murdered by Falangists on 8 May. In an act of pure revenge, and tired of being "hunted like rabbits", during the early hours of the 13<sup>th</sup> an enraged Captain Condés led a group of Assault Guards to the house of right-wing politician José Calvo Sotelo – believed (correctly) to be implicated in the military conspiracy – illegally arrested the

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<sup>111</sup> Ramón Salas Larrázabal, *Historia del Ejército Popular de la República*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1973), pp. 68, 218-19; Luis Romero, *Cara y Cruz de la República, 1931-1936* (Barcelona, 1980), p. 274; Gibson, *La noche en que mataron a Calvo Sotelo*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>112</sup> UMRA created in 1935 by fusion of Unión Militar Republicana (created in Morocco the preceding year) and the small clandestine Communist-led Unión Militar Antifascista. The UMRA had no more than a few hundred members, and Masons were prominent amongst them. Payne, *Politics and the Military*, pp. 321, 293 *passim*; Vidarte, *Todos fuimos culpables*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>113</sup> Manuel Uribarri, *La quinta columna española* (La Habana, 1943), p. 59.

parliamentary deputy and then murdered him.<sup>114</sup> The historian Joan Villaroya notes the curious significance of this: “If we abide by the more simplistic perceptions of our recent history, nothing could be more paradoxical than the fact that the person responsible for the death of a right-wing leader was a captain of the Civil Guard.”<sup>115</sup> Beyond this apparent paradox, the greater significance of this act was the fact that a leading politician could be targeted and murdered not by civilian vigilantes, but by the regime’s own police forces. It symbolized the breakdown of professionalism and the blatant politicization of Spain’s security forces, a dangerous situation for a government facing an incipient rebellion and for those civil guards seeking to remain outside of the political fray. Four days after the assassination of Calvo Sotelo, the position of these latter two groups would become virtually untenable.

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<sup>114</sup> Uribarri, *La quinta columna*, pp. 172-180; Vidarte, *Todos fuimos culpables*, pp. 211-216; Gibson, *La noche en que mataron a Calvo Sotelo*, pp. 208-214.

<sup>115</sup> Joan Villanova i Font, ‘La Guardia Civil: La Crisis del Estado, 1923-1939’, *Historia 16*, No. 218 (1994), p. 42.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

By July 1936, the concept that democratic, consensual solutions could be found to the social and political problems facing Spain had almost completely ceded ground to those proposing more radical approaches. Alongside the rhetoric of the Socialist Left and the Communists about the weakness of “bourgeois democracy” and the inevitability of a “dictatorship of the proletariat”, the Right made corresponding warnings about the debility of the Popular Front government. These not only voiced the concerns of its social constituencies, but also were meant as veiled calls to the military to intervene. In the parliamentary debate of 16 June 1936, Calvo Sotelo charged the Casares Quiroga government with allowing the unravelling of the social fabric and the principle of authority. Echoing the presumed Communist threat, of which fake documents purporting to be the secret plans of the Socialists and PCE to establish a Soviet regime had been circulating for several months, Calvo Sotelo compared the Prime Minister with both Kerensky and Karolyi, the Russian and Hungarian leaders prior to the eruption of Communist revolution in their respective countries.

Yet, calls for more energetic government was not the monopoly of those outside the political centre, and moderates from within the ranks of republican movement began to call for extraordinary measures to deal with the apparently chaotic situation. The distinguished historian Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, Ambassador to Lisbon at the time, wrote in his memoirs of anxiously awaiting for the phone call from Madrid announcing a

“Republican dictatorship of salvation” (*la salvadora dictadura republicana*).<sup>1</sup> On 25 May 1936, the National Republican Party (PNR) – whose leader, Felipe Sánchez Román, had been approached by now-President Azaña to form a new government – agreed on a declaration, that was never published publicly, that talked of forming a government with or without the support of the Socialists, and possibly ruling by decree if need be.<sup>2</sup> More publicly, Miguel Maura called for a “national Republican dictatorship” in a series of articles from 18 to 27 June in the republican daily *El Sol*.<sup>3</sup> While some of the wording used was perhaps an exaggeration of sorts, and hence was denounced in the left-wing press, that such ideas came from one of the founding fathers of the Republic could have only had a deep resonance amongst the majority of the Civil Guard, who shared his sentiments and also held the former minister in the highest respect. The policies expressed in the articles did have some resonance. They led to a friendly exchange of letters between himself and the imprisoned leader of the Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera.<sup>4</sup> Maura’s proposals were accepted by the majority of the Republican leaders, despite their earlier public rejection of these, including the Socialists Prieto and Besteiro, in the immediate wake of the military uprising. The opposition of Largo Caballero, who threatened to call a revolutionary general strike if they were implemented, meant that they were not adopted.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *Anecdotario político* (Barcelona, 1976), pp. 196-197.

<sup>2</sup> The full declaration can be found in Stanley G. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven, 2006), pp. 294-296.

<sup>3</sup> The full text of Maura’s six articles can be found in the new edition of Maura’s memoirs, edited by his grandson, Joaquín Romero Maura: Miguel Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII. De una dictadura a otra* (Madrid, 2007), pp. 513-546.

<sup>4</sup> Maura, *Así cayó*, pp. 547-552

<sup>5</sup> See testimony of Maura in *Así cayó*, pp. 552-553. For other moderate republicans voicing similar concerns about the state of affairs, see Payne, *Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, pp. 300-302.

The sensation that the day of reckoning was coming pervaded Spanish society. The murder of Calvo Sotelo was seen by many as the spark that would set off a civil war, even if the military conspiracy was already months in the planning. The lack of direct responsibility for the killing of the right-wing deputy on the part of the government did not blind it to the level of politicisation amongst its security forces. This was now recognized as a dangerous fact. A coded telegram was sent to all provincial governors calling for the search and capture of the responsible Assault Guard officers and Civil Guard Captain Condés. It warned to keep a tight reign on the Assault Guard, admitting that while the personnel of the Interior Ministry police and the Civil Guard were suspected of right-wing leanings, “including fascist sympathies”. There now existed a suspicion of “left-wing extremists” within the same security forces that were capable of carrying out “reprisals and actions incompatible with their status as agents of governmental authority”.<sup>6</sup> The murder of Calvo Sotelo naturally had its repercussions within the Civil Guard, many of whom were also in a mood of expectation. As one wrote in his memoirs, after learning of the news “we anxiously awaited the assignment to impose order and justice as it should be”.<sup>7</sup>

They did not have to wait very long. The rising, which was planned to start on the morning of 18 July, started precipitously on the afternoon of the 17th in Melilla. A mole within the Falange betrayed the conspirators’ plans to the Socialists, who in turn told the military commander of the city, General Manuel Romales. During a meeting in which the final preparations were being made, and which three representatives of Civil Guard

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<sup>6</sup> José María Varela Rendueles, *Rebelión en Sevilla: Memorias de su Gobernador rebelde* (Sevilla, 1982), p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias del sargento Ferreras* (León, 2002), p. 65.

garrison were present, a group of Assault Guards surrounded the meeting demanding entry to search for weapons. A confrontation ensued, and the arrival of a group of Legionnaires convinced the commander of the Assault Guard unit to surrender. Soon thereafter, General Romales was arrested by the rebels, who then telephoned the other African garrisons, informing them of the premature commencement of the rebellion. By the morning of the 18th, with the active assistance of the Civil Guard, most of the Spanish Moroccan Protectorate was in rebel hands.<sup>8</sup>

As the military rebels began transmitting reports of their success to peninsular garrisons, often through the radio transmitters of the Civil Guard, the government attempted to control any such news, fearing correctly that events in Morocco would encourage further rebellions across the country, as well as provoke a broader explosion within society itself. The Inspector-General of the Civil Guard, loyal to the government, made similar attempts to restrict the flow of information amongst his men. In the afternoon of the 18th he issued the following clear and direct orders:

A few rebel units in Africa have gained control of the radio station in Tetuán. I hereby communicate to the commanding officers of my corps, by order of the Interior Minister, that they consider as sedition all proclamations made from this station, which is spreading false information. All communications and orders emanating from the legitimate government and from this Inspectorate will be dispatched from the central station. I exhort all of you that you comply with

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<sup>8</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London, 2003), pp. 204-208; Juan Blázquez Miguel, *Historia Militar de la Guerra Civil Española* (henceforth *HMGCE*), Vol. I (Madrid, 2003), pp. 44-55.

absolute loyalty the statutory rule to remain always faithful to your duty, for the honour of the Institute.<sup>9</sup>

The line had been drawn in the sand. Now it was to be seen whether anyone would cross it.

Pozas was not the only officer who made appeals to the core values of the Civil Guard. On 22 July, soon after taking command of the Army of Africa, Franco gave a speech, emitted from the Civil Guard radio transmitter in Tetuán, in which he dedicated the last part to the men of the *Benemérita*, “because you are the most precious in the hearts of all Spaniards”. Echoing the frustrations and fears of the corps’ personnel, and understanding their mentality, Franco continued:

You, the self-sacrificing civil guard! Veteran soldiers who embrace voluntarily the teachings of the Duque de Ahumada! How much you must have suffered to see how justice is dishonored, how disorder and violence reigns in the countryside and the villages, caused by those delinquents who you arrested only the day before!”

Further flattering the institutional pride of the Civil Guard, Franco ended by stating that “your efforts and those of this heroic Army that we have raised, united with the impulses of so many honorable citizens, will crown our determination, and we will create a Spain that is great and worthy of having sons such as yourselves.”<sup>10</sup> Given the actions of many

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, Vol. 5 (Madrid, 1984), pp. 179-180. Slightly different wording, with an explicit reference to the rebellion being against the Government of the Republic, can be found in Rafael Quirosa-Cheyrouze y Muñoz, *Política y guerra civil en Almería* (Almería, 1986), pp. 109-110.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Miguel López Corral, “La Guardia Civil en Madrid durante la Guerra”, in Fernando Martínez de Baños Carrillo (ed.), *Guerra Civil: Madrid* (Zaragoza, 2006), p. 258.

civil guards in the intervening days between the two messages, it would seem that Franco and the military rebels made the more compelling argument.

Part of this success was the vague political character of uprising. The rebels argued that their actions were not against the Republic, but rather the government of the Popular Front that was destroying the *Patria*. This allowed for those in the military and the Civil Guard who were alienated from the government, yet hesitant about breaking discipline and without strong political convictions, to feel justified in joining the revolt. This strategy, a necessity given the variety of political loyalties within the military and security forces, was not a new one. The principle organizer of the rebellion, General Emilio Mola, had stipulated in his memorandum of 5 June 1936 that the forthcoming military uprising would install a “republican dictatorship”, which looked for inspiration not only from the previous dictatorship of Primo de Rivera but also from the (republican) military dictatorship of Piłsudski in Poland, and not explicitly from Italian fascism. The memorandum concluded that the newly-established military directory “will guarantee no change in the republican regime during its administration”, its principle goal being the establishment of “a strong and disciplined state”.<sup>11</sup> This rhetorical continuity with the existing regime was also found in the public statements of various rebel officers as they declared martial law, including General Franco.<sup>12</sup> As civilian politicians seemed unable to take the necessary measures to deal with the disorder and the presumed revolutionary threat, it was left to the Army, and by extension, the Civil Guard, to “save” the Republic.

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<sup>11</sup> Quotations from Payne, *Collapse of the Spanish Republic*, p. 313.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London, 1993), p. 150.

Indeed, a significant sector of civilian public opinion clamoured for the military to take exactly this step.

As such, in those places where the Right was strongest, the rebels appeared to be reflecting the “national will”. It has been noted that the initial wave of rebel victories roughly corresponded to the electoral successes of the Right in the previous elections.<sup>13</sup> In such places, it was a relatively easy step for civil guards to join the rebellion, even when this meant disobeying the direct orders of their commanding officers. Perhaps the most extreme example of this was in Navarra, a redoubt of radical right-wing sentiment. The military commander of Pamplona was none other than General Emilio Mola, the “Director” of the military conspiracy. Moreover, Pamplona was located in the heartlands of the Carlists, a reactionary group that had dominated Navarra for a century and since 1931 had been training thousands of its supporters for a military conflict with the “atheistic” Republic. The command of the Navarrese Civil Guard garrison had been left vacant since the end of April after its previous commander was suspected to be colluding with the military conspirators and then transferred to the command of the less significant garrison of Soria. After a visit of the Director-General of Security, Alonso Mallol, to Pamplona in May, the authorities in Madrid felt that something had to be done to halt the flurry of conspiratorial activity there. Major José Rodríguez-Medel Briones was put in charge of the Pamplona garrison on 6 June 1936, despite not being of sufficient rank to hold such a post. Rodríguez-Medel, of no known political affiliation, knew he was fighting an uphill battle as his own men were enthusiastic supporters of the conspiracy,

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<sup>13</sup> Preston, *Franco*, p. 147.

yet he believed that in the last instance their duty to defend the legally-constituted government would override their personal sentiments.

Events would prove his optimism to be misplaced. On 18 July, General Mola summoned Rodríguez-Medel to his office. Mola told him of his intention to join the rebellion, and requested that the Major do the same. Rodríguez-Medel declined, and retorted that he could count on the Civil Guard under his command to obey his orders to resist the rebels: “The Civil Guard will stand by the Government. Now and always I will defend the Republican Government as the constitutional power. That is my position.” Upon leaving Mola’s office, Major Rodríguez-Medel went to the Civil Guard barracks and gathered his men. He told them of his intention to stage a strategic retreat to the nearby city of Tafalla, from where they would confront the rebel column on its way to Madrid. Upon hearing their commander’s plans, the Civil Guard garrison mutinied, killing Major Rodríguez-Medel in the ensuing struggle, and then put themselves at the orders of General Mola. Shortly thereafter, Major Martínez Frieria, Rodríguez-Medel’s second-in-command, and Captain Ricardo Fresno Urzáiz, both loyal to the government were arrested. They were executed on the 26 August 1936.<sup>14</sup> The rest of the province soon followed Pamplona’s lead, almost in a state of exaltation, with shouts of “Long Live Christ the King!”, and formed columns for a march on Madrid.<sup>15</sup> This included the Commandant of the Civil Guard company stationed in Tafalla, Captain Jesús Miranda

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<sup>14</sup> The most detailed account of the events in Navarra can be found in Gonzalo Jar Couselo, ‘La Guardia Civil en Navarra (18-07-1936)’, *Príncipe de Viana*, No. 192 (1991), 281-323. The Rodríguez-Medel quotation is on page 305. For more information about Captain Fresno Urzáiz, a decorated veteran of the Moroccan wars with no apparent political loyalties, see José Luis Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil* (Madrid, 2006), pp. 40-41.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 228-229; Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (London, 2006), p. 102.



Guerra. He demonstrated initially a disposition to follow the lead of his commanding officer and defend the government, but after learning of the fate of Rodríguez-Medel decided to join the rebels lest he suffer a similar fate.<sup>16</sup>

Events in Pamplona graphically illustrated the fate of those who attempted to hold back the tide of hatred which was given full expression once the military rebellion began. There were those that attempted to pull Spain back from the brink, to attempt belatedly to avoid a national disaster through compromise. Diego Martínez Barrio was one such person. While workers gathered in the Puerta del Sol demanding weapons, Martínez Barrio – who had replaced Casares Quiroga as Prime Minister in the early hours of the 19th – telephoned Mola directly to offer the latter the post of War Minister in a new government. The rebel general replied, “You have your followers and I have mine. If we were to seal a bargain, we should be betraying our ideals and our men. We should both deserve to be lynched.” Perhaps thinking of Rodríguez Medel, Mola explained that given the state of excitement in Pamplona, “If I tell these men now that I have made an arrangement with you, the first head to roll would be mine. The same would happen to you in Madrid. Neither of us can control our masses.”<sup>17</sup>

With Navarra in the hands of the rebels, some of the neighbouring provinces followed suit. In Alava, the commander of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Mario Torres Rigal declared rather misleadingly that “he and his men were willing to defend to the death the Government of the Republic”. When the Provincial Governor called upon him to honour

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<sup>16</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, p. 362.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 217-218.

his word, he responded that he had already placed himself and his men at the orders of the military commander of the province, General García Benítez. Indeed, Lt. Col. Torres Rígal and most of his officers were involved in the conspiracy, led in Alava by a close friend of General Franco: Lt. Col. Alonso Vega.<sup>18</sup> The Civil Guard in Soria was under the command of Lt. Col. Ignacio Muga Díaz, who had been transferred there from Pamplona back in April due to concerns about his loyalties. Lt. Col. Muga proved these concerns to be well-founded. After a disobeying and countermanding a series of orders by the provincial governor, Muga finally declared for the rebellion as Mola's columns approached Soria. Nonetheless, lack of initiative shown by Muga and his subordinates angered Colonel García Escamez, who was leading the rebel force, and he soon dismissed Muga from his command once a replacement officer was available.<sup>19</sup> In Logroño, the Provincial Commander (*Jefe de Comandancia*) of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Manuel Fernández Valdés, was also loyal to the Popular Front government, and like Rodríguez-Medel, was out of synch with the attitudes amongst his men. On the morning of the 19th he went to interview the military commander General Victor Carrasco. Carrasco had already made arrangements with other officers, including some of Fernández Valdés' own subordinates, to join the rebellion and declare martial law. When the Civil Guard officer arrived at his office, Carrasco relieved him of his command and replaced Fernández Valdés with his second in command, Civil Guard Major Pedro Parellada

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<sup>18</sup> Santiago de Pablo Contreras, *La segunda República en Alava: elecciones, partidos y vida política* (Lejona, 1989), pp. 277-278; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, pp. 436-437, 439n17.

<sup>19</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 404-406; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 312-313.

García, who was active in the conspiracy. Fernández Valdés was arrested and imprisoned in Pamplona.<sup>20</sup>

The loyalty and fate of Fernández Valdes in Logroño was shared by the commanding officers of other large cities of the conservative north: Burgos, Valladolid and León. The old ecclesiastical city of Burgos was considered by President Manuel Azaña to be “the most dangerous city for [the government]”,<sup>21</sup> and was also the seat of the 12th Regiment of the Civil Guard. Both the Regimental Commander (*Jefe del Tercio*), Colonel Luis Villena Ramos, and the Provincial Commander for Burgos, Lt. Col. Eduardo Dasca García, were reputed to have contacts with the conspiratorial cell in the city.<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, neither of them joined the rebellion, perhaps out of discipline to the Commander of the Sixth Military Division, General Domingo Batet. The efforts of the Provincial Governor to arm the workers in defense of the government were blocked by the wives of the Civil Guard garrison, who exclaimed (not without reason) that doing so would be a death sentence for their husbands.<sup>23</sup> These same wives, and their children, chided publicly the hapless Dasca back at the *casa-cuartel* when he attempted to prevent his men from joining the rebellion by reminding them of “the loyalty dutifully owed to the constituent power”. His pleas went ignored. Indeed, his subordinates, foreseeing the likely attitude of their commanding officer, had secretly moved and hidden the arms

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<sup>20</sup> María Cristina Rivero Noval, *Política y sociedad en La Rioja durante el primer franquismo, 1936-1945* (Logroño, 2001), pp. 85-90; Joaquín Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la Cruzada Española*, Vol. III (Madrid, 1940), pp. 500-502; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 462-464.

<sup>21</sup> The Conde de Vellellano was said to have remarked to Dr. Marcel Junod of the Red Cross that “The very stones here are Nationalist”: Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 227.

<sup>22</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 227.

deposit kept in the garrison.<sup>24</sup> Abandoned by his men, and the rebels in control of the city, Dasca, Villena and another loyalist officer, Captain Enrique Marín Valenzuela, were all relieved of their commands and arrested. Dasca and Marín Valenzuela shared the fate of their loyalist colleagues in equally conservative Pamplona and were murdered on 9 August 1936 and buried in unmarked graves in the Burgos cemetery. Colonel Villena, who had taken no active part in the resistance to the rebellion, was sentenced to six years imprisonment.<sup>25</sup>

In Valladolid, subsequently awarded the title of “Capital of the Uprising”<sup>26</sup> and the wartime location of the Inspectorate-General of the Civil Guard for the Nationalist Zone, the Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard was Lieutenant Colonel Eusebio Ruiz Guerra, who was loyal to the government. Ruiz Guerra was an isolated figure amongst his garrison, as most of his subordinates were in favour of the rebellion. Worst still for Lt. Col. Ruiz Guerra was the fact that his superior officers, Commander of the 8th Civil Guard Regiment Colonel Francisco López Zapata, and the Commander of the Third Division of the Civil Guard, General Federico de la Cruz Boullosa, were also in favour of the rebel cause. General De la Cruz Boullosa was the only general within the corps to openly support the uprising.<sup>27</sup> While General de la Cruz Boullosa initially took a rather

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<sup>24</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 187-188; Joaquín Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la Cruzada*, III, p. 407.

<sup>25</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 21-23. Salas Larrazábal claimed that Villena was also “taken for a ride” (*paseado*): Ramón Salas Larrazábal, *Historia del Ejército Popular de la República*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1973), p. 121. In fact, Villena died at the age of 72 of natural causes in 1947.

<sup>26</sup> Jesús María Palomares Ibáñez, *La Guerra Civil en la Ciudad de Valladolid* (Valladolid, 2001), pp. 7 & 11.

<sup>27</sup> There seems to be some confusion about the exact role of De la Cruz Boullosa in the uprising. Arrarás claims that the General attempted to prevent his troops from joining the rebellion: Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la Cruzada*, III, p. 318. Aguado Sánchez sidesteps this by shifting the focus to the more active role played by the junior officers of the Burgos Civil Guard garrison: *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, 191-

aloof position as the rebellion unfolded, the same could not be said for Lt. Col. Ruiz's second-in command, Major Mariano Salinas Bellver, who was the uncle of the Artillery Captain Luis Salinas García – one of the officers who participated in the failed rebellion in Jaca in December 1930.<sup>28</sup> After his commanding officer demonstrated himself unwilling to join the rebellion and helped the provincial governor escape capture, Salinas arrested Lt. Col. Ruiz Guerra and took command of the Valladolid Civil Guard. This open act of insubordination went unquestioned by the city's garrison, the vast majority of which supported the rebel cause. Lt. Col. Ruiz Guerra was later court marshalled for military rebellion, alongside a small handful of other loyal civil guards in Valladolid.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, perhaps with an eye for further promotion, Major Salinas denounced his former immediate superior to Colonel López Zapata, claiming that the lieutenant colonel was in active contact with left-wing militants.<sup>30</sup> It appears that venal motives worked alongside ideological ones when dealing with the fluid situation within the Nationalist Zone. Nonetheless, despite the relatively smooth capture of key buildings in the city, it took the rebels twenty-four hours to bring the Socialists to heel.<sup>31</sup>

In León, another of the great cathedral cities of north-central Spain, Lt. Col. Santiago Alonso Muñoz found himself as isolated as his fellow provincial commanders in Valladolid and Burgos. Alonso Muñoz was reputed to have links with the Left

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192. Blázquez Miguel reports that De la Cruz Boullosa quickly adhered to the rebellion once martial law was declared in Burgos: *HMGCE*, I, p. 183. It would seem that De la Cruz Boullosa's sympathies lay with the rebels, despite his relative inaction, as he was subsequently rewarded with the post of Director General of the Civil Guard within the Nationalist zone: Francisco Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, Vol. VI (Madrid, 1985), p. 110.

<sup>28</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, p. 365.

<sup>29</sup> Ignacio Martín Jiménez, *La Guerra Civil en Valladolid, 1936-1939* (Valladolid, 2000), pp. 75-77 & 134-135.

<sup>30</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 363-364.

<sup>31</sup> Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 102, Hugh Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 229.

Republicans and enjoyed good relations with the local Socialists, perhaps a necessity given the strong union organizations in the mining areas. This apparent friendliness with the representatives of the Popular Front ran against the grain of his officers and men, who found a counter-balance in Alonso Muñoz's newly appointed second-in-command, Major Luis Medina Montoro. Major Medina was transferred from Jaén over suspicions of his loyalty to the government, yet far from diminishing the damage Medina could do, his presence in the León galvanized those men disaffected with their commanding officer. Thus, when Lt. Col. Alonso Muñoz first directed his men to attack the military rebels holed up in the Infantry garrison, and then attempted to comply with the government's orders to arm the workers, insubordination broke out amongst his men and they forthwith joined the rebels en masse.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, in neighbouring Palencia, the rebels were aided by the absence of the Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Ramón Franch Alisedo. Paradoxically, Franch was called to Madrid over concerns about the loyalty of his men. This left his second-in-command, Major Fernando Martí Alvaro, who was one of the principal conspirators in Palencia, in charge of the province when the rebellion broke out. As a result, Palencia was easily won for the insurgents.<sup>33</sup> Despite their rapid victory, the rebel civil guards and soldiers remained on alert as they expected militias of miners from the north of the province and also from Asturias to converge and overwhelm their positions. Fortunately for the insurgents, events in Oviedo – to be described below – saved them from this scenario.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 268-269; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, p. 529.

<sup>33</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 189-190.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 229-230.

With the larger garrisons and principal commands of Valladolid, León and Burgos in the hands of the rebels, it was natural that other provinces in conservative Castilla would fall in line, particularly as their commanders were all supporters of the *Alzamiento Nacional*. Once the rebels were in control of Valladolid, they contacted their colleagues in the neighbouring provinces, such as Zamora and Salamanca, which quickly declared for the rebellion, and with the full support of the Civil Guard took control with ease.<sup>35</sup> In Segovia, the insurgents, led by Civil Guard Major Joaquín España Cantos, received the support of the Mayor and were then applauded by pro-rebel crowds.<sup>36</sup> In Ávila, the Provincial Commander was Lt. Colonel Romualdo Almoguera Martínez, and he was the third person to hold that position since February 1936. Although sent to the province by Inspector-General Pozas explicitly to purge disloyal elements from both within his own men and the military garrison, Almoguera felt that his hands were tied given that he had only occupied his post a day or two beforehand. As such, he deferred all decision making to one of his assistants, Captain Chicote, who was one of the leaders of the conspiracy in the province. Soon thereafter, martial law was declared and a contingent of Civil Guards, led by Captain Julio Pérez Pérez – who participated in the *sanjurjada* and was a member of the UME – captured the provincial government building.<sup>37</sup>

This domino effect was also evident in Galicia. La Coruña had the most important garrison, as well as some of the larger cities and towns of the region. The primary go-

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<sup>35</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 192-193 & 198-199 respectively. For Salamanca, see also Santiago López García and Severiano Delgado Cruz, "Que no se olvide el castigo: la represión en Salamanca durante la guerra civil", in Ricardo Robledo (ed.), *Esta salvaje pesadilla: Salamanca en la guerra civil española* (Barcelona, 2007), pp. 103-107.

<sup>36</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 192-193; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 210-211.

<sup>37</sup> Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la Cruzada*, III, pp. 382-386; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 240-242.

between in the province was Civil Guard Captain José Rañal Lorenzo, and the majority of middle-ranking officers were sympathetic to the conspiracy, even if they did not count amongst the ringleaders. Their ranks were bolstered by the presence of Lt. Col. González Vallés and Lt. Col. Benito de Haro Lumbreras, both on indefinite leave by government decree after the events of 14-16 April. González Vallés, it should be remembered, was the officer who directly disobeyed government orders regulating the burial of the slain Civil Guard lieutenant, Anastasio De los Reyes. De Haro was previously Provincial Commander of La Coruña, but was dismissed and briefly imprisoned after the government discovered his involvement in a planned coup.<sup>38</sup> Against this significant group of rebel sympathizers were the three highest-ranking commanders of the province: the Commander of the 6th Civil Guard Regiment, Colonel Ramón Pérez Tello, the Provincial Commander Lt. Col. José Clarés Cruz and his second-in-command, Major José Álvarez Ríos. As occurred in many other places, these commanding officers found themselves isolated once the insurgents took action – though Clarés Cruz did manage to help the provincial governor escape the clutches of the rebels – were relieved of their commands and then court marshalled. Lt. Col. González Vallés was then named Chief of the Delegation of Public Order, whilst Clarés Cruz and Álvarez Ríos were sentenced to twelve years imprisonment.<sup>39</sup>

In Pontevedra the Civil Guard played a prominent role not only in the preparations for the rebellion, but also in neutralizing the groups of workers arriving in the provincial capital

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<sup>38</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 259.

<sup>39</sup> Carlos Fernández Santander, *Alzamiento y guerra civil en Galicia, 1936-1939*, Vol. I (La Coruña, 2000), pp. 80-85; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 366-367; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 490-494.



to frustrate their plans.<sup>40</sup> Curiously, even though the Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Ricardo Macarrón Piudo was sympathetic to the rebellion, and was made Chief of Public Order in its wake, his lack of initiative during the preparations for the *Alzamiento*, as well as some apparently dubious actions afterwards, led to an official investigation by the Nationalist authorities. The product of these was Macarrón's expulsion from the corps for "desafecto al Régimen".<sup>41</sup> Conspirators in Orense, amongst whose numbers were members of the Civil Guard, declared martial law upon receiving news of events in La Coruña and orders to do so from Valladolid. Prior to this, the Civil Guard refused outright the order from the Provincial Governor to hand over their weapons deposits to the workers, as happened in many other provinces.<sup>42</sup> In Lugo, martial law was declared via the radio transmitter of the Civil Guard once news arrived that La Coruña had just done so. The Provincial Commander, Major Fernando Álavarez Holguín then led his men out to secure the province for the rebel cause.<sup>43</sup>

Outside these areas of right-wing strength, the situation facing Civil Guard, military and civilian conspirators was more complicated, and thus produced a greater variety of reactions and results. In Madrid, arguably the most important city for rebels and loyalists alike, the situation remained somewhat confused at first. Not waiting on events, Inspector-General Pozas, who was soon to be made Interior Minister, swung into action. Upon receiving news of the rebellion in Morocco, he reinforced the Presidential Guard

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<sup>40</sup> Fernández Santander, *Alzamiento y guerra civil en Galicia*, I, pp. 278-279; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 520-521.

<sup>41</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 368-369.

<sup>42</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 263-264; Fernández Santander, *Alzamiento y guerra civil en Galicia*, I, pp. 260-261; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 514-515.

<sup>43</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 262; Fernández Santander, *Alzamiento y guerra civil en Galicia*, I, pp. 234-235; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, p. 508.

and, to bolster the nearly 2300 civil guards normally stationed there, ordered the concentration of 3000 men from those provinces bordering that of Madrid in an effort to “save the Republic”. Though, given that some of these provinces declared for the rebels, only a part of this number arrived in the national capital.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, all of Pozas’ immediate subordinates, the two Regimental Commanders (Colonel Fernando Núñez Llanos and Colonel Eduardo Agustín Sierra) and the two Provincial Commanders (one each for the city and province of Madrid: Lt. Col. Sebastián Royo Salsamendi and Lt. Col. Luis Andrés Marín) were loyal, as was Pozas’ replacement as Inspector when he occupied the Interior Ministry, General José Sanjurjo y Rodríguez Arias.<sup>45</sup>

The plans of the military conspirators in Madrid were that units of the Civil Guard would control loyalist crowds whilst the rebels took control of key buildings and awaited reinforcements. Yet, in the Civil Guard garrison of Bellas Artes (mobile regiment), only one of its four officers demonstrated any willingness to fulfill this role. Many were hesitant to breach discipline with Pozas, and they also had some reservations about the viability of the rebel plan for the conquest of Madrid. Their reluctance was justified given the strength and organization of pro-government elements and the contrasting ramshackle structure of the conspiracy in the nation’s capital.<sup>46</sup> In the afternoon of the 19th, General Fanjul and two Falangist leaders failed to convince the officers of the Parque Móvil and the garrisons of Bellas Artes and García de Paredes to bring their men out into the streets to reinforce the rebel Army units of Campamento as these attempted to

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<sup>44</sup> López Corral, “La Guardia Civil en Madrid durante la Guerra”, pp. 261-262.

<sup>45</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, p. 308. Apparently General Sanjurjo y Rodríguez Arias was the first ever General of the Civil Guard to occupy the post of Inspector-General; previously this honor had been bestowed exclusively to generals from the Army.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 232-233.

join up with those in the Montaña barracks. This refusal significantly weakened the chances of success of the rebellion in Madrid.<sup>47</sup>

A company of Civil Guards were sent by Pozas to distribute to the militias the 5000 rifles stored in the Artillery Park. Yet, most of the bolts for these rifles were deposited in the Montaña barracks, whose commander, Colonel Serra, refused to hand over. Serra believed that the rebel cause in Madrid was not lost, as several Civil Guard officers who sympathized with the rebellion gave him the impression that the arrival of the 3000 civil guards ordered by Pozas to concentrate in the capital could actually work in the insurgents' favor as many of these would probably join forces with the military rebels. Given the masses of loyalist militias that were converging on the Montaña barracks seeking the release of the bolts for their rifles, Minister of War General Castelló ordered two Infantry companies and one Calvary squadron of Civil Guard to the scene to maintain order. Of the two officers put in command of this force, Major José Breñaño Ramos dutifully fulfilled his orders, while Captain Antonio Bermúdez de Castro Blanco – the commander of the Calvary squadron – was less enthusiastic and held friendly conversations with the rebel officers inside the Montaña barracks. While Bermúdez did not join them on that day, he did cross over to the Nationalists in January 1938. On the morning of the 20th, the government decided to act and ordered the attack of the barracks. The role of the Civil Guard units there was to protect those soldiers captured as prisoners. Yet, the resistance and treachery of those inside the barracks resulted in the massacre of

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<sup>47</sup> López Corral, "La Guardia Civil en Madrid durante la Guerra", pp. 262-263.

its inhabitants by the angered militias.<sup>48</sup> Fearing that they would suffer a similar fate, those rebels holed up in the Conde Duque barracks surrendered peacefully to those civil guards, commanded by Major Alfredo Semprún Ramos, sent to take them prisoner.<sup>49</sup>

The situation in Madrid had rippling effect on the course of events in several of its neighbouring provinces. In Guadalajara the Provincial Commander was Lt. Col. Ricardo Ferrari Ayora, who was ostensibly loyal to the government, as was his assistant, Captain José Rubio García. Nonetheless, his second-in-command, Major Enrique Pastor Rodríguez and the majority of the officers and men did not share their position. Despite knowing of the failure of the rebellion in Madrid and in nearby Alcalá de Henares, Major Pastor and the other officers refused to countenance the arming of the workers, particularly as they expected that fortunes would soon change with the anticipated arrival of Mola's columns descending from the north. Thus, when Lt. Col. Ferrari attempted to comply with the government's orders to arm the workers, he faced the determined resistance of Major Pastor and the rest of the officers, who threatened to remove him from command if he tried to distribute the weapons. Faced with this daring display of insubordination, Ferrari hesitated and eventually switched sides once his subordinates began to occupy the city. Captain Rubio García proved more resolute in his defense of the government. When called upon by the provincial governor to defend the Gobierno Civil, Rubio García organized a contingent of civil guards to reinforce those Security Guards already stationed in the building. Nonetheless, his men deserted him with the approach of the rebels, and Rubio was arrested. Yet, the rebels' victory was ephemeral as

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<sup>48</sup> López Corral, "La Guardia Civil en Madrid durante la Guerra", pp. 263-266; Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 111-112; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>49</sup> López Corral, "La Guardia Civil en Madrid durante la Guerra", p. 266

Guadalajara was soon recaptured by government forces proceeding from Madrid that considerably outnumbered the insurgents, with Captain Rubio playing the role of intermediary between the two groups as the rebels took refuge in the *casa-cuartel* of the Civil Guard. After several hours of resistance, Major Pastor and his men surrendered.<sup>50</sup>

The rebels in Toledo had better luck, relatively speaking. The Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Pedro Romero Basart, and his second-in-command, Major Rafael Díaz Gómez, were both involved in the military conspiracy. The military garrison of Toledo only numbered some 250 men, which made the Civil Guard, composed of nearly 700 men, of supreme importance to the potential success of any attempted rebellion in the province. Colonel José Moscardo, being the highest-ranking official present in Toledo at the time, took charge of the situation, attempting to buy time whilst the forces of the Civil Guard converged on the provincial capital. Once these had arrived, and the necessary preparations made, Moscardó openly declared for the rebellion on 21 July and the rebels took up defensive positions in the Alcázar, which served as a Military academy, and adjacent Provincial Government building. Of the 1300 people holed-up in the Alcázar, including women and children, the majority of the combatants were civil guards. As loyalist and militia forces flooded into the city, the rebels' position looked bleak as any potential relief columns were still considerably far away, and thus in no position to offer assistance any time soon. Nonetheless, by taking the precaution of concentrating the Civil Guard in the city of Toledo itself, as well as the formidable defense afforded by the Alcázar, the rebels were able to withstand a long and difficult

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<sup>50</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 182-186; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 363-366.

siege until columns of Franco's Army of Africa were able to relieve them in the end of September. The successful defense of Toledo entered into the legends of the Nationalist cause, much to the benefit of Franco himself, as well as being an embarrassment of sorts for the Popular Front government.<sup>51</sup>

Similar to the situation in Toledo, rebels in the province of Cuenca, which lacked a proper military presence, were dependent on the loyalties of the Civil Guard, which numbered nearly 500 men. Yet, the key difference was the attitude of the provincial commanders of the corps, who in the case of Cuenca was Lt. Col. Francisco García de Angela San Román. García de Angela was apparently sympathetic to conspiracy, yet maintained ambiguous attitude when rebellion actually broke out, despite the enthusiasm of many of his subordinates for the insurgents. This was dictated by events in Madrid, as well as the fact that two of García de Angela's closest subordinates, Second Lieutenant Julio Fernández Gómez and Captain Alfredo Mari Clérigues, were convinced republicans. García de Angela's caution translated into relative inaction on the part of his men, which was enough to assure that Cuenca remained in the government's sphere of influence. In the last week of July, all the forces of the province were ordered to concentrate in the capital, yet the purpose of this – other than potentially to reduce friction with local militias in the various towns and villages – was not clear. Nonetheless, Cuenca remained in the government's hand until the very end of the Civil War. Lt. Col. García de Angela

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<sup>51</sup> Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (Princeton, NJ, 1967), pp. 271-273; Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 128-133; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 342-346. The importance of this event to the Civil Guard, and particularly the corps' sometimes overlooked role in it, can be seen by the fact that a whole chapter is dedicated to the event in the semi-official history of Aguado Sánchez: *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 215-238. A detailed, though somewhat fictionalized, account can be found in Cecil Eby, *The Siege of the Alcázar* (London, 1966).

was called to Madrid on 2 August, being replaced by Lt. Fernández Gómez as provincial commander, and was imprisoned due to the ambiguity in his loyalty to the Popular Front government and the defection of a large number of his men on their way to Teruel. Another GC officer, Captain Carmelo Martínez, who was active behind the scenes in trying to initiate the rebellion in Cuenca, was also arrested.<sup>52</sup>

The Provincial Commander of nearby Ciudad Real, Lt. Col. Rafael López Montijano, wanted nothing to do with the military rebellion, though many of his officers, particularly his second-in-command Major Valero Pérez Ondategui, were sympathizers. In the company command station at Damiel, Captain Antonio Torres García wanted to join the rebellion at the first opportunity, but the right moment never materialized. Lt. Félix Prats y Prats, Line Commandant in Manzananes, concentrated the 30 men under his command, yet in the end felt the situation militated against joining the rebellion. His colleague Lt. Elías Fernández Utrilla in Tomelloso had more initiative, yet his pluck ended up costing him his life. At any rate, given the position of Lt. Col. López Montijano and the timidity of those officers stationed in provincial command, no assistance was afforded to potential rebels. When a group of Carlists went to the Civil Guard garrison on the 18th looking for arms, their request was denied “resolutely” by the officers within. Later, when local Falangists made a similar request to supply them with weapons (as opposed to giving them to the Popular Front militias), they were not only rebuffed, but arrested by the Civil Guard.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ana Belén Rodríguez Patiño, *La guerra civil en Cuenca, 1936-1939* (Madrid, 2003), pp. 64-76; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 186-187.

<sup>53</sup> Francisco Alía Miranda, *La guerra civil en retaguardia: Conflicto y revolución en la provincial de Ciudad Real, 1936-1939* (Ciudad Real, 1994), pp. 65-71; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 353-354.

Albacete, like Ciudad Real and Cuenca, did not possess a proper military presence within its provincial borders and thus any rebel initiative would necessarily need to be supported by the Civil Guard. The events of Yeste in May 1936 had engendered a mood of indignation against the Popular Front Government and Inspector-General Pozas. The Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Fernando Chápuli Ansó, went to Madrid to protest against the proceedings being brought against his men over the incident, but reportedly was rebuffed by Pozas, who allegedly would not meet with Chápuli.<sup>54</sup>

The leading conspirator in Ciudad Real was Chápuli's second-in-command, Major Ángel Molina Galano, whose efforts were consented to by his superior officer. In the wake of the murder of Calvo Sotelo, Molina began to order the concentration of the provincial forces to the city of Albacete. This precipitous move awakened the suspicion of the provincial governor, who asked Chápuli to provide an explanation for this move by his subordinate. Lacking any orders from conspirators elsewhere, Chápuli had to reverse the order. Once news arrived of the rebellion in Melilla, Chápuli himself issued the order for the concentration of forces in the capital as well as in the key command posts throughout the province. Events then began to force his hand: as Chápuli was mobilizing his men for the capture of the province, Pozas telegraphed an order for him to send 150 guards and three officers to Madrid. Chápuli was unsure how to act, and when he consulted the commanders of the neighbouring provinces, they counselled "prudence and tact" in handling the situation. Yet, his space for manoeuvre was quickly disappearing as the provincial governor issued an order in the morning of the 19th to arm the workers, groups

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<sup>54</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, VI, p. 2.



of which were arriving in the city. Sensing that the time had come for action, the military commander of Albacete, General Martínez Moreno, installed himself in the *casa-cuartel* of the Civil Guard, and that afternoon, he declared martial law. Chápuli and Molina then instructed their men to occupy Albacete and the rest of the province, which they did with the aid of the small force of Assault Guards stationed there.

While this was being done, Chápuli contacted the commander of the Civil Guard in Ciudad Real, which not only possessed a larger contingent of men, but also was the location of the headquarters of the 23rd Regiment, under whose jurisdiction Albacete fell. As mentioned above, its commanding officer was loyal to the government, which was a blow to the insurgent in Albacete, who were finding themselves increasingly geographically isolated. Indeed, they were obliged to surrender less than a week later when loyalist forces converged on the province to re-establish governmental control. Once the failure of the rebellion was evident, Chápuli committed suicide. Molina Galano and nine of his fellow rebel officers were later executed without trial on 14 August.<sup>55</sup>

The failure of the rebellion in Albacete was foreseeable as the insurgents dithered all along the more important neighbouring provinces of the Levante, thus ensuring that these all remained in loyalist hands. The key to the region was Valencia, the Headquarters of the 3rd Military Division and the 1st Civil Guard Zone, the commander of which was General Luis Grijalvo Celaya, who had promised previously to collaborate with the rebels. The consignment of Civil Guard in the province of Valencia alone was around 800 men,

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<sup>55</sup> Manuel Ortiz Heras, *Violencia política en la II República y el primer franquismo: Albacete, 1936-1950* (Madrid, 1996), pp. 64-67; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, VI, pp. 5-20; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 586-590.

potentially a crucial asset for the insurgents. Surprisingly, the local representatives of the UME made little effort to include key officers of the Civil Guard during the conspiratorial phase of the preparations. The only officer actively involved in these was relatively low-ranking Captain Luis Tío Ripoll. While many of the middle and low-ranking officers were in favour of the conspiracy, most of their higher-ranking colleagues were not willing to carelessly put their careers, and possibly their lives, on the line. The commander of the 5th Regiment (also located in Valencia), Colonel Juan Moreno Molina was loyal to the government, while the head of the two provincial commands, Lt. Col. Marcelino Gómez Plata Mateu and Lt. Col. Ricardo Agromariz Ponce de León (one each for the city and province of Valencia, respectively), were not men prone to taking risks, an attitude shared by their immediate subordinates, Major Adolfo Valcárcel Sampol and Captain Adolfo Carretero Parreño. General Salamero Ortiz, Commander of the Second Civil Guard Zone (Córdoba), who coincidentally was in Valencia, agreed with the general mood of the upper hierarchy. Moreover, amongst their ranks was Captain Manuel Uribarri Barutell, a leading member of the UMRA who was sent by Pozas kept a close eye on their activities.<sup>56</sup>

All of this did not bode well for the success of the rebels' plans. Once news of the rebellion in Africa reached Valencia, loyalist forces, with Uribarri at their head, began to prepare for the defense of the government whilst the military rebels prevaricated. Furthermore, the leader of the influential DRV, Luis Lucía Lucía, declared that he and his party would remain within the bounds of republican legality, thus sowing further

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<sup>56</sup> Eladi Mainar Cabanes, *L'Alçament militar de juliol de 1936 a València* (Benifairó de la Valldigna, 1996), pp. 72-75; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 540-543; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, p. 290.

confusion and pessimism amongst rebel sympathizers amongst the military and security forces. The caution of the nominated leader of the rebellion in Valencia, General González Carrasco, only hampered the chances of its success there. When González Carrasco wanted to change the plans to include a company of Civil Guards in the occupation of the Military Division headquarters, Grijalvo proved unenthusiastic, stating that the military must take the first steps. Once this occurred, he promised that "*la Guardia Civil, a su requerimiento, obedecería sin vacilar*". The only officer willing to take action was Captain Tío Ripoll. As González Carrasco dug his feet upon learning of events in Barcelona, the conspirators then turned to Grijalvo, who again refused to take the initiative, replying that his men "would second the rebellion, but never initiate it". Disappointed, yet undaunted, they then approached General Salamero Ortiz, who also declined to take command of the rebellion in Valencia. After several days, the momentum was lost and the advantage passed to loyalist elements. After a clash with loyalist authorities, General Grijalva was deemed to be insufficiently loyal, and was replaced by the commander of the 5th Regiment, Colonel Moreno Molina, and twenty-eight Civil Guard officers were then arrested and investigated for their roles in the conspiracy. Grijalvo and his son were later murdered on 6 November 1936.<sup>57</sup>

Events along the Mediterranean littoral followed a somewhat similar pattern. In Murcia, the Commander of the 15th Regiment, Colonel Carlos Ochotorena Laborda, and the Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Antonio Borges Fe, were both sympathetic to the conspiracy, but unwilling to take the initiative, preferring to second any action by the

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<sup>57</sup> Mainar Cabanes, *L'Alçament militar de juliol de 1936 a València*, pp. 75-119; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 543-548; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, 339-343; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 230-231, 240.

province's military garrison. Nonetheless, Major Perfecto Malo Munillo, Borges' second-in-command, and several of the officers were active in the preparations for the rebellion. When news of the coup in Melilla was known, Malo Munillo attempted to raise the garrison, but failed and was arrested, only to be executed later. Several other units attempted to join the rebellion, such as in Lorca, or displayed an "*actitud expectante*", such as in Cartagena.<sup>58</sup> In Alicante, which lacked a well-organized conspiratorial cell as well as possessing a number of loyal military officers, Provincial Commander Lt. Col. José Estany Herrero proved to be another rebel sympathizer who decided in the end to remain loyal to the government.<sup>59</sup> In Castellón, Lt. Col. José Estarás Ferro also abandoned his previous inclination towards the conspiracy once the rebellion failed to materialize in Valencia. He resisted pressure from local Carlists to take action, and when his second-in-command confronted him about his back-peddling, Estarás arrested him. Despite his superficial loyalty to the regime, suspicions about him remained and he was later executed by militiamen.<sup>60</sup>

The rebels had better luck in Aragón. As with many other areas, once the status of the key city was established, Zaragoza in this case, the surrounding provinces tended to follow the same course. Despite the historically strong presence of the CNT in the region, the insurgents were bolstered by the fact that almost all of the provinces to their north and west were largely under the control of the Nationalists. In this sense, Aragón was a

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<sup>58</sup> Carmen González Martínez, *Guerra Civil en Murcia: Un análisis sobre el poder y los comportamientos colectivos* (Murcia, 1999), pp.57-60; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 573-574, 582n38; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 344.

<sup>59</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 562-563; Aguado Sanchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 343; Mainar Cabanes, *L'Alçament militar de juliol de 1936 a València*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>60</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 556-557; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 337-339.

frontier region between the conservative north and centre and the more liberal Mediterranean east and south. This meant that the rebel cause would have had enough social support to encourage disloyalty amongst those civil guards stationed there, whilst the presence of a combative CNT only served to push them further down the road to rebellion. Indeed, as will be seen elsewhere, the active presence of the CNT more often than not would translate into Civil Guard support for the insurgency.

The Commander of the 5th Military Division was the former Inspector-General of the Civil Guard, General Miguel Cabanellas, who was also the only Army divisional commander to openly join the rebellion. Zaragoza was also the seat of the 7th Regiment of the Civil Guard, which covered the provinces of Zaragoza and Huesca, and the Regimental and Provincial commanders of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Eulogio Pérez Martín and Major Julián Lasiera Luis, respectively, were both sympathizers of the conspiracy, the latter being a member of the Military Junta. Upon hearing the news of the uprising in Morocco and groups of leftists began gathering in the streets, the commander of the Civil Guard, Julián Lasiera withdrew his men into their barracks and allowed for some Falangists to take refuge in them. The Civil Governor, Ángel Vera Coronel, refused the requests of local workers' leaders to distribute arms. His reasoning was threefold: the Government expressly prohibited such an action (at least for the moment); Vera feared that in doing so would only allow the workers – led principally by the CNT – to initiate their long-stated goal of social revolution, and thus push definitively the military into revolt; and, finally, he trusted that General Cabanellas would remain loyal to the government and restrain the rebellious tendencies of his fellow officers.

As things worsened in Madrid, and permission to distribute arms came through on the evening of the 18th, Cabanellas and his fellow officers were making their preparations. Evidently there was some concern amongst the principal conspirators that Cabanellas would not go through with it, and certainly some of his officers were hesitant to act until they were sure of events in Madrid. Yet, Cabanellas had already set himself on a collision course with Madrid and set the rebellion in motion. On the night of the 18th a group of civil guards, soldiers and assault guards occupied the provincial government building, detained Vera Coronel, and Lt. Col. Lasierra assumed the post of Provincial Governor. Having the full support of the Civil Guard (which numbered some 120 men in the city of Zaragoza, significantly less than the military garrison) and Assault Guard, Cabanellas signed and promulgated a decree of martial law and the rebels were able to gain control of the city with few problems, despite the strong presence of the CNT in the city. Once Zaragoza itself was in rebel hands, most of the province soon fell under their control, save the town of Caspe, which offered not only strong resistance, but also was vulnerable as columns proceeding from Catalonia towards Zaragoza approached. As such, it was abandoned and its civil guards obliged to retreat, though not before their commander, Captain Juan Negrete Rabella, was fatally wounded.<sup>61</sup>

Once martial law was declared in Zaragoza, Huesca followed suit. The Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Manuel Díez Ticio, and his second-in-command, Major Rafael

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<sup>61</sup> Francisco Escribano Bernal, "Una primavera de conspiraciones", in Fernando Martínez de Baños Carrillo (ed.), *Guerra Civil: Aragón* (Zaragoza, 2004), pp. 31-33; Julia Cifuentes Cheuca & Pilar Malvenda Pons, *El asalto a la República: Los orígenes del franquismo en Zaragoza, 1936-1939* (Zaragoza, 1995), pp. 13-20; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 382-386; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 318-320.

Fernández de Vega Soto, were both supporters of the conspiracy, the latter being the more active and acting as the liaison with the chief military conspirator in the province, General Gregorio de Benito. Once the decree of martial law was promulgated, Díez Ticio sent his men, under the command of Captain Vicente García Esteban and Captain Jesús Bercial Esteban (another officer who was active in the conspiracy), out into the streets in support of the military rebels. As in the city of Huesca itself, civil guards were the principal protagonists in securing control of the various towns through out the province, except in Barbastro, where the military commander managed to keep the local units of Civil Guard and Carabineros loyal whilst facing off against a group of rebels. Nonetheless, as Huesca was a province with a long border between loyalist and insurgent zones, a series of skirmishes and battles ensued between the two opposing sides.<sup>62</sup>

Teruel was a conservative stronghold, yet with a small military garrison of only 12 men in the provincial capital. As such, the attitude of the Civil Guard, and somewhat less so given their less numbers, the Assault Guard and the Carabineros were of crucial importance to deciding the situation in the province. On the 18th of July, Lt. Col. Simarro Roig and the commander of the Assault Guard, Lt. Antonio Navarro Gómez, were called to the Provincial government building to secure their loyalty to the government. Both officers stated that they were “at his disposition to guarantee the public order, as was their duty”. The position of the Civil Guard in Teruel remained ambiguous at first, given that it belonged to the 7th Regiment of the Civil Guard, whose command was in Guadalajara. As such, orders emanating from Guadalajara, which fell

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<sup>62</sup> Escribano Bernal, “Una primavera de conspiraciones”, pp. 37-40; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 320-321; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 397-398.

outside the jurisdiction of the 5th Military Division in Zaragoza, contradicted those coming from the Aragonese capital. With the declaration of martial law in Zaragoza on the 19th, Infantry Major Virgilio Aguado Martínez, with the passive compliance of his commanding officer, Lt. Col. Mariano García Brisolara, declared martial law in Teruel. As Lt. Col. Simarro was in Alcañiz at that moment, the definitive position of the Civil Guard was uncertain. Aguado met with the acting commander, Major José Pérez del Hoyo, who opted to join the rebellion with his men, as did the forces of the Interior Ministry police. This decision was not countermanded by Lt. Col. Simarro when he returned to the city the next day, and Teruel joined Huesca on the frontier of the contending sides.<sup>63</sup>

If there was a place in Spain where it could be expected that the Civil Guard would be anxious to join a movement for “national salvation”, Barcelona certainly would come to mind. The mixture of Catalan nationalism and the active presence of the CNT would seem like a recipe for fostering disaffection amongst the Civil Guard stationed there. In terms of the presence of the corps in the city, Barcelona was the seat of the 5th Civil Guard Division, as well as the 3rd and 19th Regiments (one each for the province and city of Barcelona, respectively), with a total of around 3000 personnel in the province. The Commander of the 5th Division was General José Aranguren Roldán, and that of the 19th Regiment was Colonel Antonio Escobar Huertas. Both men were of conservative

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<sup>63</sup> Valentín Solano Sanmiguel, *Guerra civil: Aragón. Tomo III: Teruel* (Zaragoza, 2006), pp. 19-21; Angela Cenarro Lagunas, *El fin de la esperanza: Fascismo y guerra civil en la provincia de Teruel, 1936-1939* (Teruel, 1996), pp. 43-48; Escribano Bernal, “Una primavera de conspiraciones”, p. 41; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 322-323. Lt. Col. Simarro Roig was named Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard in Valencia in April 1939, and it was he who managed to capture General Aranguren, the commander of the Civil Guard in Catalonia in July 1936 who remained loyal to the Republic: Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 266-267.



temperament and devout Catholics; one of Escobar Huertas' sons was a member of the Falange. Nonetheless, they inspired a certain confidence in Inspector-General Pozas, who assigned them to Barcelona in April 1936, transferring their predecessors due to suspicions of sedition.<sup>64</sup> Colonel Escobar had demonstrated a degree of sympathy for the military conspiracy. When asked during an interview with the Director of Public Order for the Generalitat, Federico Escofet, as to what his position would be in the event of a military coup, Escobar replied

If a military insurrection occurs [...] and has a national character to it, and the totality of the Barcelona garrison is out in the streets, this would represent a state of opinion. It is natural that in this case it will not be me personally who decides what to do, but rather my superiors within the Institute, which whom I will have to consult and who will decide the position that we are to take.

Unnerved by this response, Escofet reminded the Colonel that his primary duty was to defend the law, and that any military rebellion would be necessarily outside the bounds of legality, no matter how many soldiers supported it. While Escobar appeared to have been moved by this argument, Escofet maintained a certain level of doubt about Escobar, and felt more confident about the loyalty of his colleague, Colonel Francisco Brotons Gómez, the commander of the 3rd Regiment.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, there was little room for complacency amongst the authorities in the Generalitat and in Madrid as a significant

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<sup>64</sup> Manuel Risques Corbella, "Disciplinados en 1936, ejecutados en 1939. Proceso sumarísimo a la Guardia Civil de Barcelona", *Ayer*, no. 43 (2001), p. 153.

<sup>65</sup> Federico Escofet, *De una derrota a una victoria: 6 de octubre de 1934 a 19 de julio de 1936* (Barcelona, 1984), pp. 196-198.

number, if not the majority of the Civil Guard officers stationed in Barcelona were favourably disposed towards the ideals of the military conspiracy.<sup>66</sup>

On 19 July 1936 several of the local military garrisons rebelled and were resisted in the streets by anarchist militiamen and loyal Assault Guards. As the battle seemed to stalemate, members of the Generalitat fretted over what position the Civil Guard would take, especially as many of its officers were known right-wingers. It was feared that if they joined the rebels, Barcelona could fall to the insurgents. In the midst of these doubts, Colonel Escobar arrived in the city center with a large contingent of his men.

One eyewitness described the scene:

‘What’s going to happen now?’ I thought. All morning I’d been fearing a trap. The *guardia* – the people’s historic enemy! If they came out against us [all would be lost]...

At this moment, Colonel Escobar made his position known, saluting the Catalan President Luis Companys and shouting “At your orders, señor presidente!”<sup>67</sup>

In fact, it seems that the Civil Guard acted with considerable reluctance, or at least many of its officers did, with the exception of Aranguren, Escobar and Brotons.<sup>68</sup> While the majority of these officers were soon imprisoned and investigated by the revolutionary

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<sup>66</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, p. 245; Risques Corbella, “Disciplinados en 1936”, pp. 152-155.

<sup>67</sup> Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: The Experience of Civil War, 1936-1939* (London, 1988), pp. 67-68.

<sup>68</sup> Risques Corbella, “Disciplinados en 1936”, pp. 154-158; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 247-263.

The most detailed treatment of the Civil Guard’s role in the military rebellion in Barcelona is Manel Risques & Carles Barrachina, *Procés a la Guardia Civil* (Barcelona, 2001). Risques gives little to no credit for the defeat of the rebellion in Barcelona, noting that by the time the Civil Guard arrived at the scene of the various skirmishes, the outcome had already been decided. Yet, even if this was the case, and various members of the Generalitat argued otherwise, the passive loyalty of the Civil Guard certainly contributed to the defeat of the insurgency.

authorities, Colonel Escobar (General Escobar after 29 May 1937) went on to loyally serve the Republic for the rest of the war in various posts, including commander of the Army of Extremadura. He was later executed by the Franco regime after the war.<sup>69</sup>

The failure of the rebellion in Barcelona had its repercussions in the rest of Catalonia. Hesitation was the order of the day in Tarragona. Whilst military officers debated amongst themselves as to whether or not to act, they were aware of the fact that they could not count on the commander of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Arsenio Cabañas Fernández de Castro, who was waiting on events. The Assault Guards were of the same mind, and the Carabineros leaning towards supporting the government. With the capture of General Goded and his announcement of the failure of the rebellion in Barcelona, Cabañas declared for the government. The main posts in the rest of the province also took a cautious course, waiting on events in Tarragona city, and especially, Barcelona.<sup>70</sup>

The provisional Provincial Commander of Gerona, Major Felipe Moragriega Carvaja, was a key member of the conspiratorial nucleus in Gerona. Moragriega knew of the rebellion in Morocco through transmission received at the command's radio, but was waiting for the declaration of martial law in Barcelona, which was planned for the morning of the 19th. The leading military conspirator, Lt. Col. Antonio Alcubilla Pérez began dismissing and naming new authorities that morning, but upon receiving news of events in Barcelona, the rebels desisted in their efforts, and Moragriega fled to France.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> 'Vida y muerte del general Escobar: toda la verdad', *Historia 16*, no. 92 (1983), pp. 23-36.

<sup>70</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 281-283; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 337.

<sup>71</sup> Carlos Rojas, *La Guerra en Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1979), pp. 56-57; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 334-336.

Like his counterpart in Tarragona, Lt. Col. Acacio Sandoval Asensio, the Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard in Lérida, hesitated to take any action before being sure of the probable success of the rebellion. While Sandoval dithered, Civil Guard Lieutenant José Sánchez Zamora, who was one of the main conspirators in the province, convinced his colleagues to join the insurgents, whilst Civil Guard Major Vicente Garchitorena Rigán, usurped command and sent his men out into the streets to aid in the securing of the city. Nonetheless, the news of the rebellion's failure in Barcelona and the imminent arrival of a loyalist column to retake the city changed the atmosphere in Lérida. Loyalist elements went on the offensive while the rebels lost heart, and the Civil Guard was returned to their barracks. Many of rebel officers then were murdered once the city was back in loyalist hands.<sup>72</sup>

While Alava easily fell into rebel hands, the situation in the two northern Basque Provinces, Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa was more complicated. Despite a strong Socialist presence, particularly in Vizcaya, the Basque Country was a deeply Catholic and conservative area. Yet, the Spanish Right's hostility towards anything deemed to threaten national unity, which was equally felt by the military insurgents, had pushed the Basque Nationalists – who were more prominent in these two provinces than in Alava, in which the Carlists still had a significant following – into a somewhat uncomfortable alliance with a secularizing, liberal Republic. The Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard for Vizcaya was Lt. Col. Juan Colinas Guerra. Although Lt. Col. Colinas was

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<sup>72</sup> Rojas, *La Guerra en Catalunya*, pp. 54-56; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 335-336; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 274-276.

ambiguous in his loyalties, some of his officers were more committed to the Popular Front government, such as his second-in-command Major Pedro Cortaire Elizagaray. Once the military rebellion broke out, Colinas Guerra and his officers put themselves at the orders of the provincial governor, and Captain Juan Ibarrola Ornetá aided with the distribution of arms to the workers.<sup>73</sup> Captain Ibarrola, like Colonel Escobar, was one of the few devout Catholics that loyally served the Popular Front Government throughout the war. He went on to command militia units in the Somosierra, fighting alongside Valetín González, “El Campesino”, as well as Enrique Lister. Ibarrola, who would regularly go out in the field dressed in Extremaduran corduroy, was later put in charge of the 22nd Corps of the Army of the Levante, but was dismissed in the wake of the coup of Colonel Casado in March 1939.<sup>74</sup> Nonetheless, not all of Vizcaya’s civil guards were stalwarts of the Popular Front. The Line Commandant in Durango passed over to the Nationalists when the opportunity presented itself.<sup>75</sup> More damaging was the defection of Lieutenant Fernando Ledesma Navarro in February 1937, who delivered the defensive plans for Bilbao to the Nationalists just as they were about to begin their offensive on the city.<sup>76</sup> Lt. Col. Colinas, for his part, had the unfortunate distinction of being subjected to an investigative inquiry by both the Popular Front and Francoist governments, the latter sentencing him to death by firing squad.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 429-431; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 314.

<sup>74</sup> Salas Larrazábal, *Historia del Ejército Popular*, I, p. 238; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 768, 883; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 341-342.

<sup>75</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, p. 431.

<sup>76</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, p. 202.

<sup>77</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, p. 303.

The split in loyalties in Guipúzcoa would put civil guard against civil guard. The Commander of the 13th Regiment, located in San Sebastián, was Colonel Ignacio López de Ogallar, who was one of the ringleaders of the conspiracy. On the other hand, the Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Saturnino Bengoa Murizábal, and his second-in-command, Major Mauricio García Ezcurra, were both loyalists. Colonel Ogallar was arrested on the night of the 18th when he, along with the military commander of the province, Colonel León Carrasco, and a lieutenant colonel of the Carabineros were detained when they entered the provincial government building. As a result, Carrasco's second-in-command, Lt. Col. José Vallespín Cobán, was named military commander by a frustrated Mola, and Vallespín set up several cannons in front of the provincial government and demanded its surrender. At this point Lt. Col. Bengoa sprung into action, and mobilized the Civil Guard to defend the government. Meanwhile, a mixed force of soldiers, civil guards, assault guards, carabineros numbering around 200 men began to secure the strategic points around San Sebastián. The besieged Colonel Ogallar issued orders that Bengoa's commands were not to be followed. This proved fruitless as the force led by Bengoa and the Provincial Governor soon regained control of the city, with only a small group of rebel civil guards under the command of Captain Julio Ayuso Sánchez-Molero holding out in the Gran Casino. The besieging force was led by Major García Ezcurra, who managed to gain entry to the Casino and secure the rebels' surrender.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 315-317; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 442-444; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 226-227.

The matter did not end there. Loyal Civil Guard units under the command of Captain Alejo Beñarán Garín then proceeded southwards to meet insurgent columns (containing civil guards amongst them) marching northwards from Pamplona and Burgos under the command of Colonel Beorlegui. Captain Beñarán and his men, supported by civilian militiamen, put up a dogged resistance in the town of Beasáin, but were eventually overwhelmed by the rebels. Infuriated that men of the Civil Guard were defending the government, and thus retarding his advance, Beorlegui had Beñarán and fourteen of his men summarily executed. Three days later Ogallar and his fellow rebel officers were murdered when the prison in which they were being held was overrun by angry crowds. Fifty-two prisoners were killed and buried in unmarked graves alongside another thirty persons.<sup>79</sup>

The adjacent province of Santander was another situation in which the loyalty of the commander of the Civil Guard, alongside the strength of loyalist forces, spelt the defeat for the rebels. While a number of the commanding officers of the Civil Guard had pledged themselves to join the rebellion, their superior officer, Lt. Col. Román Morales Martínez refused the exhortations of the principal military conspirator and commander of the province, Colonel José Pérez García-Argüelles. Morales Martínez's men followed his lead, probably also influenced by the loyalty of the local Assault Guard and Carabineros, who already had begun to take defensive positions to prevent the insurgents from gaining a foothold in Santander. The rebellion was aborted and Pérez

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<sup>79</sup> Miguel López Corral, "La Guardia Civil en la Guerra, 1936-1939", *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil*, No. 10 (1994), p. 149; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 343-346.

García-Argüelles was arrested, as were several Civil Guard officers implicated in the conspiracy.<sup>80</sup>

Given the hostility, if not hatred caused in Asturias by the events of October 1934 and afterwards, it should come as little surprise that the Civil Guard of the province of Oviedo were ready and willing to join the rebellion. Indeed, the military conspirators were confident that they would receive the support of the numerous Civil Guard stationed in Asturias under the command of Lt. Col. Carlos Lapresta Rodríguez, who was also acting Commander of the 10th Regiment pending the arrival of Colonel Mario Juanes Clemente.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, given the proven strength and resilience of the working-class organizations in the region – a preoccupation particularly within the Civil Guard since October 1934 – meant that the conspirators had to conceive of a more creative strategy if they hoped to gain control of the region. Indeed, upon receiving news of the military rebellion in Morocco, the miners had begun already to mobilize. Colonel Antonio Aranda, the military commander, convinced both the provincial governor and the union leaders that he was on the side of the government. The fact that no one was quite sure of Aranda's political loyalties meant that his professions of loyalty were believed. Indeed, even the men of the Civil Guard were unsure as to what was his real position.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, he even convinced the miners' leaders that, with Oviedo secure for the government, they should sent their men to Madrid where the greater danger lay for the Republic. As columns of miners began to leave for the nation's capital, orders were

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<sup>80</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, p. 314; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 452-453; Salas Larrazábal, *Historia del Ejército Popular*, I, p. 101. Some accounts state that Pérez García-Argüelles refused to rebel: Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 225-226, 226n1.

<sup>81</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, p. 474.

<sup>82</sup> Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias*, p. 66.



given on the 19th to concentrate the various units of the Civil Guard in Oviedo. To further confuse the miners, civil guards were ordered to give the clenched fist salute as they left for the provincial capital.<sup>83</sup> Nonetheless, this move did arouse some suspicion, and miners in Sama de Langreo sabotaged the railway line. After a brief skirmish, the miners managed to detain a company of civil guards on their way towards Oviedo, who were then transferred and murdered in Puerto de San Isidro.<sup>84</sup>

Just as in Toledo, once the nearly 1200 men of the Civil Guard had arrived in Oviedo, they began to occupy the strategic points of the city and Colonel Aranda declared martial law. The majority of the Assault Guard, the loyalties of whose personnel was unknown, then joined the rebellion. Upon hearing of Aranda's treachery, enraged miners converged on Oviedo, beginning a siege that would last even longer than that of Toledo.<sup>85</sup> In Gijón, civil guards made common cause with military rebels, suffering long sieges in both the Simancas barracks and the *casa-cuartel* of the Civil Guard. The defenders of the *casa-cuartel* were obliged eventually to surrender after a sustained attack, only to be executed thereafter – another product of the violence and seething hatred engendered by the military rebellion. Those civil guards who joined the rebel soldiers in the Simancas barracks fared somewhat better in that they were able to hold out until relieved by Nationalist forces, though not without first suffering many casualties.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Jackson, *Spanish Republic and Civil War*, p. 241.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 476-477.

<sup>85</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 474-477; Jackson, *Spanish Republic and Civil War*, pp. 240-241; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, p. 225; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 281-304. For a personal account by a Civil Guard who participated in the defense of Oviedo, see Ferreras Estrada, *Memorias*, pp. 66-73.

<sup>86</sup> Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 272-280; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 477-480.

In the provinces of Extremadura and Andalucía we see the highest proportion of insubordination within the corps, as the majority of provincial commanders remained loyal, only to be overruled by their subordinates. Given that these two regions also constituted amongst the most conflictive areas in Spain, the sense of desperation and exasperation amongst civil guards was acute enough to foster this breakdown of the much-vaunted internal discipline of the Civil Guard.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of 19 July the military command of Cáceres received a telegram from Franco instructing them to declare martial law and join the rebellion. The Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Ángel Hernández Martín, refused to second the movement, a position not welcomed by his men. His second-in-command, Major Fernando Vázquez Ramos, with the support of Captain Luis Marzal Albarrán, confronted his superior officer and arrested him. This act of indiscipline was received enthusiastically by the rest of the men, and upon the occupation of the provincial government building, Major Vázquez Ramos assumed the post of Provincial Governor.<sup>87</sup>

Upon gaining control of Cáceres, Vázquez Ramos began to pressure the Provincial Commander in neighbouring Badajoz, Major José Vega Cornejo, to declare for the rebellion, threatening him with execution if he failed to do so. Like Lt. Col. Hernández Martín, Major Vega Cornejo refused, yet initially he had more luck in controlling his men and keeping the capital in government hands. Nonetheless, once the leash was loosened, his men began to defect: on 30 July, two detachments of civil guards that Vega Cornejo

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<sup>87</sup> Julián Chaves Palacios, *Violencia política y conflictividad social en Extremadura: Cáceres en 1936* (Badajoz, 2000), p. 136; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, p. 215.

had sent to Madrid decided to join the rebels as they gathered in Medellín. Realizing the tenuous nature of the discipline of his personnel, Vega Cornejo and the authorities reduced the armament of the Civil Guard and kept the garrisons under watch. Determined to stamp out insubordination wherever it flamed up, Vega Cornejo led a mixed column of civil guards and militiamen on 3 August to force the surrender of a rebel Civil Guard garrison in Frenegal.

Nonetheless, geography was working against Vega Cornejo. As news of the approaching insurgent columns reached Badajoz, rebellious elements within the Army and Civil Guard units leapt into action, taking as a hostage the military commander of the province, Colonel Ildefonso Puigdengolas. Yet, the rebels discovered that they had acted prematurely, and were forced to surrender to local loyalist forces. Their fortunes improved with the arrival of columns of the Army of Africa under Colonel Yagüe, who then captured the city definitively for the Nationalists. In the savage repression that followed, Major Vega Cornejo and his son, José Vega Rodríguez (who was a lieutenant in the Civil Guard and Line Commandant in Badajoz city), were executed.<sup>88</sup>

The key to controlling western Andalucía was Sevilla. The city was not only one of the strongholds of the CNT, but also possessed amongst the most important conspiratorial cells. Sevilla's turbulent history since the proclamation of the Republic made it fertile ground for military plots, as the experience of 1932 had shown. Thus, while the Commander of the 17th Civil Guard Regiment, Colonel Arturo Blanco Horrillo was loyal,

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<sup>88</sup> Francisco Espinosa, *La columna de la muerte: El avance del ejército franquista de Sevilla a Badajoz* (Barcelona, 2003), pp. 24-29, 452n81; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 85-86.

virtually all of his subordinate officers were ready to join the insurgency, including the two Provincial Commanders, Lt. Col. Genaro Conde Bujons (Sevilla-city) and Lt. Col. Manuel Pereita Vela (Sevilla-province). The fact that Colonel Blanco Horrillo had only recently occupied his post only diminished whatever moral authority he could have had over his officers and men. According to the Provincial Governor, José María Varela, who did not enjoy good relations with either provincial commander, Lt. Col. Conde Bujons played a double game to alleviate any suspicion of his true loyalties. He presented himself as a Socialist and fervent supporter of the government – often appearing in the Gobierno Civil in modest civilian clothes to reinforce this impression – but in fact he was a rebel sympathizer. Conde Bujons even attempted to convince the governor of an imminent Communist plot: it was the supposed existence of which was used by the conspirators to justify the need to rebel against the government.<sup>89</sup> Given that both provincial commanders were themselves relatively recent arrivals, the primary links with the military conspiracy were Major Santiago Garrigós Bernabéu and Major Ramón Rodríguez Díaz, the second-in-commands of the two provincial Civil Guard *comandancias*.

The role of the Civil Guard, as in many places, was to occupy the key buildings and neutralize the Assault Guards. As General Quiapo de Llano was arriving in Sevilla to initiate the rebellion on 18 July, Pereita and Conde Bujons repeatedly telephoned Governor Varela to assure him of their loyalty and that of their men, and even sent a token force to the Gobierno Civil to further obscure their true intentions, employing this

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<sup>89</sup> José María Varela Rendueles, *Rebelión en Sevilla. Memorias de su gobernador rebelde* (Sevilla, 1982), p. 77, 113-114.

deception in order to gain time for the conspirators' plans to be put in place. In fact, when Colonel Blanco Horrillo, who was convalescing in hospital after receiving some minor surgery, attempted to resist the rebels and issued orders to his men to protect the provincial government building, Lt. Col. Pereita intercepted these and ensured that they remained without effect while Major Garrigós rallied the men to the rebel cause. In a similar fashion as their colleagues in Asturias, as these forces set out to secure their specific objectives, they shouted "Long Live the Republic" and gave the clenched-fist salute of the Left in order to confuse Assault Guard units of their intentions. They then joined a not insignificant number of rebel soldiers in securing the city for the insurgents.<sup>90</sup>

A mixed column of civil guards and miners was sent against rebel-held Sevilla from neighbouring Huelva, led by the second-in-command of that province's forces, Major Gregorio Haro Lumbreras. The Provincial Commander of Huelva, Lt. Col. Julio Orts Flor had given his word to the conspirators that he would join the rebellion, but like some of his fellow officers, balked at actually taking this step when the insurgency broke out. Instead, he kept his men quartered in their barracks whilst loyalist forces took control of the city, a move that angered his subordinates. As such, those that were sent out to recapture Sevilla for the government passed over to the rebels as soon as they entered the latter city – though not without disguising their intentions as they passed through those sectors still not under the control of the insurgents.

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<sup>90</sup> Francisco Espinosa Maestre, "Sevilla, 1936: Sublevación y represión", in Alfonso Braojos Garrido, Leandro Álvarez Rey and Francisco Espinosa Maestre, *Sevilla 36: Sublevación fascista y represión* (Sevilla, 1990), pp. 179-203; Varela Rendueles, *Rebelión en Sevilla*, pp. 113-115; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, 198-199; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 82-84; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 88-97.

Once Sevilla was comfortably in the hands of the rebels, Quiapo de Llano sent his own force out against Huelva. The defense of the latter city was entrusted to the Lieutenant Colonel of the Carabineros, Alfonso López Vicencio, who attempted to mobilize those forces remaining in Huelva for its defense. The captains and lieutenants of the Civil Guard present in the city refused their assistance and passed over to the rebels, declaring martial law. Lt. Col. Orts Flor attempted to flee, but was captured and sentenced to death at his court martial soon thereafter. In reward for his services, Major Haro was named joint Civil and Military Governor of Huelva by Quiapo de Llano and commenced to carry out a bloody purge of loyalist elements. This repression was deemed to be so harsh that even Francoist authorities in the province would say that Haro “carried out his noble mission with excessive zeal”. In one of history’s ironies, in February 1941, after rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel and being named Provincial Commander of the Civil Guard in León, Haro was shot and killed by one of his subordinates.<sup>91</sup>

The rebels had mixed success in many provinces. In Cádiz, there was little to no civilian support for the military rebels. While the Civil Guard, under the command of Lt. Col. Vicente González García, rallied to their cause, the Assault Guard and Carabineros did not. As such, their position was tenuous until the arrival of reinforcements from Africa allowed them to gain control of the city.<sup>92</sup> In Almería, despite Pozas’ orders to only receive transmissions coming from government sources in Madrid, the Civil Guard kept close tabs on the progress of the uprising, learning of its success in several cities on the

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<sup>91</sup> Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la Cruzada*, III, pp.292-298; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, Madrid, 1984, pp. 199-202; Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, 51-56; Espinosa Maestre, “Sevilla, 1936”, pp. 206-208. The quotation is from Espinosa Maestre, *La columna de la muerte*, p. 255.

<sup>92</sup> Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 124-127; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 350-353.

mainland. On the morning of 19 July Franco's orders to declare martial law and submit to his command came through the transmitter. Lt. Col. Huerta Topete, the senior military officer in the province, then gathered the various officers of the Army, Civil Guard and Carabineros to ascertain their positions. He found that the majority of these desired to join the rebel's cause. Nonetheless, Huerta Topete was cautious, and did not declare martial law until the 20th. The *Jefe de Comandancia* of the Civil Guard, Lt. Col. Gregorio Vázquez Moscardí, who, like González García in Cádiz, was one of the few provincial commanders in Andalucía that joined the rebellion, put his forces at the disposition of the rebels, and ordered that his men from across the province converge on the city of Almería. The rebels appeared to have the upper hand, but with the appearance of loyalist forces and the arrival of the destroyer *Lepanto* the next day, a cautious Huerta Topete decided that his position was untenable and surrendered. Undaunted, a handful of officers and civil guards took refuge in the provincial command with the determination to resist. During the siege of the *casa-cuartel*, the Civil Guard received another telegram from Franco, who ordered Vázquez Moscardí to take command of the province, and to execute Huerta Topete if he resisted. Nonetheless, the besieged Civil Guard garrison surrendered at six o'clock that evening.<sup>93</sup>

In Granada, the seat of the 8th Civil Guard Regiment, there was a division of attitudes. The Regimental Commander, Colonel Ramón González López, along with most of the middle-ranking officers, sympathized with the rebels, whilst the Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Fernando Vidal Pagán maintained an uneasy loyalty to the government that was

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<sup>93</sup> Quirosa-Cheyrouze y Muñoz, *Política y guerra civil en Almería*, pp. 109-120; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 170-174.

dictated more out of a sense of duty rather than conviction.. The Civil Governor, César Torres, ordered Vidal to distribute the rifles stored in the Artillery garrison to the workers. Vidal sent Lieutenant Mariano Pelayo Navarro to the Artillery garrison to collect the arms. When the officers there refused, he joined their cause. The issue of handing over arms was the key point of contention between civil and military authorities, particularly as the latter were biding their time, waiting for the right moment to join the rebellion. Two days went by without action, and General Pozas, now Interior Minister, sent a direct order to Vidal to distribute arms to the workers. Under pressure, Vidal issued the order to his subordinates, who refused to carry it out. As tensions rose amongst the military and civil guard forces, General Campíns declared martial law. Lt. Col. Vidal, now almost completely isolated, was arrested by the insurgents when they occupied the Gobierno Civil. When asked by one of the rebel officers to explain his actions, Vidal responded “I was doing my duty”. Nonetheless, the insurgents were only able to gain control of the city of Granada, unable to exert their influence across the province. As such, they concentrated their forces in the provincial capital until they could be relieved by rebel columns proceeding from Sevilla.<sup>94</sup>

A similar situation occurred in Córdoba. The Commander of the 18th Civil Guard Regiment, Colonel Francisco Marín Garrido, and the Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Mariano Rivero López, remained loyal to the government, though they both had displayed some sympathy for the conspiracy previously. Like Vidal in Granada, the two officers’ sense of discipline overcame their distaste for the Popular Front Government.

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<sup>94</sup> Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la Cruzada*, III, p. 285; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 114-118; Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, V, pp. 346-348.



When the news of the rebellion broke out, Colonel Marín presented himself to the Provincial Governor, stating “I have come here out of duty. The Civil Guard and I personally are at the side of the legitimate government of the Republic. We await your orders to act.” Shortly thereafter, Civil Guard Captain Amador Martín arrived in the provincial capital with the mayor of Peñarroyo, and offered to send several truckloads of miners and dynamite to defend Córdoba from any attempted uprising. Unfortunately for both officers, the governor, Rodríguez de León, was in league with the rebels and disregarded their offers of assistance. Nonetheless, neither officers made any further gestures to prevent the success of the rebellion in Córdoba, in which the provincial second-in-command Major Luis Zurdo Martín and Civil Guard Lt. Col. Bruno Ibáñez Gálvez were willing accomplices.

When Colonel Marín went to meet with Army Colonel Ciriaco Cascajo Ruiz, the leading military officer and conspirator in Córdoba, the Civil Guard commander refused to join the rebels. Colonel Cascajo then relieved him of his command, replacing him with Major Zurdo. Insulted by this affront to his authority, Marín barked at his subordinate, “Major, you are not compelled to follow any other orders than mine. This is indiscipline, and there is no reason for it.” Unmoved, Major Zurdo replied in a manner which reflected many Civil Guard officers when confronted with commanders – including Pozas himself – that refused to see, in their minds, the call of the times: “Colonel, here there is no other discipline than that which our uniforms demands. This is above any political considerations.” Zurdo then gave Marín ten minutes to surrender the Gobierno Civil before it would be shelled by artillery. In control of the government, Zurdo was named

Chief of Public Order in the city, but was later replaced by his much more brutal co-conspirator, Lt. Col. Ibáñez Gálvez, or “Don Bruno” as he infamously came to be known. Nonetheless, the rebels were only secure in their control of the provincial capital and some of its hinterland, and thus were obliged to take defensive positions until reinforcements arrived from Sevilla.<sup>95</sup>

The rebellion in Málaga displayed some similarities to that of Almería. Martial law was declared on the 18th once news arrived of the uprising in Morocco. The rebellion enjoyed widespread support amongst the Civil Guard, with the exception of the Provincial Commander, Lt. Col. Aquilino Porras Rodríguez. Nonetheless, the rebels, with the aid of two Civil Guard units, failed to capture the Gobierno Civil, and with the mobilization of loyalist forces and the threat of naval bombardment, the rebels surrendered. While the timidity of General Paxtot, who was in charge of the rebellion in Málaga, was a factor for its failure, poor planning and implementation also played their parts. As one rebel Civil Guard officer explained in his trial, martial law was declared and the rebellion initiated before the concentration of Civil Guard forces was carried out, a necessary move given the loyalty of the Assault Guards.<sup>96</sup> The role of the Commander of the 16th Civil Guard Regiment, Colonel Fulgencio Gómez Carrión, was ambiguous. Recognizing the validity of the declaration of martial law, Carrión ordered his men out to support the rebels. Yet, upon receiving Pozas’ circular about opposing the military rebels, he sent a telegram to Madrid to ask for clarification, explaining that he had placed

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<sup>95</sup> Francisco Moreno Gómez, *La Guerra Civil en Córdoba, 1936-1939* (Madrid, 1986), pp. 16-27; José Tomás Valverde, *Memorias de un alcalde* (Madrid, 1961), pp. 180, 185; Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la Cruzada*, III, pp. 240-265; Blázquez Miguel, *HMGCE*, I, pp. 140-143.

<sup>96</sup> The declaration of Captain Román Durán is quoted in Juan A. Ramos Hitos, *Guerra Civil en Málaga, 1936-1937* (Málaga, 2003), p. 62.

himself at the orders of the military authorities, as the decree of martial law was issued prior to him receiving orders from Madrid. As the rebellion faltered in Málaga, his professions of loyalty became more profuse after he received a terse response from Pozas. Carrión then returned his men back to their barracks.<sup>97</sup>

This ambiguity spared Colonel Carrión from being immediately dismissed and arrested by the official authorities, but the weakening of Madrid's control over affairs in the immediate wake of the rebellion meant that this was only a temporary respite for the Colonel. Indeed, as anarchist militias exerted their control over Málaga and its province, they murdered a considerable number of Civil Guard officers, Carrión being amongst them. Yet, this example of "red terror" was indiscriminate when it came to dealing with an institution that was long seen as the "enemies of the people" and many of whose members were complicit in the rebellion. As a result, despite his loyalty to the Popular Front government, Lt. Col. Porras Rodríguez, the Provincial Commander of the corps, also fell victim to revolutionary justice. It should be mentioned, though, that counterrevolutionary justice was even more sanguinary, as loyal civil guards suffered even more at the hands of the Nationalists once they captured Málaga in February 1937. According to a list sent later that same month by the newly appointed Jefe de Comandancia, Lt. Col. José Enríquez Ramírez, to the Inspector-General of the Civil Guard in the Nationalist Zone, 56 loyalist civil guards were executed, 37 sentenced to life

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<sup>97</sup> Ramos Hitos, pp. 59-62, 79-123; Antonio Nadal, *Guerra Civil en Málaga* (Málaga, 1984), pp. 28-38; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, pp. 212-213.

imprisonment, two to a prison sentence of 12 years and a day, and another received six years.<sup>98</sup>

The province of Jaén lacked a proper military presence, and as such, the hopes of the conspirators lay in the support of the Civil Guard for the planned rebellion. The Provincial Commander was Lt. Col. Pablo Iglesias Sánchez Martínez, a practicing Catholic with conservative views. His immediate subordinates were Major Eduardo Nofuentes Montero and Major Ismael Serrano. All three officers were involved in the failed military coup of 1932, and consequently were hesitant about getting their fingers burned a second time. Thus, when pro-rebel civilian groups converged on the Provincial Command looking for arms, despite the considerable sympathy for the insurgency amongst the middle-ranking officers, Lt. Col. Iglesias refused to distribute any weapons, claiming that the rebellion was premature, and hence doomed to fail. Iglesias' decision hampered all preparations for a rebellion, while at the same time the considerable working class organizations began to mobilize for the defense of the government. This situation did not sit well with the majority of the officers and men of the provincial garrison. Friction between the Popular Front committees and civil guards was frequent, only increasing disaffection. As elsewhere, as men were sent to fight the advancing rebels or to recapture towns under their control, they took advantage of the first opportunity to cross over to the insurgents. One such group in Andújar, under the command of Captain Santiago Cortés, after coming under continued pressure to distribute

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<sup>98</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, pp. 392-393. It should be noted that these men would no longer have been officially civil guards as the corps had been abolished six months beforehand, though this has little bearing on the sheer numbers of those former civil guards punished for their service to the Popular Front government.

arms to the workers, gathered provisions and arms and installed themselves in the Santuario de Nuestra Señora de la Cabeza, where they soon found themselves besieged by militiamen and loyalist forces. This siege was the longest of all those suffered by insurgent forces, lasting nine months, but ended in surrender after Condés was mortally wounded.<sup>99</sup>

While defections amongst the Civil Guard were frequent, they should have come to little surprise. News of yet another contingent of civil guards passing over to the rebels often provoked anger amongst the militias, anti-fascist committees and the authorities in Madrid. Yet it would be somewhat ingenuous to interpret the suspicion directed towards the *Benemérita* was due simply to their occurrence. Indeed, civil guards had been seen even before July 1936 and an anachronism within the Republic by many leftist sectors; in the revolutionary atmosphere that followed the military rebellion, this was even more the case.

Nonetheless, in the common struggle against the insurgents, differences needed to be set aside. The breakdown of the state apparatus in the wake of the military rebellion brought loyal civil guards and militiamen together into makeshift coalitions in order to achieve their common objective of defending the Republic. The journalist Ramón J. Sender – a

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<sup>99</sup> For a personal, though exaggerated, account of the events surrounding the siege by one of the Civil Guard officers, see Captain Reparaz and Antonio Tresgallo de Sousa, Antonio, *Desde el Cuartel General de Miaja al Santuario de la Virgen de la Cabeza: 30 días días con los rojo-separatistas, sirviendo a España. Relato de un protagonista* (Valladolid, 1937). Francisco Cobo Romero, *La Guerra Civil y la repression franquista en la provincia de Jaén, 1936-1950* (Jaén, 1993), pp. 9-55; Luis Miguel Sánchez Tostado, *La Guerra Civil en Jaén* (Jaén, 2006), pp. 59-78, 108-112; Salas Larrazábal, *Historia del Ejército Popular*, I, pp. 96, 283, 1070-1071. The importance of this event for the Civil Guard can be seen in the extraordinary amount of space given to it in the semioficial *Historia de la Guardia Civil*. More pages are dedicated to the siege of the Santuario than any other single incident in the corps' history: Aguado Sánchez, *Historia de la Guardia Civil*, VI, pp. 26-108.

fierce critic of the Civil Guard himself – noted one incident he witnessed alongside the militias in the Guadarrama: “A youth, a newspaper seller, said to me, pointing to a sergeant of the Civil Guard.

‘That man broke my father’s arm when he was beating him in October, 1934.’

‘And now you are going to fight by his side?’

“He looked at me in astonishment:

‘If we all think of liquidating our personal wrongs at a time like this, we are done for.’<sup>100</sup>

The sight of Civil Guards fighting alongside loyalist elements in defense of the regime was also seen as a sign of imminent victory, if not the righteousness of the government’s cause. As Manuel Cruells, a university student in Barcelona and a Catalan nationalist, exclaimed when he saw Colonel Escobar salute Companys and put his men under the orders of the Generalitat,

It was unforgettable. Anyone who hasn’t lived that moment can’t imagine what it was like. The apotheosis of 19 July: the *guardia civil* on the people’s side! We knew we must win now...<sup>101</sup>

The revolutionary atmosphere in places such as Barcelona could, at times, have its effect even on the men of the Civil Guard. As one mill-owner’s wife describes a scene that symbolized the very essence of this process:

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<sup>100</sup> Ramón J. Sender, *The War in Spain: A Personal Narrative* (London, 1937), p. 38

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 68

When I saw a *guardia* sitting in a car in the Plaza de Catalunya, his tunic unbuttoned, his tricorne pushed to the back of his head and smoking a cigar, I knew there was no law and order any more, knew that the *guardia civil* had become infected by the populace.<sup>102</sup>

Loyalist Civil Guard units often played as crucial a role in the defense of the government as their disloyal colleagues did in the success of the insurgents. While many Civil Guards crossed over to the rebels once reaching the front line, there were those who continued to loyally serve the Popular Front government and played important roles as military instructors for the largely untrained militiamen. Captains Fernando Condés Romero, Francisco Galán, Juan Ibarrola Orueta and Lieutenant Colonel Royo Salsamendi all led mixed units of civil guards, soldiers and militiamen in the sierras surrounding Madrid, halting the advance of Mola's Army of the North. The Civil Guard's presence in the front lines translated into high casualty rates. In the first three months of fighting on the Madrid front, official sources report 3125 civil guards were killed in action.<sup>103</sup> The Francoist military historian, Ramón Salas Larrazábal gives a total figure of 6579 casualties on the Madrid front alone, the highest rate amongst the regular forces fighting in this zone after the Infantry.<sup>104</sup>

The formation of mixed columns of civil guards and workers was indeed an exceptional occurrence. This was especially true when the militiamen were anarcho-syndicalists. On the Aragón front, the anarchist militia leader Saturnino Carod dubbed his unit the Carod-

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 110.

<sup>103</sup> López Corral, "La Guardia Civil en Madrid", p. 268, 269n10.

<sup>104</sup> Salas Larrazábal, *Historia del Ejército Popular*, I, pp. 560-562n50.

Ferrer column in recognition of the services of Lieutenant José Ferrer Bonet, who served as his military adviser. The presence of Lt. Ferrer and his 80 civil guards was not digested easily by Carod's fellow anarchists, particularly once he began to militarize the unit in an effort to increase its efficiency. This produced a flood of desertions, but Carod stood firm. He explained:

It was understandable. For many years I had spoken to the peasants of Aragon not only about their problems ... but of ideas. Opposition to capitalism, the state, the church, the military. They drank in these ideas; and now, when the revolution was happening, they couldn't understand when I spoke of the need for militarization, of the need to respect republican institutions and political parties, the need to organize new town councils, new organs of authority. They simply left the column. But in their home villages great pressure was put on them to return. Many came back. I addressed them: 'You can rejoin the column, but first you will have to do a fortnight's training. And your instructors will be the *guardia civil*.' Imagine telling a CNT militant he had to accept orders from a *guardia*! But I wasn't going to back down. 'In accepting, you will be demonstrating your willingness to become good combatants.' They accepted the training...<sup>105</sup>

Yet differences in ideologies and mutual suspicions that had been engrained over the years were sometimes insuperable. Militia committees pressured the government to purge the ranks of those civil guards serving on the front, one of these being Royo

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<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p. 133. Captain Ferrer Bonet was previously stationed in Tarragona before being sent northwards towards Zaragoza: Salas Larrazábal, *Historia del Ejército Popular*, I, p. 997.



Salsamendi. Lt. Col. Royo Salsamendi fell foul of his erstwhile militia allies when he attempted to impose discipline in those units under his command. When civil guards in his unit began to defect en masse to the advancing rebel columns, militia leaders attributed this to a lack of loyalty on the part of Royo Salsamendi. As such, he was imprisoned and his reward for loyal service to the Popular Front government was to be murdered by anarchist militiamen.<sup>106</sup> Loyalty to the Popular Front was no guarantee of safety, for in the turbulent and uncertain atmosphere in the Republican Zone during the first phase of the Civil War, suspicion and blame found easy targets in the supposed “enemies of the people”. This could take a particularly sinister form, as with the murder of fifty-one civil guards imprisoned in the “cheka” of the *Spartacus* anarchist column in November 1936.<sup>107</sup> Incidents such as these only provoked more defections. Julián Zugazagoitia, a Socialist and Interior Minister from May 1937 to April 1938, tells the story of a loyal Civil Guard sergeant who eventually passed over to the Nationalists. Before doing so, this sergeant prepared a letter to his commanding officer to explain his actions. In this he wrote that, despite his loyal service to the government and his own republicanism, he found the disdain and distrust to which he was constantly subjected too much to bear. Zugazagoitia noted that this was not an isolated case.<sup>108</sup>

The situation provoked by the military rebellion and subsequent civil war ultimately brought the end of the Civil Guard in the Republican Zone. The abolition of the corps, desired by many on the Left back in 1931, was now not only possible, but a necessity

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<sup>106</sup> López Corral, “La Guardia Civil en Madrid”, pp. 267-268.

<sup>107</sup> Cervero, *Los rojos de la Guardia Civil*, Chapter 5; López Corral, “La Guardia Civil en Madrid”, pp. 279-283.

<sup>108</sup> Julián Zugazagoitia, *Guerra y vicisitudes de los españoles* (Barcelona, 2001), 131.

giving the reigning atmosphere and the need for the government to adjust to it in order to re-establish the authority of the central state. Thus, on 30 August 1936, the Civil Guard was dissolved and renamed as the National Republican Guard (*Guardia Nacional Republicana*, GNR), and thus started a process of politicization not unlike that carried out by the Nationalists (and later under the Franco dictatorship).<sup>109</sup> While a reduced core of civil guards went on to serve in the GNR, for all intensive purposes, the force established by the Duque de Ahumada had disappeared in Loyalist-controlled Spain, thus bringing to an end the tense relationship between the Republicans and the Civil Guard.

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<sup>109</sup> For a discussion of the GNR, and its heavy politicization, see López Corral, “La Guardia Civil en Madrid”, pp. 270-279, 283-286; Cervero, *Los rojas de la Guardia Civil*, Chapter 8.

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