The London School of Economics and Political Science

Wartime destruction and post-war urban reconstruction:
case studies of Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid in the
Spanish Civil War and its aftermath

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To my parents, Katinka and Rafael,
my brother Ivar and José Luis.

Abstract

There are few investigations that consider both the practical and symbolic dimensions of wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction of cities, and almost none that do so for the particular case of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship. This thesis examines the wartime destruction and post-war rebuilding of three prominent sites in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the first two decades of the Franco regime (1939-1959) from an interdisciplinary perspective at the intersection of history, social and political theory, urban planning, and architecture. The thesis is based on extensive archival material, and includes primary textual sources (military reports, administrative documentation, and official publications), secondary textual sources (press material, political, academic and technical literature, and fiction), and primary visual sources (maps, plans, architectural drawings, and aerial photographs of the sites).

The thesis introduces the selected sites as exemplary of three propositions on the relationship between history, political discourse, and the built environment during and in the aftermath of conflict and violent regime change. While Barcelona's Avinguda de la Catedral demonstrates that wartime destruction can act as a catalyst for urban redevelopment, Bilbao's bridges exemplify the way that post-war reconstruction can be used to mark a change of political regime, and the ruins of Madrid's Cuartel de la Montaña reveal how post-war regimes tend to design ambitious reconstruction plans, which they are not necessarily able to implement. By considering the historical, military, political-administrative, and aesthetic aspects of the destruction and rebuilding of these sites, the thesis proposes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of urban destruction and reconstruction.

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Introduction

"The National Reconstruction Plan involves nothing more and nothing less than providing our homeland with a perfectly functioning corporeal organisation, alive and beautiful, where the spirit of the former is allowed to bear fruit, gloriously fulfilling its universal mission."[1]

(Servicios Técnicos de FET y de las JONS, 1939)

This thesis examines the wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction of three prominent sites in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the first two decades of Franco's dictatorship (1939-1959) from an interdisciplinary perspective at the intersection of history, social and political theory, urban planning and architecture. The thesis introduces the selected sites—Avinguda de la Catedral, Bilbao's bridges and the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña—as exemplary of three propositions on the relationship between history, political discourse and the built environment during and in the aftermath of conflict and violent regime change. While Barcelona's Avinguda de la Catedral demonstrates that wartime destruction can act as a catalyst for urban redevelopment, Bilbao's bridges exemplify the way that post-war reconstruction can be used to mark a change of political regime, and the ruins of Madrid's Cuartel de la Montaña reveal how post-war regimes tend to design ambitious reconstruction plans, which they are not necessarily able to implement. The thesis aims to contribute to the analysis of the practical and symbolic dimensions of the processes of violent physical destruction and rebuilding of cities, and to a better understanding of the two processes in the specific context of the Spanish Civil War and post-war period. Further, it seeks to demonstrate the theoretical advantage of studying the two processes together and, more generally, the usefulness of approaching historical events and the accompanying political discourses by examining the built environment.

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[1] "El Plan de Reconstrucción Nacional se refiere, ni más ni menos, que a dotar a la Patria española de una organización corpórea de perfecto funcionamiento, viva y bella, donde su espíritu fructifique y cumpla gloriosamente su misión universal." Sección de Arquitectura Servicios Técnicos de F. E. T. y de las J. O. N. S., "Ideas Generales Sobre El Plan Nacional De Ordenación Y Reconstrucción," (Madrid: Servicios Técnicos de F. E. T. y de las J. O. N. S., Sección de Arquitectura, 1939).

Wars have played a key role in the history of cities and the transformations of their built environment. Both wars themselves and the recovery from them constitute intense political, social and economic processes. In ancient times, cities often originated in defensive constructions such as forts and citadels. As war techniques progressed, cities transformed themselves according to the requirements that the new techniques demanded. The advent of aerial warfare techniques in the early twentieth century turned wartime destruction into a trigger of urban reform. If cities used to shape themselves for war, many cities have since been shaped by war.

The massive destruction and extensive reconstruction of cities during and after the last global confrontation, the Second World War, suggests that the two processes are characterised by certain recurrent patterns, problems, challenges and accomplishments, even though each city reveals a unique process of destruction and reconstruction. For example, destruction in modern times has tended to be concentrated in port areas and city centres. The London docks during the Blitz is a good example. Ports are of course strategic targets. Their destruction can be justified militarily, but that of the residential areas adjacent to them cannot, and yet they have often ended in ruins. The destruction of the latter has been the result of not only the early bombers' lack of precision, but also the deliberate aim of terrorising the civilian population from the air. Furthermore, city centres are often targeted, regardless of their historic value. Because of the density of buildings and people and the particular quality of their construction materials, city centres soon proved easy preys to the flames caused by incendiary bombs, which were used extensively for the first time during the Second World War. Other recurrent patterns that can be identified in the wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction of cities are the efficiency of wartime emergency reconstruction efforts compared with reconstruction proper. The latter is often prolonged because of lack of state funding and the unremitting housing shortages caused by the continuous arrival of an uprooted rural population in the aftermath of war. Moreover, post-war urban reconstruction is also often marked by the survival of pre-war social ties, institutional arrangements and economic power structures, which can both complicate and facilitate the rebuilding process.

Urban destruction and reconstruction during the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime share many of the above features, while offering unique characteristics that stem

from Spain's divergent path in the context of twentieth-century Europe. Such commonalities and divergences appear intertwined. For example, while the Spanish Civil War is one of the few instances of a civil confrontation based on modern ideological grounds, it is often presented as a prelude to the Second World War and the international collision of Fascism, Liberalism and Socialism. The ideological nature of the conflict also had an impact on how destruction and rebuilding took place. Although a civil war, the early intervention of Germany and Italy in support of the military rebels quickly involved the international community in the conflict. Aside from the foreign soldiers who assisted the rebel side, thousands of international volunteers participated on the Republican side, contributing to casting the conflict under the romantic aura of revolutionary freedom fighting, which largely persists in the global imagination today. As a result of the German and Italian intervention, unprecedented destruction was caused to Spanish towns and cities. New aerial warfare techniques were deployed by the German and Italian air forces, and the Luftwaffe, especially, was successful in applying the lessons learnt in the Spanish Civil War during the Second World War. Unlike Italy and Germany, which saw their fascist states defeated in the war, the victors of the Spanish Civil War turned Spain into a military dictatorship, which initially presented itself to the world as a fascist regime with totalitarian aspirations. At this juncture, General Franco, the *Caudillo*, was given the unparalleled opportunity of rebuilding the country almost from scratch mirroring the values that the rebels had fought to reinstate: unity, discipline, honour, hierarchy. Such values became the ideological pillars of the new regime. However, the material scarcity of post-war Spain and Franco's pragmatic, if not opportunistic, running of state politics resulted in a relatively modest use of this exceptional situation.

As historically competing political, cultural and economic nuclei, Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid form a geographical triangle and a potentially forceful political and cultural trilogy. The three cities resisted the military uprising and suffered destruction during the Spanish Civil War. And more importantly for the purposes of this thesis, in all three cities it is possible to identify prominent urban sites that underwent significant transformations as a direct result of the conflict. As intimated earlier, each of the three sites identified in this thesis is used to illustrate one of the three propositions that were introduced at the beginning.

The first proposition, which implied that wartime destruction can act as a catalyst for urban redevelopment, is exemplified by the evolution of the area in front of Barcelona's old Cathedral. The area was repeatedly bombed by the rebel air force throughout the Civil War, but especially in 1938. After the war, a whole neighbourhood was demolished and the area was turned into an avenue, according to plans that existed before the outbreak of the conflict. Attempting to turn destruction, not only wartime destruction, into an opportunity for urban redesign is something cities have done repeatedly throughout history, but perhaps more consciously in modern times. Other, notorious examples are Lisbon following the 1755 earthquake, Chicago after the great fire in 1871 and Rotterdam in the aftermath of the Second World War.[2]

The second proposition suggested that post-war reconstruction can be used visibly and symbolically to mark a change of political regime. This proposition is illustrated by the case of Bilbao's reconstructed bridges. During the Civil War, the Basque–Republican troops blew up Bilbao's bridges—eight in total—before they left the city in June 1937. The bridges that the new rebel authorities rebuilt offered a very different appearance from their predecessors, and such a difference was emphasised by the discourses that accompanied the inauguration ceremonies of the bridges. Another example of explicit political marking of the built environment is the post-war reconstruction of a divided Berlin, where buildings such as the television tower in East Berlin were intended as representations of the power of Communist Germany, while projects such as the Kulturforum in West Berlin were created as representations of Western pluralism.

Finally, the third proposition claimed that post-war regimes tend to conceive of novel or ambitious reconstruction plans, but are not necessarily able to live up to them. Because of economic, political legal and/or ideological constraints, in most cases, the post-war physical rebuilding of cities constitutes a fairly painful, piecemeal process, which produces more continuity with than change from the pre-war city. The case of the ruins of the military barracks that stood on the Montaña del Príncipe Pío in western Madrid are illustrative of this. The barracks were completely ruined during the Civil War. After the war followed several prominent, official projects, initially as part of the plans for a

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[2] See Joan (ed.) Ockman, ed., *Out of Ground Zero : Case Studies in Urban Reinvention* (Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University; Munich; New York N.Y.: Prestel, 2002).

neo-imperial capital city. None of them was ever accomplished, and since 1972 the site has contained a park and an ancient Egyptian temple. The ambition to redesign post-war cities completely existed in many European urban planners' projects in the aftermath of the Second World War, yet relatively few of their aspirations materialised because of the above-mentioned constraints. What is interesting perhaps in the case of post-war Europe is that even in cities where destruction had not been as critical, planners shared the aspiration to build something new, which suggests that material devastation might not be the only reason for post-war planners' dreams of urban renewal.

The first proposition involves a pragmatic attitude towards reconstruction—making the best out of destruction—whereas the latter two entail idealist approaches based on the attempt to use reconstruction for ideological purposes. In the first case, destruction is turned into an advantage for carrying out plans that existed prior to destruction, whereas in the other two it is reconstruction that is seen as an opportunity for planning a new city. The third proposition implies that the attempt to plan everything from scratch according to new ideas does not necessarily work, while the proposition that reconstruction can be used to mark a change of regime and ideology suggests almost the opposite.

This apparent contradiction can be seen as the result of the tension between the continuities and discontinuities that seem to characterise the post-war recovery of cities. For the purposes of this thesis, the Spanish Civil War is considered a fundamental disruption or discontinuity, which allows for a line to be drawn between the pre-war and post-war situation of Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid. However, once such a line is drawn, it is possible to distinguish between additional continuities and discontinuities that operate on at least three levels: historical, practical and ideological. It seems pertinent to speak in terms of historical continuities and discontinuities when referring to events that date back beyond Spain's immediately and politically relevant recent past at the time. Examples are the continuous relevance of water in the history of the area in front of the Cathedral in Barcelona; or the repeated destruction and reconstruction of the bridges of Bilbao over the centuries as a result of floods and wars; but also the discontinuity that the removal of Barcelona's city-wall and Bilbao's annexation of adjacent lands in the nineteenth century entailed for these two cities' development. Practical continuities and discontinuities are related to the country's most immediate

past, including the permanence and/or rejection of pre-war plans, pre-war administrative staff, practices and contractors in the reconstruction processes. Finally, it is argued, ideological continuities and discontinuities become apparent when a post-war regime deliberately uses reconstruction as a means of asserting itself. The discourses around reconstruction, the actual projects and the appearance of the finished sites often involve—as they do in the three sites examined in this thesis—an emphasis on breaking with the most recent past, the Second Republic, while seeking continuities with the moral and aesthetic values of earlier historical periods, most notably in this case, sixteenth-century Spain.

At a time of heated debates on the historic memory of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship—including the question on what to do with the monumental legacy of the latter—it is important to note that, although the enormous relevance of these contemporary debates cannot be ignored, this thesis strives to examine the decisions and discourses that produced Spanish post-war planning and architecture from the point of view of the time period under consideration, and within the context of European post-war reconstruction more generally.[3] In the current political situation, in which reminiscences of the political animosity that detonated the Civil War can be detected, more historicised investigations of Spain's recent past seem necessary as a way of fostering a more informed and substantive intellectual debate on the conjunction of events, decisions and motivations that led the Spanish population to a fratricidal confrontation in the 1930s and the victorious side to replace a democratic system with a dictatorial regime which lasted for almost four decades. In particular, the study of less researched and apparently less controversial aspects of the conflict and Franco's

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[3] On the 26th of December 2007 the *Ley por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura* (Law according to which rights are acknowledged and extended and measures established in favour of those who suffered persecution or violence during the civil war and the dictatorship)—commonly referred to as *Ley de la Memoria Histórica* (Law of Historic Memory)—was passed in the Spanish Parliament. Of the different actions envisioned by the Law, the regulation of the disinterment of bodily remains buried in mass graves probably receives the most attention. However, the Law also contemplates the removal of symbols and public monuments that exalt the military uprising, the Civil War and the repression of the dictatorship, except when they are of artistic or architectural value. Spanish town and city councils are now obliged to remove those symbols and monuments that have not been listed and ensure that private owners do the same in their properties. It is suggested that the attempt to reconcile a radical proposition according to which nothing ought to remind the population of the Civil War and the dictatorship in a celebratory tone with a simultaneous appeal to moderation on the grounds of aesthetic values—thus arguing for maintaining that which is beautiful and/or well designed regardless of whether it celebrates the Civil War and the dictatorship—highlights the difficulty of finding a universal and consistent legal solution to the legacy of the Franco regime more than three decades after the dictator's death and Spain's transition to democracy.

dictatorship such as the destruction and reconstruction of Spanish cities may contribute to a more complex understanding of the country's recent past and the challenges of its present political culture.

Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter 1 critically reviews some of the available literature on wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction of cities, and seeks to identify some general insights into the two processes that help frame the Spanish case. The chapter begins by briefly examining the historical role of wars for cities with a particular emphasis on the arrival of aerial warfare in the early twentieth century and its impact on urban formations. The chapter then goes on to discuss terrorism and the war on terror as the most recent form of warfare. The terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 prompted new research on urban conflict and conflict resolution, highlighting the centrality and vulnerability of cities in the post-Cold War order. Prior to the World Trade Center attacks, the conflict in the Balkans produced the concept of *urbicide* to describe the deliberate and systematic destruction of the urban, here understood as the freedom and cultural heterogeneity that often characterise cities—a phenomenon that predates the Balkan War.

The section on reconstruction commences by discerning different phases or stages of reconstruction and their characteristics, and then goes on to discuss specific cases of post-war reconstruction. Because of the geographical context and the time period studied here, it is the main findings of scholars who have analysed the reconstruction processes in Europe after the Second World War that are considered. As suggested earlier, funding difficulties, prolonged housing shortages, but also continuity in planning and building design were some of the issues that post-war European cities, including Spanish cities, experienced. Following this, some of the scholarship that examines more contemporary cases of reconstruction, for example in the Middle East, is discussed. New challenges are involved in these processes that have to do with the influence of the colonial legacy and the prominent participation of international organisations in these countries' reconstruction processes. The chapter concludes by considering three basic modes of reconstruction—restoring, replacing and leaving in ruins—and the theoretical and practical implications of each of them.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the methodological aspects of this research. The reason for choosing archival research to approach the empirical cases that underpin this thesis is explained, and some details on the selection, systematisation and analysis of the archival material are addressed. The chapter also discusses some of the challenges involved in each stage of the processes of information collection and analysis, particularly the author's different experiences of the archives in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid in terms of availability of and accessibility to the materials. There is also a brief clarification on how certain key terminology is used throughout the text.

Chapter 3 seeks to situate the three empirical cases in the historical context of wartime and post-war Spain. While Chapter 1 seeks to put forward a wider theoretical and geographical framework within which to situate the three cases, Chapter 3 aims to delve into some of the particularities that characterised the Spanish experience of wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction, especially of its cities. The chapter commences with a general explanation of the outbreak of the war, after which it concentrates on the roles of Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid in the conflict, and their experiences, which arguably affected their situation under the dictatorial regime that followed. The Republican and rebel sides' emergency reconstruction efforts across Spain are briefly described. When the war finished and the victorious rebel military established itself in power under General Franco's leadership, these emergency measures turned into reconstruction projects proper. The institutions that were created for this task as well as their priorities, values and aesthetics are explored as a way of further illuminating the specific situations of post-war Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid, including the three selected sites.

All three empirical chapters are divided into two main parts, the first focusing on the pre-war history of the site and its destruction and the second on its reconstruction. In the first empirical chapter, Chapter 4, the opening of Avenida de la Catedral in front of the Cathedral in Barcelona in the aftermath of the Civil War is introduced as representative of the idea that wartime destruction can act as a catalyst for urban redevelopment. The plans for the opening existed since the mid-nineteenth century, but the densely built historic fabric of this area worked against their implementation. When the Civil War left in ruins several of the buildings whose demolition the plans anticipated, the new city council did not hesitate to seize the opportunity, and finally opened the avenue. In

this case, wartime destruction was seen less as an opportunity for realising new plans, and more as an occasion for carrying out previous, unaccomplished plans.

The first part of the chapter introduces the various pre-war plans for the opening of the avenue and the public's responses to them. Following this, the destructive impact on the city of the bombings during the Civil War—particularly on the area in front of the Cathedral—is described. Barcelona's wartime emergency measures, essentially the construction of air-raid shelters, are also portrayed. The second part of the chapter summarises the events immediately after the end of the conflict and explains the somewhat intricate funding procedures followed by the new city council to address the various reconstruction projects, including the demolition of the damaged area in front of the Cathedral and the opening of Avenida de la Catedral. Next, the sequence of projects that gradually led to the opening are analysed. Furthermore, the public's various responses to these significant transformations at the heart of the old city—bearing in mind the limitations on the freedom of speech under Franco's dictatorship—are discussed in some detail.

Chapter 5 examines the reconstruction of the destroyed bridges in Bilbao as illustrative of the idea that reconstruction can be used to mark a change of political regime. Not only were the four reconstructed fixed bridges aesthetically different from their predecessors, and arguably representative of the values of the New Spain, but the official rhetoric inspiring their reconstruction and inauguration ceremonies seemed to reinforce the aim of visually and symbolically marking the advent of an extraordinary change in the course of Spain's history. Furthermore, the destruction and reconstruction of the two drawbridges Deusto and Begoña, which were not fully finished when they were blown up, arguably challenged the boundaries between reconstruction and new construction, allowing the new Bilbaoan authorities to subtly confuse the two, and take almost full credit for the design and building of the drawbridges.

The first part of the chapter considers the pre-war history of Bilbao's bridges, especially their changing function from infrastructures with the sole aim of securing communication between the two riverbanks to key sections of the new axial thoroughfares that gradually structured modern Bilbao. As an industrial port city, Bilbao came to play a strategic role during the Civil War, and the half-accomplished

drawbridges also came to play theirs, partly as improvised military infrastructures. TheBasque–Republican troops' decision to dynamite all the bridges before leaving the city on the 19th of June 1937 is subsequently examined and contrasted with the rebels' accounts of the "Red barbarism" that, according to them, was the only motivation behind the extensive damage inflicted on the city. The second part of the chapter looks into the design and funding of the reconstructed four fixed bridges and the two drawbridges, thereby emphasising the different challenges encountered in the rebuilding processes of these two groups of bridge infrastructures. The official discourses accompanying the reconstruction processes and the final opening ceremonies are examined subsequently.

Finally, Chapter 6 introduces the Franco regime's early plans for a neo-imperial capital city, including the transformation of the ruins of Madrid's Cuartel de la Montaña into one of the city's three most representative buildings—Falange's (the state party's) headquarters—as expressing the idea that post-war regimes often start out with grand reconstruction plans, which they gradually have to abandon because of structural and/or circumstantial impediments. In the case of Madrid, it will be argued, ideological and political reasons carried weight—particularly Franco's relatively early distancing of himself from Fascist and Nazi ideals—but more than these, the severe material scarcity that affected Spain as it emerged from the Civil War accounts for the regime's difficulty in maintaining its initial plans for the capital city.

The first part of the chapter examines the pre-war history of the Montaña del Príncipe Pío, which witnessed the outbreak of the Spanish War of Independence in the early nineteenth century, and later the construction of the military barracks known as Cuartel de la Montaña, which was completed in 1863. The Cuartel de la Montaña, in turn, became the scenario of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in Madrid when Republican militias stormed the barracks where the rebel mutineers had gathered in July 1936. The impact of the Spanish Civil War on the capital city is subsequently analysed together with the various emergency and planning efforts that the Republican authorities undertook during the war. This allows for a comparison of the Republican wartime urban plans with the Franco regime's post-war plans for the capital city in the second section of the chapter. This section commences by reviewing the latter in light also of European planning at the time. The architectural style and aesthetic ideals

proposed by Falange in the early post-war period are examined next, followed by a discussion of the reasons for the regime's gradual abandonment of these ideals, and the replacement, more generally, of the concept of state planning for a pragmatic approach. This incorporated private capital, and resulted in a fragmented rebuilding process and a fairly unsystematic expansion of the city. The fate of the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña between 1939 and 1972 dramatically illustrates the evolution of the regime's planning and architectural activities in and discourses about the capital city. The different uses made of, and projects for, the site are discussed bearing in mind the significance that the ruins purportedly had within the regime's imagination as a contradictory symbol of Falangist heroism and downfall.

The Conclusion summarises the main findings of the discussion conducted in the preceding chapters. It aims to synthesise both the general features and the distinctiveness of the processes of wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction in the context of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath against the backdrop of the two initial arguments: first, the advantage of studying these two processes together; second, and more generally, the additional insights that an examination of the actual and planned transformations of the built environment might generate for a fuller understanding of a particular historical period and its political discourses.

Chapter 1

Wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction in perspective

1. Introduction

There exist few comparative studies of historically and geographically diverse experiences of wartime destruction and post-war rebuilding as both independent and interrelated processes. Moreover, there is no comprehensive general theory available on wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction akin to the theories that scholars have on social revolutions and political transitions, for example.[4] Different aspects of the two phenomena have been analysed and debated by scholars in various disciplines within the social sciences and the humanities, but the interest in studying the two processes systematically is relatively recent. This might be why case studies have been more predominant than the attempt to compare different situations and create wide-ranging theoretical frameworks.[5] Further, it is worth recalling that there has generally been less interest among scholars in producing grand theories and universal models in the past two decades.

This thesis considers specifically the destruction and rebuilding of the physical environment of cities from both a practical and a symbolic perspective. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to review critically some of the literature that addresses aspects of these two processes, attempting to put forward some general insights into how and why cities are and have been destroyed in the context of war, and how they are reconstructed. The first part of the chapter examines the historical role of wars for cities, the dramatic shift that the advent of aerial technology in the early twentieth century entailed for the urban experience of war, and the implications of more recent forms of wartime destruction threatening cities—essentially large-scale terrorist attacks.

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[4] The author has in mind, for example, Charles Tilly's comparative analysis of social revolutions and Juan Linz's analysis of transitions to democracy.

5 Yet there appears to exist a growing interest in Britain in creating a broader theoretical framework through initiatives such as Eric Hobsbawm's project "Reconstruction in the immediate aftermath of war: a comparative study of Europe, 1945-50", awarded the 2003 International Balzan Prize, and developed in the Department of History at Birkbeck College, 2004-2007. There is also the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit, which Prof. Sultan Barakat created in the Department of Politics at the University of York in 1992. The Unit has its own Master's and PhD programmes. Finally, there is the Cambridge University Post-Crisis and Post-Conflict Group, which was founded by graduate students in 2005 and was recently awarded a grant by the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH).

The second part discusses different experiences of urban post-war reconstruction especially after the Second World War. Because of the location and the time period under consideration in this thesis, more time is spent on reviewing the experiences of post-war Europe. Studies of more recent cases of post-war urban recovery, such as that of Beirut and other Middle Eastern cities, are proliferating, and will be discussed briefly. It is suggested that although many of the findings provided by these more recent cases show numerous similarities with the European post-war scenarios, they also involve new challenges, which have to do with these countries having to contend with colonial pasts and the extensive participation of the international community—often via international organisations such as the United Nations—in their reconstruction efforts.

The final section of the chapter considers different ways of reconstructing—restoring, replacing and leaving in ruins—and succinctly explores the theoretical grounding that underpins each process, while offering some examples. The conclusion offers a summary of the main points discussed throughout the chapter.

1.1 Destruction

1.1.1 War and the city

The role of wars in the history of cities has been reflected on by renowned social theorists such as Max Weber, Lewis Mumford and Walter Benjamin. Weber refers to the role of the castle as a political and military projection in medieval and early modern cities. The counterpart of the castle, the marketplace, which symbolised peaceful commerce, was also often used to assemble troops. Weber seems to imply that war constituted a latent presence that could hardly be ignored by medieval urban dwellers even in times of peace.[6] Castles, city-walls, military towers and esplanades for troops to gather comprised essential urban structures. In *The Culture of Cities*, Lewis Mumford discusses the role of war as the driving force for early-modern urban transformations:

> "The intensive development of the art of fortification shifted the emphasis in building from architecture to engineering, from esthetic [sic] design to material calculations of weight, number and position: prelude to the wider techniques of the machine. But especially it altered the urban picture from the short-range

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[6] Max Weber, *La Ciudad* (Madrid: Las Ediciones de la Piqueta, 1987).

world of the medieval city, with its walking distances, its closed vistas, its patchwork space, to the long-range world of baroque politics, with its long-distance gunfire and its wheeled vehicles and its increasing desire to conquer space and make itself felt at a distance."[7]

As the means to wage wars evolved, traditional military structures such as city-walls, moats and towers gradually became obsolete. Furthermore, with the industrial revolution a new "enemy", the working class, appeared. For capitalists and most governments, the working class constituted a perennial menace to public order. Baron Haussmann's re-design of Paris is often presented as the paradigmatic example of how national authorities responded to these changes. The new, broad avenues and streets, which replaced the old city's dense, medieval street grid not only symbolised state power, but made it easier for troops and security forces to circulate and more difficult for rebellious masses to congregate or set up barricades. Yet, as Richard Sennett suggests, while repressing "the movements of the urban masses", the new avenues consciously privileged "the motions of individuals"[8]. *Flâneurs* and shoppers were hardly seen as a threat in the emergent consumer-capitalist society.

The arrival of aerial warfare techniques in the early part of the twentieth century exposed the city in an unprecedented way. Defensive structures above the ground were less useful now as they could be easily destroyed from the air. An exception would be the flak towers that Hitler had construct in German cities after 1940. But in most cities, both military and civilians had to go beneath the ground to find shelter. Subterranean galleries and basements were suddenly part of a parallel urban system, not so much designed for living as for sheer survival—like the ancient Roman catacombs perhaps.

In his explorations of the late nineteenth century, Walter Benjamin already notes the implications of the new forms of destruction for the late-modern individual and collective psyches. In the *Arcades Project*, when reflecting on various, one might say, lugubrious aspects of the city—Paris, in this case—Benjamin suggests:

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[7] Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1938).
[8] Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (London - Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996) 329.

"The fantasies of the decline of Paris are a symptom of the fact that technology

was not accepted. These visions bespeak the gloomy awareness that along with

the great cities have evolved the means to raze them to the ground."[9]

Modern fantasies of urban decline, destruction and total annihilation have become
popular and powerful motifs in the past century. They were initially stimulated by
artistic–political movements such as the Futurists, who urged their society to destroy
culture and heritage in their craving for a new dawn of civilisation. The content of such
fantasies reached new dimensions as some of the worst atrocities ever imagined came
true, especially during the Second World War, and more recently in the proliferation of
civil wars and international wars across the globe.

Historically, however, cities seldom served as battlefields and the distinction between
soldiers and civilians was for the most part respected. Wars were usually waged far
away from cities or at their outskirts, but not inside the city-walls. Only at the end of a
particular battle, or in the final stages of a war, were cities assaulted and looted. It was
not only in the defenders' interest not to ruin the city until the end of the siege, but also
in the attackers' interest to keep the spoils as intact as possible. As G.J. Ashworth
suggests in *War and the City*, "such mutual aversion to fighting in the city [...] was
elevated to a convention in military society".[10] Ashworth argues that even twentieth
century warfare "provides remarkably few examples of the deliberate choice of an
urban battlefield, although the few were often memorable".[11] Among these were
Madrid during the Spanish Civil War. According to Ashworth, Madrid and other
Spanish cities proved that urban environments could nonetheless work as good
defensive terrain in spite of an attack/defence manpower ratio of 10:1 as compared to
3:1 in rural areas.[12] As will be explained in Chapter 3, Madrid was able to resist the
occupation of Franco's troops for almost three years.

1.1.2 Aerial warfare

Beginning in the early twentieth century, the use of aircraft to drop bombs and
chemicals on military targets, but also civilian populations and constructions generated

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[9] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, Mass., London: Belknap Press, 2002) 97.
[10] G. J. Ashworth, *War and the City* (London: Routledge, 1991) 113.
[11] Ibid. 115.
[12] Ibid. 116, 20.

new military strategies. The opportunity to destroy factories, warehouses, power plants and water deposits at relatively little cost constituted an effective means of depriving the enemy of essential supplies. Moreover, the possibility of intimidating civilians and actually annihilating entire neighbourhoods and districts together with their inhabitants was more and more viewed as a method for weakening the enemy's morale. As geographer Kenneth Hewitt explains, in the new strategy of area or carpet bombing it was "the spread of fires from the incendiaries the bombers dropped [that] was the main cause of damage and casualties".[13] People died more often of burns and suffocation than of the wounds caused by shrapnel and flying debris.

Furthermore, Hewitt claims that as early as 1914, aeronautical studies predicted that the level of damage from incendiaries was as much the result of the type of constructions targeted as of the number of bombs dropped. Densely constructed residential neighbourhoods in the inner city, where wooden structures and poorer construction materials such as plaster and brick often predominate, "were ideal places to start a mass fire".[14] Both the German raids on British cities and the British raids on German cities during the Second World War testify to this early observation. As it happens, working-class families and poorer residents not only populated the most tightly built neighbourhoods, but were often unable and sometimes unwilling to leave their dwellings during the bombing campaigns. Hewitt and other scholars argue that the socio-economic origin of the victims of the bombings during the Second World War partly explains why the different governments involved in the conflict did not feel compelled to put an end to the massive raids.[15]

But prior to the Second World War, the German and Italian air forces, and to a less extent the Soviet air force, had the opportunity to test their war machines in the Spanish Civil War. In his thorough examination of the development of the Luftwaffe between the First and the Second World Wars, James S. Corum devotes a chapter to the Germans' role in the Spanish Civil War.[16] According to him, the Luftwaffe's

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[13] K. Hewitt, "When the Great Planes Came and Made Ashes of Our City - Towards an Oral Geography of the Disasters of War," *Antipode* 26, no. 1 (1994): 453.
[14] Ibid.: 462.
[15] See Kenneth Hewitt, "Place Annihilation. Area Bombing and the Fate of Urban Places," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 73, no. 2 (1983): 271.
[16] James S. Corum, *The Luftwaffe. Creating the Operational Air War 1918-1940* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1997).

experience in the Spanish conflict "had an enormous impact on Luftwaffe doctrine, tactics, and technology".[17] Over 19,000 staff members served in Spain between 1936 and 1939, and the German air force "had the opportunity to conduct virtually every type of air campaign",[18] which meant that "by 1939 the Luftwaffe had more veterans who had participated in a modern air war than any other air force in western Europe".[19]

Brian R. Sullivan, on the other hand, analyses the involvement of the Italians in the Spanish conflict and concludes that, unlike the Germans who greatly benefited from this prelude to the Second World War, "the resources consumed in Spain left the Italian Army and Air Force seriously weakened".[20] Sullivan suggests that the Italian military leaders did not have the time or the right mentality to digest the lessons from the Spanish Civil War, and were also unable to replace their technical equipment quickly before the Second World War broke out. This would explain their relatively poor performance between 1940 and 1941.[21]

The Italians might not have learnt as much as they could have from their Spanish experience, but there is hardly any doubt that the Aviazione Legionaria was successful in its campaigns over the Spanish Mediterranean coast, assisting considerably the military rebels' cause. According to Spanish military historian Alcofar Nassaes, the Italians sent their best aircraft to Spain, and for a time their forces enjoyed significant autonomy, even though in principle they depended on the Spanish rebel military.[22] The impact of the bombings on Barcelona and other Catalan localities has been thoroughly documented in the past years by Catalan historians—notably Josep Maria Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroya i Font—who have also more cursorily examined the bombings of other Spanish cities.[23] An interactive exhibition at the Museu d'Historia de Catalunya in Barcelona in spring 2007 with the title *Quan plovien bombes* (Catalan for "When

[17] Ibid. 219.
[18] Ibid. 220.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Brian R. Sullivan, "Fascist Italy's Military Involvement in the Spanish Civil War," *The Journal of Military Studies* 59, no. 4 (1995): 697, 726.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Alcofar Nassaes, *La Aviación Legionaria En La Guerra Española* (Barcelona: Editorial Euros, 1975) 223, 27.
[23] See Josep M. Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroya i Font, *Catalunya Sota Les Bombes (1936-1939)* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1986), Josep M. Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroya, *España En Llamas: La Guerra Civil Desde El Aire*, 1. ed., *Temas De Hoy. Historia* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2003), Joan Villarroya i Font, *Els Bombardeigs De Barcelona Durant La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)*, 2nd edition ed. (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1999).

bombs rained down") further testifies to what may be a growing interest in making visible the arguably less known fate of the bombed Catalan towns.

1.1.3 Terrorism

In the Anglophone world, the interest in studying the effects of war and terrorism on cities picked up after 11 September 2001 for perhaps obvious reasons. The analysis of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center has given rise to an abundance of scholarly works. One of the earliest scholarly responses to the events came from Craig Calhoun, Paul Price and Ashley Timmer, the editors of *Understanding September 11*, who attempted to meet "the need for well formulated and clearly presented analyses that reveal rather than hide their intellectual underpinnings" amidst the proliferation of interpretations of the attack based on conceived wisdom, official consensuses and conspiratorial arguments.[24] Outside the vast national and international political implications of 9/11 and closer to the topic under consideration in this chapter, Edward L. Glaeser and Jesse M. Shapiro took the opportunity to explore the impact of terrorism on urban form. Nevertheless, their schematic discussion of the four ways "in which physical danger has affected urbanisation" and their empirical evidence (Berlin, Paris and London during the World Wars; London and the IRA; and Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv) are more revealing than their conclusion: when evaluating the effects of the 9/11 attack on New York and the potential overall impact of terror on America's cities, the authors conclude (reassuringly perhaps) that such impact will be small.[25]

Stephen Graham's edited book *Cities, War, and Terrorism* is another example of this renewed interest in the urban experience of war and terrorism.[26] The title explicitly suggests that we might be witnessing the emergence of a new field within urban studies—*urban geopolitics*. The contributors to the piece—including Zygmunt Bauman,

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[24] Craig Calhoun, Paul Price, and Ashley Timmer, eds., *Understanding September 11* (New York: The New Press, 2002) 15.

[25] Edward L. Glaeser and Jesse M. Shapiro, "Cities and Warfare: The Impact of Terrorism on Urban Form," *Journal of Urban Economics*, no. 51 (2002). Glaeser and Shapiro start their article by establishing four ways "in which physical danger has affected urbanisation" (historically): 1) the "safe harbour" effect, which relates to the need to crowd together in the face of land-based attacks; 2) the target effect, which results from crowding together since "urban density means that it is possible to destroy (or steal) a large amount in a short time"; 3) the impact on costs of transportation, that is, in times of war, transportation becomes dangerous, thus it makes sense to remain in the city at least while the target effect does not outdo the cost of moving out (in the case of air raids, for example); and 4) the effect of the actual destruction of buildings.

[26] Stephen (ed.) Graham, ed., *Cities, War, and Terrorism. Towards an Urban Geopolitics.* (Malden MA-Oxford-Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004).

Peter Marcuse and Michael Sorkin—view cities as the emerging key actors in contemporary politics and international relations.

As the centres of economic, financial and political activity, a number of large cities in the world have become the targets of global terrorist networks. The implications of terrorism and, even more, of the defence against terrorism for the urban experience is especially noticeable in cities in the so-called democratic world, which became accustomed to unique levels of freedom and stability after the end of the Second World War. Graham argues that the planning and management of cities like New York and London are increasingly "being brought within the widening umbrella of 'national security'".[27] In the past few years, residents and visitors in these cities have had to get used to exceptional and extraordinary security measures, which would have been considered appropriate for an authoritarian state a decade ago. The militarisation of cities—including "random" security checks, closed circuit televisions and harsher immigration rules—is merely one of the consequences of "the global vicious circle of terror", which involves state-backed terror and informal terror. As Graham explains, it is often "state-backed terror, atrocity, and crimes against humanity that breed informal terrorist atrocity and crimes against humanity" to begin with. Then, "states respond with more of the same while invoking states of emergency and cultures of fear", which in turn "allow legal restraints to be dispensed with more state-backed terror".[28]

For cities that allegedly breed terrorist networks—Baghdad and Kabul being the obvious examples—the consequences of this logic are of course worse. Surveillance is here accompanied by destruction—no buildings are spared when it comes to hunting down potential terrorists. Graham argues, however, that with their intricate and often unpredictable fabric, cities (especially in the Middle East) somehow "*get in the way* of the US military's [and their allies'?] fantasies of trans-global, real-time omnipotence".[29] Increasingly, high-tech military strategies have had to adapt to the "urbanisation of resistance", but the urban battlefield still remains more dangerous and technically challenging for regular combatants.[30]

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[27] Ibid. 11.
[28] Ibid. 14.
[29] Ibid. 20.
[30] See Ibid. 19.

Aside from economic and financial nodes, cities also often act as cultural and ideological centres. They are appropriated as metaphors and/or metonyms for larger social and political formations such as nations and religious communities, and therefore easily identified as the physical materialisations of particular sets of values and ideas. In some conflicts, the deliberate eradication of the urban, cultural and architectural heritage of the opponent becomes a means of depriving the enemy community of its very foundations or its physical testimony of an age-old existence on which to continue building its present and future.

Robert Bevan, who in a recent book examines the destruction of architecture and memory in several (mainly twentieth-century) conflicts and revolutions across the world—including the Balkan war, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the Second World War, the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the Turkish–Greek conflict in Cyprus— significantly concludes that "[t]he international community should be on its guard for the mass destruction of a people when it sees the destruction of their cultural artefacts".[31] The combination of ethnic and cultural cleansing can indeed take genocidal proportions as it did during the Nazi Holocaust and the Great Calamity in Armenia, but from Bevan's account one may deduce that the aim to annihilate a people and their culture can be found in slower and quantitatively less intimidating destruction processes, including the Israelis' killings and house demolitions in Palestinian territories, to which Eyal Weizman has drawn scholarly attention.[32]

1.1.4 Urbicide

The destruction of towns and cities in former Yugoslavia gave rise to the theoretically powerful concept of *urbicide*, which couples urban destruction directly with genocide, and has since been applied to other cases of extreme urban destruction such as Grozny during the Chechen wars in the late 1990s. Genocide, which literally means the killing or destruction of life, is defined by the 1948 Geneva convention as the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group".[33] Martin Coward describes the concept of urbicide as

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[31] Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory. Architecture at War* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).
[32] See Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London - New York: Verso, 2007).
[33] General Assembly Resolution, "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," (Geneva: 1948), Art. 2.

"the destruction of urban fabric insofar as it comprises the conditions of possibility for urbanity. Urbanity is characterized by an agonistic heterogeneity in which identity is constituted in relation to difference. Urbicide, in destroying the conditions of possibility of urbanity, denies such heterogeneity."[34]

Coward has later reconsidered the concept, identifying other meanings of urbicide, while clarifying his own understanding of it. According to him, scholars have used the concept to refer to both "the endogenous potential for self-destructive violence inscribed within the dynamics of the modern city" (the effects of redevelopment, for example) as well as to "the posited relationship between the city, militarization and war" (the impact of surveillance, policing, and so on).[35] However, he claims, his contribution is closer to "a phenomenology of the destruction of buildings". Buildings are here taken to be public objects, which are shared with others, sharing always involving an encounter with difference.[36] Hence, it is the elimination of this encounter with difference that constitutes the rationale of urbicide: like genocide, in certain contexts, the ultimate aim of selectively destroying the urban built environment is to achieve ethnic, social and/or cultural homogeneity.

Drawing from the Balkans' experience directly, François Chaslin explains the phenomenon of urbicide as the reaction of an agonising illiterate rural world against the liberal ways of life of the city.[37] Chaslin recalls similar phenomena in the past, such as the Maoist strategies, which sought to have the cities encircled by the countryside, or the sustained attacks on cities by Latin American guerrillas. In all these cases, the city has been portrayed as a source of national decay and corruption, implying the need for cleaning and emptying it of all that embodies or symbolises urbanity, be it buildings or people. In this view, in the former Yugoslavia, the reaction against the city involved the distrust of the ethnic and religious heterogeneity that famously characterised many Balkan cities. Chaslin, an architect himself, uses the writings of local architects Ivan Straus and Bogdan Bogodanović (who was the mayor of Belgrade between 1982 and 1986) to confer more realism on his depiction of how feelings of mutual hostility and suspicion were fuelled between the urban and rural populations, and subsequently

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[34] Martin Coward, "Urbicide in Bosnia," in *Cities, War and Terrorism. Towards an Urban Geopolitics*, ed. Stephen (ed.) Graham (Malden MA-Oxford-Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004).
[35] Martin Coward, "'Urbicide' Reconsidered," *Theory and Event* 10, no. 2 (2007): Paragraphs 17, 24.
[36] Ibid.: Paragraphs 34, 37.
[37] Francois Chaslin, *Une Haine Monumentale: Essai Sur La Destruction Des Villes En Ex-Yugoslavie* (Paris: Descartes & Cie., 1997).

among different ethnic and religious groups. Such an idealised divide between the urban and the rural is not unfamiliar to the Spanish Civil War and post-war period. The military rebels tended to portray cities as nests (*nidos*) of liberal or communist anti-militarism and anti-clericalism.

With a distinct flavour of denunciation, Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo draws some historical parallels between besieged Sarajevo in 1996 and besieged Madrid in 1936, suggesting that both capital cities can be viewed as examples of

> "heroic resistance of civilian populations [...], who managed to undo the plans of those who expected, in the 1990s as in the 1930s, a quick victory for the stronger force. In each case, stubborn opposition caused the war to drag on, creating terrible hardship but enabling the population to recognize those who had shared complicity in the barbarous aggression."[38]

Aside from the comparison between Sarajevo's and Madrid's endurance against the anti-urban forces of Serbian and Spanish nationalism, it is suggested that more could be said about the Spanish conflict to further document and illustrate the intimate connection between mass killings and mass destruction of material culture, including cities. The social revolution that took place in Madrid and Barcelona and other Spanish cities at the beginning of the war—during which members of the aristocracy, bourgeoisie and clergy were systematically executed by popular militias, and almost every single church either destroyed or turned into a public or military facility—was in many ways a twentieth-century re-enactment of the ferocious, anti-clerical spirit of the French Revolution. The iconoclastic activities of Anarchists and Communists on the Republican side were not replicated by similar actions on the rebel side, but the systematic killings of civilians were, and tens of thousands of workers, peasants and also artists and intellectuals in the Red zones were killed. Franco's brutal repression of the vanquished continued after the war and until the very end of his dictatorship. In this, one might say, ideological or class-based and also religious cleansing, hundreds of thousands of people were tried by military courts and ended up executed, or in prison or labour camps. A subtler way of humiliating the vanquished—which anticipates the following section on post-war reconstruction—was forcing them to *redeem* their

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[38] Juan Goytisolo, "Madrid 1936 -- Sarajevo 1996," *Queen's Quarterly* 103, no. 1 (1996).

wrongdoings (their *sins*) by reconstructing the towns that they had lost after intense battles such as Brunete and Belchite.

1.2 Reconstruction

1.2.1 Reconstruction phases

In their examination of disaster relief and recovery in cities in the aftermath of natural catastrophes, mainly in the United States, J. Eugene Haas et al. make a potentially useful distinction between four different periods or stages of recovery, which are roughly chronological, but also likely to overlap. After an initial emergency response (1), they argue, cities go on to restore what is restorable (2). Following this, they reconstruct what has been destroyed "for functional replacement" (3). Finally, they undertake reconstruction "for commemoration, betterment and development" (4). Haas et al. claim that "the time required for each activity period (except for the last) is about ten times that of the previous one", which suggests that rebuilding basic infrastructures and housing is the most time-consuming part of the process of recovery of a ruined city.[39]

In his study of Paris in the aftermath of the Second World War, geographer Hugh Clout identifies a similar chronology. Immediately after the "bombing raids a range of emergency services rescued the injured, removed victims, cleared debris, demolished dangerous structures, shored up what might be conserved and filled shell holes".[40] Clout maintains that "[d]espite extreme difficulties, the effectiveness [of the emergency services] was remarkable".[41] By contrast, he argues, permanent reconstruction of housing in and around Paris proved extremely slow.[42]

Part of the explanation for municipal services' wartime efficiency might lie in the spirit of discipline and solidarity that seems to take over in emergency situations, also often propelled by efficient war propaganda. Although a number of bureaucrats and private individuals might make profit out of the rationing of food and other essential supplies, there are also many examples of wealthier individuals offering provisions and shelter to

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[39] John Eugene Haas, Robert W. Kates, and Martyn J. Bowden, *Reconstruction Following Disaster, Mit Press Environmental Studies Series* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: M.I.T. Press, 1977) 1.
[40] Hugh Clout, "Ruins and Revival: Paris in the Aftermath of the Second World War," *Landscape Research* 29, no. 2 (2004): 126.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.: 130.

those in need (see Chapter 4 for how different companies offered to use their facilities as air-raid shelters in wartime Barcelona, for example).

But once the collective spirit of discipline and obedience stops being a necessary element for the city's survival, it appears as if individual interests begin to take over again. Haas et al. claim that once the "drama of the emergency and restoration periods fades", the same forces that shaped the characteristics of the city before the disaster "reemerge as the primary determinants of the city of the future".[43] Does this mean that cities are less affected by war than one would imagine?

1.2.2 Continuity and change in post-war urban reconstruction

In 1954, Leo Grebler, a professor of urban land economics, had the opportunity of studying 28 European cities which had been severely damaged during the Second World War. Although many things had changed—for example, street patterns had been altered, new, less densely built city centres constructed, and even the architecture in some of the reconstructed areas looked different—Grebler affirmed that when focusing on the entire pattern of reconstruction, "a great deal of persistence [could] be detected".[44] War and destruction had brought "surprisingly small permanent changes in the economic base and growth patterns of cities". Most city dwellers who spent the war as refugees in smaller towns and villages returned to the bombed cities as soon as the war ended. Surprisingly few considered not returning to their urban way of life, in spite of the apparently discouraging prospect of resettling in bombed-out cities.[45] People returned to their old homes, businesses to their former premises, regardless of building conditions.

Fred Charles Iklé, who undertook a similar study to Grebler's a few years earlier, between 1949 and 1950, argues that ownership of the land could explain the return of homeowners and shop proprietors from an economic perspective, but not that of tenants. Instead, "social ties, which still connect the bombed-out person with his former

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[43] Haas, Kates, and Bowden, *Reconstruction Following Disaster* 25.
[44] Leo Grebler, "Continuity in the Rebuilding of Bombed Cities in Western Europe," *The American Journal of Sociology* 61, no. 5 (1956): 463.
[45] Ibid.: 464.

neighbourhood" seemed to play a key role here.[46] Iklé is nonetheless careful to point out that there is a limit to the repopulation and restoration of an area. Even though significantly lower than many people would have assumed prior to the Second World War, the limit exists when basic utilities and transportation have not or cannot be restored. In such cases, social ties are not enough to bring back residents and businesses to their former neighbourhoods.[47]

Ownership and social ties are perhaps two of the "determinants" of post-war cities, to use Haas et al.'s terminology. However, Grebler suggests that urban dwellers' level of attachment to their city depends on the cultural context. In the case of post-war Europe, he claims, it has to be understood against the backdrop of traditional European society, which, he argues, is more prone to the status quo than younger societies such as the United States.[48]

Be that as it may, indeed little of wartime planners' ambition to use destruction as an opportunity to redesign European cities according to modernist planning ideals materialised in the aftermath of the conflict. Grebler gives several reasons for this "lost opportunity", including that planners could not ignore the fact that large sections of the cities were still standing (90 per cent of the County of London remained intact, for example). Cities were also keen to restore taxable property and trade quickly. And even though municipalities owned the land in the reconstruction areas, they needed to attract private developers who were willing to build, and this often resulted in compromises, which did not benefit the implementation of innovative, large-scale plans.[49]

In his detailed study of post-war reconstruction in Germany, historian Jeffry M. Diefendorf further elaborates on the reasons why ground-breaking planning concepts were seldom implemented in the wake of the Second World War. In the case of the German cities, the early administration and coordination of the reconstruction efforts took place under the auspices of the allied occupation. Until 1949, different visions and practical arrangements operated in the zones controlled by Britain, France, the United

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[46] Fred Charles Iklé, "The Effect of War Destruction Upon the Ecology of Cities," *Social Forces* 29, no. 4 (1951): 390.
[47] Ibid.: 390, 91.
[48] Grebler, "Continuity in the Rebuilding of Bombed Cities in Western Europe," 469.
[49] See Ibid.: 468, 69.

States and the Soviet Union.[50] This did not foster the design of an overarching, national programme for urban reconstruction with jointly agreed rules and practices. The fact that many of the planners and architects had worked during the Third Reich also set the tone of the reconstruction process: cautiousness and pragmatism were a safer recipe than boldness and ideology at this historic juncture.

Even though each city "experienced the process of reconstruction uniquely", they also underwent similar challenges.[51] Aside from having to compromise with the real estate sector in exchange for financial backing, Diefendorf suggests that city planners in post-war Germany were seldom successful in involving the public in their discussions, instead reproducing pre-war (and wartime) top-down planning procedures characterised by a significant amount of secrecy. One of the consequences of the public's alienation was that a large volume of uncontrolled housing construction took place, both in the outer suburbs and the inner cities, further hindering the realisation of comprehensive urban plans.[52] In view of the prolonged and extensive housing shortage, it is perhaps not surprising that urban dwellers chose to ignore larger planning concerns. In France, as historian Danièle Voldman explains, provisional housing complexes failed to be taken down within the timeframe originally envisioned, instead becoming the nuclei of the shantytowns that expanded at the margins of many French cities well into the mid-1970s.[53]

Nevertheless, it appears as if reconstruction in Germany and France, and possibly other European countries, was over all quite successful. In spite of the largely failed attempt at using destruction as an opportunity for rebuilding according to new urban models, Diefendorf concludes that "at least in a quantitative sense, and in terms of speed, reconstruction was a great success [in Germany]". "Within a decade or so after the war," he writes, "cities that had been reduced to rubble and ashes were again livable and lived in."[54] By 1954, in France too, according to Voldman, the replacement of the destroyed urban fabric had been accomplished and cities were back to normal

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[50] See Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War. The Reconstruction of Cities after World War II* (New York - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 244-51.
[51] Ibid. xviii.
[52] Ibid. 218, 19.
[53] Danièle Voldman, *La Reconstruction Des Villes Françaises De 1940 À 1954. Histoire D'une Politique* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1997) 322.
[54] Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War. The Reconstruction of Cities after World WarII* 276.

(notwithstanding the housing problem that still affected many urban dwellers—a problem partly inherited from the pre-war period).[55]

In her examination of reconstruction in France, Voldman emphasises the political dimension of the rebuilding process.[56] In the French case, she explains, the *Ministère de Reconstruction et Urbanism* (Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism, MRU), which the Provisional Constituting Assembly created in March 1945, took over several of the institutions previously created by the Vichy regime, and largely relied on the same interventionist approach that had characterised the latter's undertakings during the war.[57] Voldman suggests that it is important to acknowledge such practical continuities in the organisation and coordination of reconstruction between the authoritarian regime of Marshal Pétain and the democratic governments that followed after 1944, as much of the present structure and dynamics of the French planning administration were set up during these transitory years.[58] One would think that in cases of war (international or civil) followed by a change of political regime, new forces, ideas and practices, different from those that sustained the pre-war (and wartime) city, emerge. Post-war Spain, as will be discussed, is another case in point suggesting that even when a regime change is the outcome, the same forces—creative and economic—that shaped the pre-war city are likely to resurface and ultimately take the lead in the reconstruction process.

Another controversial aspect of post-war reconstruction processes is the use of political prisoners and prisoners of war. Prisoners were used extensively as forced labour in Nazi Germany and, as will be explained in the following chapter, a scheme of cancellation of penalties by work was also designed in Franco's Spain. The working conditions of the Nazi prisoners, which are sadly but fortunately well documented, were extreme, leading in most cases to death. In the aftermath of the Second World War, German prisoners of war were in turn used by the Allies and the Soviets for various reconstruction tasks. In an article published in November 1945, Nemeiah Robinson suggests that the use of German manpower was already implicitly considered part of the exaction of "reparation in kind for the destruction wrought by the Germans" that France, the United Kingdom

[55] Voldman, *La Reconstruction Des Villes Françaises De 1940 À 1954. Histoire D'une Politique* 12.
[56] Ibid. 427.
[57] Ibid. 145-48.
[58] See Ibid. 7-13.

and the United States proclaimed as "an inflexible purpose" in the Yalta Conference.[59] For historical and ideological reasons, perhaps, the experience of the 400,000 German prisoners of war that remained in Britain by the end of 1946,[60] or the sometimes tragic fate of the tens of thousands of German prisoners that were deployed in France for cleaning mine fields after 1945, tend to be less known.[61] It is a fact, however, that governments across the world have recurrently exploited political prisoners and prisoners of war in the past century, regardless of their political ideology and despite the existence of international agreements condemning such practice.

As indicated by the secondary literature cited previously, cities that were bombed or damaged during the Second World War have received significant attention, although usually in the form of case studies. Aside from French and German cities (Berlin, Dresden),[62] Dutch (Rotterdam), British (London, Liverpool),[63] Italian (Rome)[64] and Japanese cities (Tokyo, Hiroshima)[65] have elicited numerous institutional reports and academic pieces of research, which can only be included as references here. Some of them, like Fried's book on Roman politics and planning since the Second World War or the reports by Holden et al. on London, are more technically and policy-oriented. Pieces like Fukui's and Sinnai's edition on post-war urban reconstruction in Japan, or Ladd's account of the prolonged troubles faced first by a divided post-war Berlin and then by a

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[59] See Nehemiah Robinson, "Problems of European Reconstruction," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 60, no. 1 (1945): 25-28.

[60] James Richards, *Life in Britain for German Prisoners of War* (BBC, [cited 24 August 2008]); available from http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwtwo/german_pows_01.shtml.

[61] See George Bönisch, "Surviving German Pows Seek Compensation," *Spiegel Online International*, 25 August 2008, Hugh Clout, "The Reconstruction of Upper Normandy: A Tale of Two Cities," *Planning Perspectives* 14, no. 2 (1999): 87, Danièle Voldman, *Le Déminage De La France Après 1945* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1998).

[62] Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke, *Dresden : Paradoxes of Memory in History, Studies in Anthropology and History ; V. 28* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), Germany (Federal Republic.) Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen., *The Palace of Berlin and Its Downfall : An Illustrated Report on the Destruction of Cultural Monuments in Berlin*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Tauber, 1951), Frederick Taylor, *Dresden : Tuesday, 13 February 1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

[63] Charles Henry Holden and William Graham Holford, *Reconstruction in the City of London : Interim Report to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee by the Joint Consultants : (with Report of the Improvements ... Committee)* (London ,: 1946), Charles Henry Holden et al., *The City of London : A Record of Destruction and Survival : The Building Development of the City, the Damage Suffered in the Years 1940-1945, and the Proposals for Reconstruction* (London: Published on behalf of the Corporation by the Architectural Press, 1951), Charles Henry Holden, William Graham Holford, and London. Corporation. Improvements and Town Planning Committee., *Reconstruction in the City of London : Final Report to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee by the Joint Consultants* (London: s.n., 1947), Bryan Perrett, *Liverpool : A City at War* (London: Hale, 1990).

[64] Robert C. Fried, *Planning the Eternal City : Roman Politics and Planning since World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

[65] N. Fukui and H. Jinnai, *Destruction and Rebirth of Urban Environment* (Tokyo: Sagami Shoba Publishing, 2000).

unified post-division Berlin, offer deeper analyses of the social and psychological implications of post-conflict and post-crisis recovery.[66]

More contemporary case studies of reconstruction can also be found for the war-torn cities of the Middle East and the Balkans. Beirut is one such example.[67] Authors have focused on the more obvious challenge of rebuilding a city divided along religious lines, but also on the implications of the unusually prominent role in the reconstruction process of one specific individual: the businessman and twice prime minister Rafiq Hariri, assassinated in February 2005. Hariri, who financed large portions of the reconstruction of the city from his own pocket, has been both acclaimed for his vision and generosity, and accused of overseeing the real problems of Beirutees and favouring foreign business interests.[68] Usually, as has been argued previously, the problem faced by the state and the local administrations when addressing post-war reconstruction is that they have to reach compromises with the private sector in order to rebuild. The confluence of political and economic leadership in the Lebanese case might therefore be viewed as facilitating the smoothness and efficiency of the reconstruction process, but becomes problematic from the point of view of the democratic control of the process and the accountability of the actors involved. Even though Hariri tried to distribute most of the shares of Solidere (the company that he created to address reconstruction in Beirut) among the public, while he was the prime minister, there was in principle nobody outside the government and Solidere to assess the decisions made on the rebuilding of the Lebanese capital city.

It is perhaps too early to evaluate the long-term results of the physical reconstruction of Afghan and Iraqi cities, but there are nonetheless numerous reports and much secondary literature available already.[69] Sultan Barakat, an academic and professional expert on post-war reconstruction, argues that one of the fundamental problems of reconstruction in less developed countries is that "a disproportionate amount of aid is being absorbed

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[66] Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[67] See, for example, "Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction," *Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East* 47 (1993), Dona J. Stewart, "Economic Recovery and Reconstruction in Postwar Beirut," *Geographical Review* 86, no. 4 (1996).

[68] See Stewart, "Economic Recovery and Reconstruction in Postwar Beirut," 487-504.

[69] See, for example, Sultan Barakat, ed., *Third World Quarterly. Reconstructing War-Torn Societies: Afghanistan*, vol. 23 (2002), B.A. Kazimee, "Sustainable Reconstruction and Planning Strategies for Afghan Cities: Conservation and Environmental Heritage," in *The Sustainable City Iv. Urban Regeneration and Sustainability* (Southampton - Boston: WIT Press, 2006).

by relief initiatives and repair of infrastructure for rapid delivery of services in the short term, without any strategic view of how they are to be sustained and by whom".[70] Vision is a fundamental ingredient for successfully conceiving and implementing reconstruction programmes. Yet vision in this context has often been understood as the capacity to conceive grand, epic, ultimately over-ambitious reconstruction projects such as architect Pedro Bidagor's plan for post-war Madrid. But vision lies probably more in the capacity to match a city's ambitions with the resources available to it at that very moment, without loosing sight of its future needs and resources. This is not necessarily an easy task.

1.3 Restore, replace or leave in ruins?

Art historians have long been concerned with how preservation and reconstruction efforts are actually carried out. Aloïs Riegl initiated the discussion in 1903 distinguishing between the *historic value* and the *age value* of monuments in his famous essay *The Modern Cult of Monuments. Its Character and Origins*.[71] Should buildings and monuments be restored to their original state or should later modifications and/or additions be respected? To put it boldly, what should be done with medieval cathedrals, for instance, some of which were built over hundreds of years spanning different architectural periods? There are seemingly no definite answers to these questions. It is suggested that most of the times it ends up being the institution or the restorers behind the specific reconstruction or restoration project who decide whether age or historic value should be given priority. In some cases, cities may decide not to touch the remnants of destroyed monuments as a way to immortalise the horrors of war. Examples of this are the A-bomb dome in Hiroshima or the Frauenkirche in Dresden after the Second World War, although the latter was eventually restored after the German reunification.[72] In other cases, they may decide to build something different as in the case of Ground Zero in New York City.

Sooner or later, war-torn cities—and Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid were no exception—are confronted with the choice between restoring, renewing or maintaining the ruins of specific sites. In these situations, theoretical arguments in favour of one or

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[70] Sultan Barakat, ed., *After the Conflict. Reconstruction and Development in the Aftermath of War* (London - New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

[71] Aloïs Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments. Its Character and Origins," *Oppositions*, no. 25 (1982).

[72] A British group was asked to lead the work, partly as a symbol of reconciliation between Germany and the former allied country. The restoration was completed in 2005.

the other choice are often eagerly debated, and the experiences of other cities and countries used to back the arguments.

The restoration of Warsaw's historic centre after the Second World War has become paradigmatic of a city's decision to reproduce its built environment exactly as it looked like prior to destruction. But other Polish towns such as Gdansk were also restored, as much as possible, to their pre-war appearance by the new Communist authorities.[73] In the case of Warsaw, it is usually argued that Poles felt the need to recover at least a portion of the capital city's centuries-old cultural heritage for future generations. This was also an important act of national reassertion after Hitler's systematic attempts at destroying Polish culture. Another arguably interesting example of restoration is the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, which was damaged during the Second World War (although not as severely as the surrounding buildings on Pariserplatz). The decision of Berlin's two post-war administrations—Western and Eastern—to restore the Gate jointly was exceptional. The Gate's preservation as part of the Berlin Wall and *apart* from it illustrates the complex interplay between the disruptive effect of the post-war division of the city and the numerous historical continuities that operated despite such division.[74]

Within the year of the attack on the World Trade Center, and at the very beginning of the debates about how to reconstruct Ground Zero, a number of scholars explored how to turn the disaster, which from the point of view of the victims and their relatives was obviously irreversible, into an opportunity. The prospect of recovering some of the spaces and values that were lost in this area of Manhattan when it was redeveloped in the 1970s was enticing. For urbanists such as Michael Sorkin, if there was a lesson to draw from 9/11, it was that the financial district, the so-called heart of capitalism, had to be reshaped in such way that it in fact challenged the heartlessness of our contemporary

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[73] See Jerzy Stankiewicz, *Les Monuments De Gdansk. Histoire, Destruction Et Reconstruction* (Poznan: Instytut Zachodni, 1961).
[74] See R. Partha Khan and Olivia Muñoz-Rojas, "The City of Traumas, the Trauma of Cities: Modes of Preservation and Commemoration in Berlin, Hiroshima, and New York," in *Stadt Und Trauma/City and Trauma*, ed. Bettina Fraisl and Monika Stromberger (Würzburg: Köönigshausen & Neumann, 2004), 70-75.

economic system. Moreover, being such a key area for the city, the destruction of the World Trade Center was seen as *an opportunity to rethink New York City as a whole.*[75]

In an attempt to gather inspiration from past cases of urban regeneration after destruction and reflect on the broader theoretical implications of these processes, Joan Ockman put together an interdisciplinary anthology of case studies, spanning the aftermaths of Lisbon's 1755 earthquake, Chicago's 1871 fire and the Balkan War in the 1990s, among many others.[76] The chronological sequence of cases of catastrophes followed by regeneration convey the sense of a long history of urban resilience and transformation. This observation becomes perhaps even more compelling when looking back at the history of ancient cities such as Sybaris, Cyrene and Salamis, which were resurrected from their ashes not just once, but several times.[77]

The initial quest for rethinking lower Manhattan and New York City as a whole in the aftermath of 9/11 largely waned amidst the competing claims of redevelopers, state officials and victims' associations. Between restoring the site to its earlier appearance, replacing it with a new design and leaving it in ruins, the second option was chosen. However, it is suggested that it is only in appearance that the Freedom Tower and the adjacent buildings that have been designed for Ground Zero are different from the Twin Towers: their function—finance and commerce—and purported meaning—US supremacy—have hardly changed.

Ruins have also been viewed as evidence of a people's supremacy. Nazi architect Albert Speer's theory of ruin value defended the idea that architects ought to conceive the buildings and monuments of the Third Reich with their ruins already in mind. Akin to the architectural legacy of the Roman empire, which over the millennia has turned into the worn-away, but overwhelming ruins we admire today, Speer (and Hitler) wanted the monuments of the Third Reich to be designed and built with materials that would produce aesthetic and powerful ruins, which would testify to the greatness of the German empire centuries later. Georg Simmel's view of traditional ruins as the

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[75] See Michael & Zukin Sorkin, Sharon, (ed.), ed., *After the World Trade Center: Rethinking New York City* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[76] Ockman, ed., *Out of Ground Zero : Case Studies in Urban Reinvention.*

[77] William David Gordon, "The Destruction of Cities in Mediterranean Lands" (paper presented at the The Sixth J.L. Myres Memorial Lecture, New College, Oxford, 1971).

harmonious conciliation between the effect of natural decay and the resilient spirit of man-made forms was hereby challenged by the aim to *control* decay.[78] But before Speer, nineteenth-century English aristocracy had discovered "the pleasure of ruins",[79] and got into the habit of placing artificial ancient ruins in the green, undulating landscapes of their estates. A distinction should perhaps be made between aesthetic and toxic ruins: in the celebration of ruins as magnificent and inspiring elements, Speer probably did not have in mind the contaminated ruins that were in evidence in British and German cities in the aftermath of the blanket bombing.

In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin writes that "[d]emolition sites [are] sources for teaching the theory of construction". He quotes Charles-François Viel, who discusses the advantages architects had in his time because they were able to observe the foundations and first layers of the numerous churches and cloisters that were being demolished in Paris as part of the redevelopment of the city.[80] The entrails of most cities conceal layers of groundwork, demolished buildings and scattered artefacts, like forgotten, sometimes repressed memories, which may be randomly or selectively retrieved. Both wartime destruction and urban redevelopment may violently open up these hidden entrails, bringing them to daylight. This was the case of the Roman military belt of Barcelona, fragments of which first appeared when Via Layetana was opened in the early twentieth century, and then later when the bombings during the Spanish Civil War led to the demolition of many old houses attached to the ancient wall. Barcelona city councils at the time decided to retrieve the city's Roman past by bringing out its ruins.

The improvement of photographic techniques in the second part of nineteenth century proved an invaluable tool for archaeologists such as Fox Talbot, who specialised in taking photos of Egyptian monuments, or Désiré Charnay who shot some of the first pictures of Mayan ruins in Mexico. These aesthetically pleasing and instructive images of ancient monuments and ruins were soon reproduced for commercial purposes in the form of picture cards and illustrated books. These became immensely popular amidst

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[78] Georg Simmel, "The Ruin," in *Essays in Sociology, Philosophy and Aesthetics*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).
[79] See Rose Dame D. B. E. Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins. Reprinted Ed* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1966).
[80] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*.

the educated middle classes, who could now travel to distant lands without abandoning the comfort of their armchairs.

There is also a long tradition that views ruins as evocative of the frailty of man-made creations and the brevity of human life. Michael Perlman suggests that images, and ruins in particular, constitute powerful mnemonic devices and transmitters of concepts and experiences that may lie beyond the reach of language.[81] Perlman is here thinking of Hiroshima and the unprecedented, possibly ungraspable, experience of total annihilation. The question remains whether the ruins of the A-bomb dome (former Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotional Hall), the only remaining pre-war structure in Hiroshima, can indeed transmit the meaning of absolute destruction. On the other hand, as suggested in Chapter 6, the post-war ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña in Madrid might have been intuitively left untouched for many years because they conveyed the contradictory sentiments of defeat, martyrdom and victory that the rebels had towards Madrid—the city where they had been initially subdued, which took them three years to seize, and which they attempted to turn into the epitome of the New Spain.

French photographer Charles Soulier was able to document the damaged Parisian quarters during the Paris Commune in the 1870s. This is one of the first urban conflicts of which there is photographic evidence. Over time, the live documentation of wartime destruction has proved a useful propaganda tool. To Franco's supporters, the ruined bridges that the Basque–Republican troops left behind in Bilbao during the Spanish Civil War bore witness to the Reds' "destructive barbarism". Not surprisingly, the enemy's destructive acts always appear worse than one's own, and are therefore often used to discredit the enemy. Pictures of war-torn cities, displaying accusatory sentences against the enemy, circulated in many national media during the Second World War and the same kind of propaganda has been present in international media during more recent conflicts such as the Balkan War. There is, however, a difficult balance to keep between denouncing the enemy's atrocities and maintaining the morale of the population, who might not want to be reminded of the horrors of the war in this way.

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[81] See Michael Perlman, *Imaginal Memory and the Place of Hiroshima* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988).

If most of the above suggests a historical weakness for ruins, some scholars argue that such sentiment may have shifted during the second half of the twentieth century in view, precisely, of the unprecedented levels of destruction caused by two world wars and the increasing threat of environmental catastrophes.[82] However, much contemporary art, including cinema, suggests that the fascination with ruins and decay is very much alive. And such fascination will probably always remain alive, whether sustained on metaphysical, archaeological, aesthetical or political preoccupations.

Destruction itself exerts a similar attraction. Urban apocalypses continue to elicit the imagination of writers, film-directors and their audiences. It would seem as if the menace of mass destruction—whether real or perceived—is more and more contributing to shaping the perceptions and conceptions of the world of contemporary urban dwellers. But then again the fear of divine punishment through wars, plagues and natural catastrophes has populated the minds of city dwellers across the globe for millennia. And so has the myth of the Phoenix bird—death and destruction are the prospect for resurrection and reconstruction.

1. Conclusion

Many cities were historically designed with war in mind. City-walls were erected to close them off from potential attacks by land or sea. In the nineteenth century, city-walls were torn down as the urban population began to grow dramatically. The enemy was no longer expected to arrive from outside the city—the enemy was now inside the city. Radicalised workers and the masses of poor, homeless or unemployed migrants from the countryside were seen as a constant threat to the good order of the city. The 1830 and 1848 revolutions and the Paris Commune were an anticipation of large-scale violent urban confrontation. In the following century, cities were again exposed to warfare in the traditional sense (two or more fighting armies), only this time, the attacks would come from the air. The arrival of aerial warfare techniques in the early twentieth century effectively turned cities—even cities that were not at the forefront of battle— into targets, and civilians into passive victims of war. The scale of destruction caused by air raids was unprecedented, and more importantly perhaps, the relation between the number of casualties and damage inflicted on cities from the air and the number of

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[82] See Brigitte Desrochers, "Ruins Revisited: Modernist Conceptions of Heritage," *The Journal of Architecture* 5 (2000).

casualties among the pilots conducting the attacks was exceptionally disproportionate. From now on, death and destruction on the enemy's side could be carried out at relatively little human cost on the attackers' side. Air raids were conducted during the First World War, but it was during the Second World War that control of the air became of paramount importance. The significance of the German and Italian air forces' intervention in the Spanish Civil War for the outcome of that conflict was already an indication of this.

The turn of the twenty-first century witnessed the end of a short period of post-Cold War optimism. With the 9/11 terrorist attacks, some would argue, a new kind of warfare was inaugurated, in which sporadic yet massive terror attacks on cities are fought with conventional means of war often far away from the originally targeted city. Global capitalist cities such as New York and London may attract the wrath of trans-national religious fundamentalists, but cities in ethnically and culturally diverse nations such as the Balkans and Chechnya have become victims of urbicide—the systematic destruction of city life and its physical habitat. The loathing among certain groups for the tolerant, diverse and unpredictable nature of the city is probably as old as the city itself, but takes on new dimensions with the development of the modern metropolis. Often associated with economic, social and cultural progress, the modern metropolis is also identified with material and moral decay. All this is in stark contrast with the rural environment, which appears to certain groups as an idealised location of authenticity, purity and virtue. Ultimately, the contrast (and conflict) between idealised notions of the urban and the rural lies at the heart of most modern ideologies.

Twentieth-century wartime cities have generally demonstrated a surprising capacity to devise emergency measures and undertake temporary reconstruction work in the face of death and destruction. A spirit of discipline and solidarity, aided by effective war propaganda, seems to take over in cities that are threatened by air raids (or other forms of attacks). However, it is often argued that this sort of spirit vanishes once the danger is over, and cities gradually return to normal. Thus, when reconstruction proper begins, pre-war institutional arrangements and compromises, as well as social and economic patterns, tend to resurface, gradually determining the dynamics of the rebuilding process. The opportunity for change that a destroyed city provides from the point of view of many planners and architects might therefore be challenged by the

administrative inertia and property arrangements of bureaucrats and politicians, and city dwellers' emotional attachment to the pre-war city. It has been suggested by scholars examining European post-war reconstruction that continuity was clearly more in evidence than change in the rebuilding of the European cities after 1945. Despite the enthusiasm and the work that a number of modernist planners put into redesigning the post-war cities, such designs seldom advanced beyond the drawing-board.

Decisions on whether to restore a site, replace it or leave it in ruins are usually the result of both practical and symbolic considerations, and one may find examples of the three in reconstructed cities. There exist some examples of cities that have followed the first two approaches more consistently such as Warsaw (restoration) and Rotterdam (replacement). Although there are no modern and contemporary cities that have been completely left in ruins in the aftermath of war, there are villages such as Oradour-sur-Glane in France or Belchite in Spain which were never repopulated and left as a symbol of the inhumanity of the attackers or humans in general. On the other hand, one may find prominent urban wartime ruins which have deliberately been left unrestored for similar purposes, for example the A-bomb dome in Hiroshima or St Michael's Cathedral in Coventry. The immortalisation of the destruction of a site is probably best captured in its ruins, but it might not always be economically viable to keep them in this state. Moreover, as the replacement of the World Trade Center in New York City demonstrates, there is not necessarily a shared desire to preserve the memory of death and destruction as a visible scar in the urban fabric. Eventually, memorialisation is subject to cultural and religious habits, political motivations and economic interest. And these different forces might concur or be at odds with each other when determining the fate of a particular site.

Chapter 2

The challenges of archival research

2. Introduction

In certain circumstances, it is less the benefit of retrospection that is relevant to the historical researcher, and more the possibility of actually undertaking the particular research. It is suggested that the study of wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction in the context of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime, specifically between 1939 and 1959, would have been more difficult to undertake during the decades within which the two processes developed. As potential research fields, wartime and dictatorial regimes prove generally more challenging because of the physical dangers involved—especially in the first case—and the restrictions on the circulation of, and accessibility to, official information in such circumstances. Military and administrative secrecy constitute fundamental obstacles to a more comprehensive and rigorous investigation of the activities of wartime and dictatorial political systems, and it is often not until there is a change of regime or the release of state secrets that researchers have access to sufficient information as to produce informed analyses— unless, of course, the information has been accidentally or deliberately destroyed.

In the case of contemporary Spain, it is only after the transition to democracy in the late 1970s that national, regional, municipal and other archives, libraries and public institutes have gradually begun to organise and operate according to the standards of open and democratic societies. Bearing in mind that few if any of the individuals directly involved in the destruction and rebuilding of the three sites examined in this thesis are still alive, it seemed sensible to base the investigation of the two processes mainly on archival material. Moreover, for the purposes of studying the technical and symbolic dimensions of the destruction and reconstruction processes in the three cities, official documents and publications together with photographs, drawings, press material, fiction and other literary genres seemed to be adequate sources. Finally, the abundance and availability of such materials in the archives identified as relevant in the three cities made this a viable and fruitful research option.

By describing how the archival material used was selected, systematised and finally analysed, the aim of this chapter is to justify the choice of archival research as the most adequate approach to the study of wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction in the context of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. One of the purposes of discussing the research methodology in an interdisciplinary, but fundamentally historical–sociological dissertation, as the present one aims to be, is to allow the reader the possibility of replicating the investigation by revealing where the author found her data. This is possibly the only way for other scholars to be able to examine rigorously the author's selection and interpretation of such data.

The chapter commences with a brief elucidation of why the analysis of archival material is seen to be the most suitable way of substantiating the three propositions made in this thesis. Following this, it considers the kind of materials the author was interested in examining and the preliminary classification used for organising the information that was subsequently collected during the different stages of fieldwork. Then there is a brief discussion about the challenges met during archival work. This is followed by a section that goes through the main archives visited in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid, and gives representative examples of the kind of information that the author was able to collect in each of them. The following section attempts to explain how the different materials were approached and used at the stage of analysis. Finally, a note on terminology has been included to clarify the way in which certain key terms and designations are used in the subsequent chapters. The conclusion summarises the main aspects discussed in the preceding sections.

2.1 Why archival research?

Archival research is extensively practised by historical sociologists, but it is not the only methodological tool available in the discipline. Practitioners of retrospective ethnography,[83] for example, might rely on community and family accounts to reconstruct past events. Very few, if any, of the individuals that were directly involved in the Spanish Civil War and the post-war reconstruction of the sites and cities examined in this thesis are still alive, and it would therefore have been difficult to base

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[83] Charles Tilly distinguished between two main currents in recent historical sociology: retrospective ethnography and critical comparison. See Charles Tilly, "History of and in Sociology. Introduction to the Didactic Seminar on Methodologies of the History of Sociology" (paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Montréal, 2006).

the research on direct interviews.[84] On the other hand, these people's descendants could have been interviewed had the aim of the thesis been to examine the individual choices and motivations informing decisions on destruction and reconstruction policies. Yet, as already indicated, the emphasis of this investigation has been on the facts and technical details of the destruction and reconstruction processes (type of destruction, type of works, funding, etc.) and the official rhetoric underlying them. For both purposes, official documents and publications seemed to be more adequate sources than second-hand accounts. Moreover, press material, fiction and other kinds of literature written during the period under consideration have also been considered as a way of complementing the administrative voices found in the official documentation. In the context of a dictatorship, complementing often means reinforcing. However, it turned out that, despite the censorship affecting publications under Franco's rule, some groups found ways of ignoring or even challenging the dominant official voices.

This was a significant finding, which somehow challenged the commonly shared understanding that the Spanish Civil War and the establishment of Franco's dictatorship entailed a complete break with the recent past (the Second Republic) and the absolute disappearance of any dissenting voices. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the political and discursive discontinuities that resulted from the Civil War and the change of regime were accompanied by continuities at other levels in the realm of planning and architecture. It is the tensions or contradictions that are to be found in the official documentation—between administrative documents and political pamphlets, for example—which largely sustain the main arguments of this thesis: that wartime destruction can act as a catalyst for urban redevelopment, that urban reconstruction may constitute a marker of a violent regime change, and that ambitious reconstruction plans can sometimes result in modest and fragmented post-war city rebuilding processes.

2.2 Materials sought

In December 2005 the author had the opportunity to explore and preliminarily assess the availability and scope of archival material on the destruction and reconstruction of Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid. Such preliminary exploration suggested that the

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[84] Nevertheless, when the opportunity exceptionally came up, the author did not hesitate to share informal conversations with an old lady who witnessed the transformations of the Barri de la Catedral in Barcelona, the first of three cases examined.

documents and sources to be collected could be divided into three groups according to their nature. Such a division was subsequently maintained throughout the research process for practical purposes:

Primary textual sources:
- Military reports
- Administrative reports and documentation
- Official publications and legislation

Secondary textual sources:
- Newspaper articles
- Articles in magazines and architectural publications
- Political literature (speeches, pamphlets, leaflets, etc.)
- Academic literature
- Technical literature
- Fiction

Primary visual sources:
- Maps and plans of the cities and neighbourhoods
- Aerial photographs of the sites
- Photographs of the sites at different moments
- Reconstruction plans with a special emphasis on the selected sites
- Architectural drawings

After the first round of archival fieldwork in summer 2006, the materials were classified thematically as well. First, the documents were divided into two main sections, one on destruction and another on reconstruction. It was soon obvious that the bulk of the material would go under the second section, and also that the distinction between the two was not always as clear-cut as originally expected. However, the division was maintained and the material on destruction was organised in three subsections, one for each city. The same was done with the material on reconstruction, except that in this case a sub-section containing material on post-war reconstruction in Spain in general was included. Furthermore, within each sub-section the materials were grouped according to the classification outlined above (military reports, administrative reports

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and documentation, etc). Except for the fiction, all these materials can be considered as archival.

The way the materials were organised at this early stage of the research process was not only useful for managing practically what gradually became a vast amount of paperwork, but has also informed the structure of the thesis and the final presentation of findings and arguments. As will be discussed later, the primary textual and visual sources were used mainly for reconstructing the facts and events associated with the destruction and reconstruction of the particular sites, whereas the secondary textual sources allowed for examining the official and public discourses that emerged around these events.

Between September 2006 and February 2007, while in Mexico City, the author examined the material collected, and began to write a first draft of the section on Barcelona. In March 2007, a second round of fieldwork was completed. This time only a few specific archives and libraries in Barcelona and Madrid were visited with the aim of covering some of the gaps identified during the first stage of analysis and writing. Between summer 2007 and spring 2008, the drafts of the three empirical chapters were finalised.

2.3 The experience in the archives

Archives are problematic from many points of view. Most of them are managed by official or public institutions and hence subject to the existing government's decisions. Under certain political circumstances, this might affect the availability and accessibility of the information stored in them. Under extreme situations, it might lead to the destruction of particular documents. But archives are also problematic in themselves. What information is stored in the first place, and how it is stored, is not a straightforward matter. Not everything can be stored. Conventional archives are almost intrinsically biased towards written and printed materials, especially those produced by official bodies. This means that the past experiences of what are considered subordinate social groups (be they children, women, colonial subjects or workers)—who have little or no access to the public sphere and little possibility of generating printed matter—are significantly underrepresented in the world of archives.

Furthermore, individual archivists can have considerable responsibility when it comes to deciding which documents and files are kept in an archive for public access, and which ones are left unrecorded and hidden in the basement. Though unsystematic and disorderly archives constitute a challenge for the researcher, overly tidy archives should raise her suspicions. After all, somebody must have taken on the task of organising the materials according to a specific logic, and in the process may have been tempted to discard items that they could not place under any of the pre-established categories or which seemed irrelevant.

When the author started this particular research, she expected to find that materials in the different archives that she visited in Spain were equally acessible. Broadly speaking, it was easier to find and gain access to municipal archival material for the period under consideration in Barcelona and Bilbao than in Madrid. Barcelona and Bilbao are of course smaller than Madrid, and probably have produced fewer administrative documents over the years than the capital city. But it also seemed plausible to think that the fact that Barcelona and Bilbao are located in, and even constitute, the centres of regions under autonomous governments probably also explains why their historical records are better administered. Small governments informed by nationalist ideologies may be more prone to take good care of their historical records. In the case of Catalonia and the Basque Country, the political and linguistic repression experienced by the Catalan and Basque populations under Franco's four-decade dictatorial regime has probably reinforced the predisposition of their now autonomous governments to set up accessible and efficient regional and local archives. After all, researching the history and particularities of a specific territory is a way of fostering and reinforcing a national identity.

The municipal archives in Barcelona (Arxiu Muncipal Administratiu de Barcelona, Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat and Arxiu Fotogràfic) are particularly well organised and their materials easy to access. The buildings, usually historic buildings, have modern and functional interior facilities. Most archival material on Bilbao and its environs is accessible at the municipal archive (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao), which is located in one of the floors of the city hall. The research rooms were undergoing refurbishment while the author was there, and it is likely they have gained a more pleasant and functional appearance after the work was finished. Most of the files that the author was

interested in were stored elsewhere (in the nearby town of Mungia), but the author was encouraged to ask for the materials to be brought on site. They usually arrived within a day or two.

In contrast, the location of and access to relevant archival data in Madrid involved more challenges. The municipality of Madrid was partly administered by the central government during the Civil War and its post-war reconstruction was also coordinated by a governmental body, the *Junta de Reconstrucción de Madrid* (Madrid Reconstruction Board). As a result, the documentation relating to the reconstruction of the capital city during the period under consideration is scattered among various national, regional and municipal archives in the city and the town of Alcalá de Henares, about 50 kilometres away. Unfortunately, there is no systematic inventory detailing what can be found where, which means that researchers (at least freelance researchers) are forced to visit each potentially relevant archive and ask the staff on site for information. Apart from the dispersal of materials, the vastness and fairly chaotic nature of the national administrative archive, the *Archivo General de la Administración*, in Alcalá de Henares, also contributed to the author finding the Madrilenian archives somewhat dispiriting.

From a more prosaic point of view, visiting archives is not always a satisfying and productive experience. For example, the fact that most archives only opened in the mornings was sometimes challenging. If, additionally, they had a daily limit on the number of items researchers were allowed to request, the experience became all the more discouraging. If none of the items asked for on a particular morning was of any relevance (and this happened relatively often), the author had to wait until the next day to make any progress. Fortunately, libraries and other institutions where press material and secondary literature could be found were open in the afternoons and evenings, which meant that the second half of the day was not necessarily wasted.

It is important for reseachers to be allowed to make photocopies or scans of the documents as many of them do not have limitless time to spend in the archives. Often it is not possible to read through all the material on site, but only to browse through it, make notes and copy sections of the text by typing it down on a laptop or similar device. But the most preferable working method is to make photocopies. Fortunately,

the archives that ended up being the most important for this research had fairly generous photocopying policies, and the author was able to take significant amounts of paperwork with her for a later, more careful analysis.

2.4 Archives visited, materials collected

This section introduces briefly the archives visited that proved relevant for the research. First, the national archives and libraries in the capital city are introduced, then the section moves on to the local archives and libraries in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid. Some of the most representative materials collected in each of the archives will also be described.

2.4.1 National archives and libraries

The aim of visiting the *Archivo General Histórico Militar* (General Historic Military Archive) in Madrid was to find information on the destruction of the three cities, including details on the military tactics deployed, types of bombs and artillery ammunition dropped, etc. The author spent a number of days, or rather mornings, there (the archive opened from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.), but was not entirely successful in finding the specific information she sought. There were massive inventories of microfilm rolls, which the author had to browse through with hardly any guidance, in trying to find the rolls detailing the activity of the rebel troops in the three cities. A number of reports on the wartime situation of the three cities with regard to food supplies, evacuations, refuges, etc. were identified, but very little about their destruction. The reports on the bombings of Barcelona, for example, were usually about specific strikes on the port and factories outside the city, but never on any downtown areas. A few months later, Prof. Joan Villarroya—who has written various books on the bombing campaigns in Spain and is cited on several occasions in this thesis—told the author in an informal telephone conversation that there is hardly any information about the attacks on civilian targets in the military records from the Civil War. In almost all the reports, these were identified as military targets.

At the Archivo General de la Administración in Alcalá de Henares, which has been referred to already as a particularly challenging place but where most of the material on *Regiones Devastadas* (the Devastated Areas Department, which Franco created in 1938) is kept, the author was nonetheless able to locate a set of files detailing the

successive projects for the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña in Madrid. The information found on the *Comité de Reconstrucción, Reforma y Saneamiento* (the Reconstruction, Reform and Sanitisation Committee), which led the emergency reconstruction measures in the capital city during the war, was, on the other hand, not very useful in the end, consisting mainly of pay-rolls and a few, random projects for disinfection facilities. The author also paid several visits to the archive and library of the *Ministerio de Fomento* (Public Works Ministry), situated in the labyrinthine *Nuevos Ministerios* complex on Paseo de la Castellana, where several official documents on the post-war reconstruction of Spain as well as more recent articles reviewing the reconstruction process—especially in relation to Regiones Devastadas—were to be found. At the *Biblioteca* and *Hemeroteca Nacionales* (National Library and Newspaper Library), founded in 1712 and located next to Plaza de Colón, some attention-grabbing documents on Spain's economic reconstruction were identified. But what was more interesting for the purposes of this investigation was the presence of press material on the reconstruction of Madrid, its new aesthetics, and particularly a few articles commenting on the project for Falange's headquarters on the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña.

2.4.2 Archives in Barcelona

The *Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona* (Barcelona Municipal Admnistrative Archive) was one of the first archives visited, in December 2005. The author then went back twice, first during the first round of fieldwork in summer 2006 and subsequently in spring 2007. The staff were quite helpful in advising as to which files could be potentially interesting to the author. There is a vast amount of material in the archive under the label *Junta de Defensa Pasiva*, which includes information about the wartime activities of the Barcelona Passive Defence Board and the fire department, maps and drawings indicating the exact impact of the bombs in the city as well as extensive information about the municipal construction of anti-air raid shelters. Furthermore, several files contained general information about reconstruction in Barcelona, including demolition and clearance undertakings as well as a detailed account of the funding procedure that allowed the city council to finance reconstruction after the war. Another group of files provided specific, and surprisingly abundant, information on the reconstruction of the area in front of the Cathedral. Most of the information about the area during the period covering the pre-war project for Gran Via C to the various post-

war works that eventually led to the opening of Avinguda de la Catedral/Avenida de la Catedral was available.

The *Arxiu Històric de Barcelona* (Barcelona Historic Archive) is located in the ancient Archdeacon's House, besides the Cathedral, and allows its users a privileged view of Avinguda de la Catedral. Here, it was possible to access a considerable amount of newspaper and magazine articles about the streets that were part of the Barri de la Catedral (Corribia, Plaça Nova, Bou de la Plaça Nova, Boters, Tapineria, etc.) and the transformations that the area underwent after the Civil War. What made it relatively easy to identify the relevant documents was the existence of annotated lists of the articles that have been published on specific streets of Barcelona for the past hundred years. Although probably not exhaustive, the lists seemed nevertheless to be almost complete, and except for the years that the Civil War lasted, the articles spanned about a hundred years. Another helpful aspect of this archive was that it was open the whole day, which made it possible to review administrative files at the Arxiu Municipal Administratiu in the morning and press materials in the afternoon. Some pertinent literature on Barcelona written during the period under consideration and documents relating to the funding of post-war reconstruction were available at the library of the *Col·legi de Arquitectes de Catalunya i Balears* (Catalonia and the Balears Architects' Association), which also has a privileged view of Avinguda de la Catedral. The author took several pictures of the area from their premises. At the *Arxiu Fotogràfic* (Photographic Archive), digital pictures of the same area in the 1940s and 1950s could be requested. Here, too, the material was classified according to street names, which made it easy to locate the relevant photographs.

2.4.3 Archives in Bilbao

As already intimated, the Archivo Municipal de Bilbao contained most of the necessary administrative information on the reconstruction of the bridges (and construction of the two drawbridges immediately before the war). The contents of the 36 box-files that the author requested were not all equally relevant, and much of the paperwork was somewhat repetitive. But, on the other hand, this possibly indicates that the greater part of the original documentation has been retained. At the *Biblioteca de la Diputación Foral de Vizcaya* (Biscay Provincial Deputyship Library) the author looked up a number of articles in newspapers and magazines, mostly local press, that referred to

Bilbao's bridges, including the inaugurations of the rebuilt bridges. Thanks to a literature review on the bridges, which was available at the *Biblioteca Municipal de Bidebarrieta* (Bidebarrieta Municipal Library) and contained references to various pieces of news, it became relatively easy to locate the relevant articles at the library of the Diputación. The author was further helped by a member of the staff who seemed to know the content of some of the old Basque magazines by heart! At the *Archivo Foral de Vizcaya* (Biscay Provincial Archive), in turn, it was possible to request digital copies of photographs of the bridges before the war and of their ruins immediately after they were dynamited in June 1937. The Archivo Foral keeps historical documents on Biscay, including Bilbao, and this is also where the earliest documented references to the bridges were found.

2.4.4 Archives in Madrid

The first municipal archive visited in Madrid was the *Archivo de Villa de Madrid* (Madrid Municipal Archive), which is located on the former military premises of the Cuartel del Conde Duque, a vast and beautiful building not far from Plaza de España. The process of locating information was rather time consuming here. The archival index contained call numbers that referred to microfilm rolls, which in turn contained different call numbers indicating the location of the actual files or documents with information about specific streets. The author was looking for information on the reconstruction of buildings on Paseo del Pintor Rosales and Ferraz in the environs of the Cuartel de la Montaña. Some of the files identified in the microfilm rolls were missing, but the ones that could be checked were arguably enough to give a sense of the situation of the area after the war. The author paid a couple of visits to the *Hemeroteca Municipal de Madrid* (Madrid Newspaper Library), which, like the Archivo de Villa, is located in the Cuartel del Conde Duque. Unlike the Arxiu Històric de Barcelona with its annotated lists of articles on specific streets, the Hemeroteca featured thematic lists. Unfortunately, these were fairly unsystematic, and seemed to include articles published mainly in the early 1970s, and thus beyond the general time-frame of this thesis. Nevertheless, a few articles about the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña, the park that eventually replaced them at the end of the 1960s, the temple of Debod and the memorial that was inaugurated in 1972 seemed highly pertinent, making the author eventually reconsider the original time-frame (1939-1959) she was to study for the case of Madrid.

The visits to the library of the *Colegio de Arquitectos de Madrid* (Madrid Architectural Association) proved particularly fruitful as the library keeps copies of all the issues of *Reconstrucción*, the monthly magazine of Regiones Devastadas (the post-war reconstruction department), and the *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*. It also holds copies of the conference proceedings of the various *Asambleas Nacionales de Arquitectos* (National Architects' Assemblies), which were organised throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Moreover, some of Falange's technical reports on town planning and architecture can be found here.

The *Cartoteca de la Consejería de Obras Públicas de Madrid* (Madrid Public Works Regional Council Map Library) holds some aerial photographs of Madrid and the area of interest for this research taken in 1943 and 1955, which proved very helpful for identifying the state of the ruins of the Cuartel at different points in time. Finally, the *Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid* (Madrid Regional Archive), situated in the old, beautifully remodelled *El Águila* beer factory, has a wonderful collection of photographs of the capital city during the post-war period, most of which pertain to the Santos Yubero series. Visitors are allowed to borrow slides of the pictures for free, and make digital copies of them if necessary. The dramatic pictures of the masses celebrated in the ruins of the Cuartel included in the chapter on Madrid are part of the Santos Yubero collection.

Aside from the archives and libraries just mentioned, the author visited a few public libraries from where she borrowed fiction about the Spanish Civil War and other pieces that seemed relevant or simply inspiring for the research. It ought to be noted, finally, that some of the institutions visited have been omitted either because they did not have the material expected or because it turned out to be of marginal importance in the end. Finally, the author would like to mention the British Library as the first place in which she became familiar with official publications of the Franco regime and the *Archivo de la Palabra* in Mexico City, where she had the opportunity to read a few interviews made with Republican exiles.

2.5 Using the archival material

Archival research cannot be considered a method in itself, and is more accurately described as "[the use of] a particular type of data—data generated in the past, stored in

archives—which can be researched *using a variety of methods*"[85] (emphasis added). Hence, archival material can be used in many different ways. It is generally argued that archival material can be approached from a *realist* or an *idealist/social constructionist* viewpoint. In the first case, historical documents are taken at face value and used to reconstruct the past, whereas in the second researchers are more concerned with archives and historical documents as a *topic* itself. Social constructionist researchers presuppose archival material is in many ways flawed, having problems of *authenticity*, *credibility*, *representativeness* and *meaning*.[86] They look instead at the organisation and content of the documents in order to *trace* the social and political meanings embedded in them and ultimately map out the social and cultural context in which they were produced.[87] The "use of historical sources to discover the reality of which these sources are traces"[88] suggests that archival material cannot be regarded as self-supporting evidence, but needs an interpretive framework, which may in turn be the result of earlier interpretations of archival material.

In practice, the distinction between the two approaches seems more blurred, and it is suggested that the analysis undertaken in this thesis is based on a more intuitive approach that combines elements of the two. Most of the materials gathered belonged to the group that was defined as primary textual sources. As already noted, it was particularly difficult to identify relevant military reports, and those which the author had the opportunity of examining might have problems of credibility and representativeness.[89] The same can be said of the largest proportion in this group, the administrative documents and official publications detailing the impact of destruction, the wartime and post-war reconstruction plans, the projects and budgets, and the implementation procedures followed in the three cities and, more specifically, in the selected sites. These documents were initially analysed as sources of descriptive information, taking dates, figures and so on "at face value", thus using a realist approach. Official publications and some of the secondary textual sources—essentially newspaper and magazine articles—were also used as descriptive sources of information

[85] Ben Gidley, "Doing Historical and Archival Research," in *Researching Society and Culture*, ed. Clive Seale (London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004), 250.

[86] See John Scott, *A Matter of Record : Documentary Sources in Social Research* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).

[87] Gidley, "Doing Historical and Archival Research," 254.

[88] Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories : Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1994) 14.

[89] See Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 2nd ed ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 391.

at first. By triangulating and contrasting the information from the primary sources with the secondary sources, the author was trying to compensate for some of the potential flaws of the administrative material.

While continually aware of the incompleteness and potentially problematic nature of the archival information she was working with, the author still aimed to reconstruct the sequences of events—the facts and technical details—that led to the destruction and subsequent rebuilding of the three selected sites. In the writing process, the aim was to generate as smooth accounts of the events as possible, but it is also explicitly acknowledged in the text when archival information is missing. So, little by little, based on the primary textual sources, the outlines of the three destruction and reconstruction processes emerged. The secondary textual sources, including newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, fiction and other literature, provided samples of the rhetoric and the discourses that fuelled the destruction of the three cities and later sustained their reconstruction. Both the stylistic conventions (form) and the themes and ideas (content) that appeared to mould the various materials gathered became relevant to the author. The analysis was now moving closer to the social constructionist approach.

Even though the stylistic conventions and the language employed in Spanish official documents, especially at the municipal level, did not change dramatically between the Second Republic and the Franco regime (a number of bureaucrats remained in the new administration), some remarkably ornate formulas were introduced under the latter. For instance, rhetorical phrases celebrating the New Spain and deriding the "barbarous Reds" can be found in the first paragraphs of otherwise purely technical reports, and set phrases of adherence to Franco and the *Movimiento Nacional* (National Movement) appear at the end of all official documents almost without exception. The bold coexistence of conventional technical language and expressions of ideological allegiance and patriotic flourish is perhaps the most striking feature of the administrative documents produced under the Franco regime. Such formal combination of practice and rhetoric is only matched—as far as the archival material examined here is concerned—by some of the technical documents that labour unions and leftist associations generated in the social-revolutionary atmosphere that followed the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. The difference is that these did not have the time to

mutate into the arguably weary and empty expressions that the dictatorship's formulas turned into over time.

The stylistic conventions and language employed in the secondary textual sources, that is, the post-war newspaper and magazine articles, academic writings and other kinds of literature that are part of the archival material here examined, are more varied. A number of journalists, writers and scholars seemed to prefer the use of more neutral and discreet styles, which did not attract the author's attention for being particularly representative of the values of the New Spain, but probably did not attract the regime's censors' attention either. And this was obviously an advantage for many writers who were not particularly sympathetic to Franco, and simply wished to be left in peace. Other writers did not hesitate to include overblown expressions of praise for the Caudillo and the new political regime, especially during the first years of the dictatorship. Falange's publications contain by far the most extravagant style and language, echoing the Party's early aspirations to become a spiritual and aesthetic movement. The competing source for spiritual inspiration, the Catholic Church, influenced writing conventions too, yet differently. Unlike the often radical and sometimes even poetic Falangist expressions, the prudish, overindulgent conventions that shaped the sermons of a predominantly conservative priesthood also ended up shaping the paternalist, purportedly naïve and unimaginative style that underpinned much of the regime's discourse and propaganda.

At a relatively early stage of the analysis, certain recurrent themes could be identified in the various materials collected, which are not necessarily new to the established scholarship on the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime: the rebels' denunciations of the barbarism of the Red-Marxists, their emphasis on patriotism, family and masculinity, the new regime's loathing for the city as the incarnation of the evil forces of Liberalism and Communism, its idealisation of the Spanish Empire and Roman Spain, its particular melange of modern and reactionary ideas, and so on. Together, these themes helped to constitute a loose interpretative framework, which allowed the author to situate the post-war reconstruction of the three selected sites, and of Spain more generally, within the larger context of the nation's post-war recovery and the establishment of Franco's dictatorial regime. Some of the themes proved more persistent than others in the fields of architecture, urbanism and public works policies,

to which most of the archival material gathered relate. The distrust of the city and the idealisation of the Spanish Empire were particularly important ideological elements within these fields.

Dealing with visual sources—in this case, maps, plans, drawings and photographs—is in many ways not unlike dealing with texts. The emphasis on the distinction between the content of an image and the context within which it was produced is applicable here, too, and also "the subjectivities through which images are viewed".[90] For the purposes of this research, maps, plans and drawings were used to complement and illustrate the information that was extracted from the textual sources. In exceptional cases, such as the Cuartel de la Montaña in Madrid, for which it proved more difficult to find textual information initially, street maps were helpful to establish a simple chronology of the transformations of the site.

Photographs of the three sites were used mostly as illustrations and only exceptionally as objects of deeper analysis and interpretation. Unlike the plans and the drawings of the sites, which are merely projections on paper, the available photographs arguably constitute the most accurate testimony of the transformations of these three areas. In spite of potential issues of representativeness and credibility, the photographic material has been key for visualising and verifying the information obtained from the textual and other visual sources. As already suggested, only in the exceptional case of the photographs of the commemorations that were celebrated among the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña in the 1940s does the author provide a deeper interpretation (see Chapter 6, pp. 268-269). The fact that these pictures appeared as particularly striking to the author might have to do with the author's subjective experience of them, to use Pink's terminology. The photographs are here interpreted as representative of a very Spanish (Castilian), Catholic aesthetics before which the author feels an odd mixture of familiarity, curiosity, scepticism and respect.[91]

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[90] Sarah Pink, "Interdisciplinary Agendas in Visual Research: Re-Situating Visual Anthropology," *Visual Studies* 18, no. 2 (2003): 187.

[91] The Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime continue to carry a significant weight for most Spaniards—albeit different weights—and Spanish politics is still very much tainted by references to the country's relatively immediate past. In spite of having completed a five-year undergraduate programme in politics at Madrid's Universidad Complutense, the author was little acquainted with the Franco regime as a political system before undertaking this research. Undergraduate courses in Spanish political history ended with the Spanish Civil War in 1939, and courses in Spanish contemporary politics began in 1975 with Franco's death and the transition to democracy. There was thus a gap in the curriculum of almost

2.6 Note on terminology

Some clarification with respect to the terminology used in the subsequent chapters seems pertinent here. First, the two sides confronted during the Spanish Civil War are referred to in various terms throughout the text. The Republican side appears as Republicans, Reds or loyalists, and the rebel side is identified as rebels, *Nacionales*[92] or Francoists. The terms rebels and Nacionales are generally used to designate the supporters of the military coup during the war, whereas the latter refers to the supporters of Franco's dictatorship after the war. Second, in the sections that examine the case of Barcelona, both the Catalan and Spanish (Castilian) names of streets, institutions and other entities are usually included when discussing the pre-war and wartime periods, whereas only the Spanish names are mentioned when Franco's post-war dictatorship is discussed, thus reflecting the fact that Catalan was banned during this time. The Catalan designation is generally used when the text is not considering any of these periods in particular. Third, in the section on Bilbao, the different names that the bridges of the city received over time appear in the text depending on which time period is being discussed, yet an effort has been made to clarify which bridge infrastructure is ultimately being referred to. Finally, in each chapter the original Spanish (or Catalan) names of institutions, titles and so on appear in italics accompanied by their English translation in brackets the first time that they are mentioned. Subsequently, the Spanish name and the English translation are used

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forty years of Spain's twentieth-century political history. University professors' implicit argument that there was no need to waste time on the Franco regime since too much time had already been wasted by those who had to live through the four decades of dictatorship seemed natural to the author and her peer students in the 1990s. It is perhaps difficult to say how representative this experience is of Spanish public universities at large. But it is suggested that this predominant attitude among the academic staff was characteristic of—and possibly understandable in—the ideologically progressive members of the generations born during the Civil War, or a little later, who spent their youth with the sense of being deprived of their freedom and basic rights.

In view of the above, at first it was almost inevitable for the author not to approach the literature and materials collected with the assumption that the years of the dictatorship was above all a repressive and uninteresting period, during which everything was so tightly controlled that nothing interesting could really happen. However, as she collected more and more information on the three sites and began examining it, the author's image of the regime as slightly stiff and one-dimensional changed, and she was able to appreciate a more complex, contradictory and rich image. Another important aspect of the author's research experience has been the fact of reading and thinking about Spain in a different national context, the British, and writing for an audience which is not necessarily familiar with the empirical cases examined here. It is suggested that this might have contributed further to freeing the author from pre-established assumptions and expectations.

[92] *Nacionales* is often translated into English as 'Nationalists', but the author prefers to maintain the Spanish designation, which is different from *nacionalista*, the Spanish word for nationalist.

indistinctly throughout the chapter, although generally the Spanish designation is preferred.

2. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to explain why archival research was deemed the most suitable approach to the topic of this thesis and how the archival material that constitutes its empirical basis was collected and analysed. It has been argued that historical research is sometimes the only way of carrying out scholarly investigation of certain contexts when these contexts are difficult to study in real time because of physical constrictions and limitations on the availability of consistent and reliable information. Wars and dictatorships, including the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship, were introduced as examples of these potentially more challenging research environments, which might therefore be better examined retrospectively.

There are different ways of carrying out historical research, and archival research is one of them. Archival research was deemed the most suitable mode of enquiry for developing and illustrating the three propositions that structure this thesis. After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of this approach, the different materials that were looked for in the archives (primary and secondary textual sources, primary visual sources) were described. Following this, details were given about how the notes and paperwork that was gradually collected was organised according to the nature of the material (administrative documents, newspaper articles, etc.) and some main themes (destruction, reconstruction, etc.) The author's experience in the different archives visited in the three cities was also addressed, stressing the fact that accessibility to and availability of materials in Barcelona and Bilbao posed fewer challenges than in Madrid, where the materials were more scattered and generally less well organised. At the same time, the potentially problematic nature of overly tidy archives was pointed out.

The archives visited and some of the documents collected in each of them were subsequently introduced with the aim of facilitating the possibility of replicating this investigation. The next section discussed how the materials were analysed. It was suggested that the author's approach to the archival material lay somewhere between realism and social-constructionism. Although the author was interested in the facts and

technical details of the processes of destruction and reconstruction, she was also keen on tracing the discourses and rhetoric underpinning the two processes. Bearing in mind the issues of authenticity, representativeness, credibility and meaning that might affect the validity of archival material, details were provided on the stylistic conventions and the recurrent themes found in, for example, the Francoist documents such as the profusion of patriotic flourish and the constant opposition between the orderly nature of the New Spain and the barbarism of the Republicans. By identifying certain recurrent themes an interpretive framework gradually emerged. This framework helped reinforcing the three propositions presented on the relationship between destruction and reconstruction or, more generally, between history, political discourse and the built environment in the particular context of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. Finally, a few remarks were made on how certain key terminology has been used—particularly when Catalan and Spanish designations exist—and the conventions followed for translated terms from Spanish into English.

Chapter 3

The Spanish Civil War and its aftermath (1936-1959)

"There are lots of true stories about the Spanish Civil War that remain to be told by the historians of future generations. Only they will be able to sift the wheat from the chaff, the true from the false, to weigh the good and the bad, to lay the blame or mete out the praise. We are too close to it. Many facts are not available, and those we have are clouded by our emotions."

Herbert L. Matthews, reporter for the *The New York Times* during the war[93]

3. Introduction

Journalist Herbert L. Matthews' appreciation continues to be relevant today. Seventy years after the end of the Spanish Civil War, some would argue that we are still too close to it. And although more facts are available, they are still often clouded by our emotions. How many generations have to pass before a historical period can be reviewed *dispassionately*? Is it ever possible? The intention of this introduction is not to delve into a discussion on the limits of historiography, but to suggest that it is a challenge to write, if only superficially, about a period—the Civil War and the dictatorship that followed—that has strongly marked the hearts and minds of several generations of Spaniards, including the author's.

The aim of this chapter is to provide some context for the three empirical cases of wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid examined in this thesis. The period under consideration spans the years 1936 to 1959, and encompasses the Civil War (1936-1939) and the first two decades of General Franco's dictatorship, usually known as the autarchy (1939-1959). The chapter starts by giving a brief overview of the outbreak of the war and commenting on the key participation of the German and Italian air forces in the conflict, and more specifically in the destruction of a number of Spanish towns and cities, including Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid. It then goes on to discuss each city's role in and experiences of the

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[93] Cited in Alberto Reig Tapia, "Guernica Como Símbolo," in *La Guerra Civil En El País Vasco. 50 Años Después*, ed. Carmelo Garitaonandía Garnacho and José Luis de la Granja (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, 1987), 153.

conflict. These, it will be argued, depended significantly on the particular city's geographical location and relationship with the Republican government as the war unfolded. Subsequently, the chapter moves to the reconstruction efforts that both sides undertook during the conflict and the new regime continued on its own once the war ended. Since reconstruction proper is generally of more interest to the overall argument of this thesis, the chapter spends more time on how reconstruction was organised by the Franco regime than on the two sides' wartime emergency measures. Fundamentally, it looks at which institutions were created to address reconstruction after the war, what their priorities were, how reconstruction works were organised by the new regime, and what planning and architectural guidelines were devised for what was perceived as an immense and unprecedented national task.

3.1 The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War

From a broader perspective, the Spanish Civil War can be viewed as the outcome of the orchestrated repression by Spain's reactionary forces of yet another attempt to bring the country onto the path of secular modernisation. It is often argued that the nineteenth-century liberal bourgeois revolution failed in Spain despite early indications of the contrary such as the proclamation of the Cádiz Constitution in 1812—in fact, one of the first liberal monarchic constitutions in the world. The Cádiz Constitution was in force only briefly. Subsequent attempts throughout the nineteenth century to consolidate the rule of liberal governments and achieve economic and cultural liberalisation came up against the institutional power of the monarchy and the Church, and the dominant position of the landed nobility. Spain remained backward in the eyes of its more developed northern neighbours, but also in the eyes of many Spaniards. The sense of national failure culminated with the loss of the country's last colonial possessions in 1898. From a closer point of view, the Spanish Civil War can be seen as the result of the increasing social and political tensions faced by the Republican regime since its establishment in 1931, following Primo de Rivera's conservative dictatorship under the reign of Alfonso XIII. Spain's political climate grew increasingly tense in 1934 after the triumph of the rightist coalition, the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), in the general elections held that year. The CEDA's victory was a major backlash for the governing leftist coalition. The electoral swing to the right could be seen as an indication that substantial sectors of the population did not approve of the leftist government's approach towards some of the most sensitive issues in Spanish

political culture: the status of religion (and the Church), the role of the military and the political-territorial organisation of the state.

The result of the 1934 elections triggered major social unrest among workers and leftist activists, and—fearing conservatives would move Spain backwards—they engaged in systematic riots and strikes, which made it difficult for the newly appointed government to rule. Labour unions and leftist associations organised demonstrations and revolts, and were increasingly met by armed groups of young men with Fascist and Spanish-Nationalist ideas, who saw it as their mission to reinstate public order and defend the nation from International Socialism. The two groups constantly clashed, and there were killings almost daily during certain periods.

The critical situation led to early elections in February 1936. A large coalition of leftist and liberal Republican parties and factions joined in a Popular Front to run in the general elections. The rightist groups tried to join together in a similar front, but unsuccessfully. The *Frente Popular* won the elections, and power was back in the hands of the left. But the new leftist government faced the same difficulties as its conservative predecessor. The clashes between workers and rightist groups continued, especially in Catalonia. Violent anti-clerical actions began to take place. The general sense of unrest persisted, and grew worse after the elections in February. Within the military, rightist officers more or less overtly conspired against the government, convinced of its inability to handle the perceived threat of an imminent socialist revolution and the partition of Spain as a result of Catalan and Basque Nationalist demands. They were backed by a number of aristocrats, landowners and financiers, as well as the now illegal Falange party,[94] including their proto-militias, and the Carlists[95] in northern Spain. Several frustrated attempts at a military coup to remove the leftist government from power followed. Ideological discrepancies and personal rivalries among the potential leaders of the conspiracy made it difficult to act jointly.

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[94] Membership of Falange was made illegal in March 1936 after a spiral of killings amongst leftists and Falangists, which culminated with the attempted assassination of the Socialist Law Professor Luis Jiménez de Asúa. For a detailed history of Falange see Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain 1923-1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), Stanley G. Payne, *Falange. A History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961), José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, *Historia De Falange Española De Las JONS* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2000).

[95] The Carlists had defended the right to the Spanish throne of an alternative branch of the Bourbons since the nineteenth century. They constituted the most reactionary political force of 1930s Spain.

It was not until the 18th of July 1936 that the military conspirators managed to coordinate a national coup. Initially, the aim of the rebel generals was to overthrow the government, but not necessarily eliminate the Republican regime. There was a vague idea of establishing some kind of authoritarian transitory government to restore order and discipline in the nation's affairs. But the insurrection did not succeed in all of Spain. The military in Catalonia, Valencia, Madrid, Asturias and Biscay remained loyal to the Republican government, and a civil war commenced. From the beginning, the Republican government received pressure to distribute weapons among the population. Armed popular militias and committees emerged under the auspices of trade unions and other leftist associations, becoming a fundamental part of the Republican government's resistance movement against what was now perceived as a common enemy: Fascism. However, these groups often turned out to have their own agendas, which went beyond, or even against, the defence of the Republican institutions. Many saw the collapse of the Second Republic's formal political institutions as an unprecedented opportunity for social revolution. A similar radicalisation of aims took place on the rebel side, which gradually abandoned the idea of establishing a moderate authoritarian government for more totalitarian concepts of power, ultimately based on the single authority of the man who manoeuvred to become the *Caudillo*: General Franco. The internationalisation of the war further contributed to casting the conflict as a clash between Liberty and Fascism. Few people, including the conspirators, had imagined that the military coup of the 18th of July 1936 would lead to a three-year-long civil war, anticipating the ideological confrontation and the horrors that other nations in Europe and elsewhere in the world would endure between 1939 and 1945.

The war shook the everyday life of the Spanish population both at the front and the rearguard. Towns and villages, quite randomly, finished up on one of the two sides, Republicans or *Nacionales*, and entire families had to flee for their lives. Neighbours gave one another away, and the so-called *paseos* (literally, walks), by which the alleged supporters of the opposite side were individually walked with their hands up to the outskirts of their locality and shot from behind, became a common practice on both sides. As in most fratricide confrontations, the darkest impulses surfaced. But, at the same time, attitudes of civic courage and solidarity were equally notable.

3.2 The role of Italian Aviazione Legionaria and the German Luftwaffe

Hitler's and Mussolini's assistance to the rebels proved key for making the coup happen and ensuring the rebels' eventual victory. Both leaders sent thousands of men to fight on the rebel side, and it has been suggested that "the Italian ground forces came to constitute the hard core of the rebel army".[96] But it was probably the contribution of the German and Italian air forces that produced the most spectacular results. In August 1936, the Republicans attempted to recover the Balearic Islands from the rebels, but failed. Mallorca, where the rebels had installed their aero-naval base, could not be regained, and the squadrons of the Italian Aviazone Legionaria would continue using the island as their base throughout the rest of the conflict, carrying out increasingly systematic bombings of the coastal areas, especially the port cities. Barcelona, Tarragona, Valencia, Alicante and Cartagena were among the most affected with several hundreds of victims (in some cases, thousands), and another several hundred destroyed buildings and sunk boats.

Possibly the most dramatic instance of the Aviazione Legionaria's involvement in the Spanish Civil War occurred on the 16th of March 1938 when Mussolini gave the order to raze Barcelona to the ground: "*Iniziare da stanotte azione violenta su Barcelona con martellamento diluito nel tempo*" ("Begin violent action on Barcelona tonight through unremitting hammering"). Historians speculate on the reasons for *Il Duce*'s sudden urge to destroy the port city, and see it as a response to Hitler's annexation of Austria, or maybe a signal to France as it was about to sell weapons to the Spanish Republican army.[97] Franco, who at that point was not in the same hurry as Mussolini to finish the war, realised that the international reaction to the bombings would be exceptionally negative, unnecessarily harming his image and undermining the cause of the military insurrection. Consequently, he ordered a cessation of the bombings two days later, on 18th of March, although much death and destruction had already been caused by then.[98]

The German Luftwaffe was particularly significant for the occupation of the Basque Country. In March 1937, Franco instructed all the rebel forces to concentrate on one target: the northern front. The Basque Country, Cantabria and Asturias had to be

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[96] Dante A. Puzzo, *Spain and the Great Powers 1936-1939* (New York - London: Columbia University Press, 1962) 242.

[97] Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya, *España En Llamas: La Guerra Civil Desde El Aire* 171.

[98] Ibid.

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conquered. Some of the country's most important metallurgy and mining industries were to be found here, and the Germans shared a vested interest in occupying this area. Gradually, the German air force and the rebel ground forces developed an efficient tactic of air–land cooperation. The air raids crushed, terrorised and scattered the Basque-Republican battalions, which in their weakened state became easy preys to the rebel infantry. Much has been written on the German Luftwaffe's sadly famous bombing of the Basque town of Gernika on the 26th of April 1937, and there continues to be significant controversy with regard to the motivations behind the attack and the final number of victims. What historians seem to agree on, however, is that the Luftwaffe was successful in breaching the iron ring of Bilbao, the fortified system that enveloped the Basque capital city. As a result of the intense bombing campaign that finally led to the seizure of Bilbao, nearby towns Amorebieta, Durango and Eibar were left almost completely in ruins.

The bombing of Madrid increased as Franco realised the difficulty of taking over the capital city by land.[99] He is said to have exclaimed that he would "destroy Madrid rather than leaving it to the Marxists".[100] The equally stern determination of the Republican authorities and a majority of Madrilenians to resist the occupation—which is often celebrated as a paradigmatic example of popular resistance against Fascism[101]—helped delay Franco's victory.

Some accounts suggest that Madrilenians initially reacted with humour to the bombs, joking about their size and giving them funny nicknames. But sometimes humour turned into sheer irresponsibility and the Republican authorities had to put up signs to remind the population of the real danger of the air raids. Unlike Bilbao and Barcelona, Madrid came to enjoy the privilege of having a security zone from November 1936. The rebels agreed to not attack this particular area and civilians were voluntarily evacuated to those neighbourhoods. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the area largely coincided with the district of Salamanca, the nineteenth-century extension of the city, a traditionally conservative, bourgeois area.

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[99] Cf. G.J. Ashworth's observation in Chapter 1, p.30, that Madrid during the Spanish Civil War proves that urban environments can work as good defensive terrain
[100] Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya, España En Llamas: La Guerra Civil Desde El Aire 47.
[101] Michael Seidman, "Individualisms in Madrid During the Spanish Civil War," The Journal of Modern History 68, no. 1 (1996): 63.

3.3 The role of the three cities in the conflict and their different experiences of the war

Although the three cities had very different experiences of the war, their fates were linked by the cut and thrust that characterised the relationship among the Catalan, Basque and central governments almost from the start of the conflict. It is sometimes argued that reciprocal suspicions and recriminations came to obstruct the inter-governmental flows of information and communication, complicating the joint efforts to resist the military insurrection.

Barcelona's wartime experience was largely characterised by the initial failure of the coup in Catalonia, and the social revolutionary frenzy that broke out and spread across the city once the rebels were subdued. The city also suffered systematic aerial bombing from the sea, and the arrival *en masse* of war refugees from the rest of Spain. Moreover, the growing tensions between Communists, Socialists and Anarchists led to violent clashes among the political groups running the Catalan capital city after the start of the conflict.

Despite its industrial tradition and the fact that it remained loyal to the Republic, Bilbao did not witness the same kind of social turmoil that Barcelona did. Instead, it saw the approval of the Basque autonomy a few months into the war, followed by the establishment of the Basque government in the city. As the rebels made their way into Biscay, Bilbaoans lived under the terrifying threat of massive air raids akin to the one that had flattened Gernika.

Finally, Madrid's experience of the war was determined by its capital-city status and its three-year long resistance against the rebels' seizure. As in the case of Barcelona, the rebel military was initially subdued, and trade unions and popular committees took over public life. Their social-revolutionary principles and activities often challenged the Republican government's control of Madrid, and ultimately of Republican Spain as a whole.

Even though the Republican government did not represent any particular region of Spain but Spain as a whole, the discourses at the time largely identified the

geographical seat of the government, Madrid, with the government itself. When the government moved to Valencia in winter 1936, the Republican general military staff remained in the capital city, issuing orders from there. The constant exercise of this metonymical slip in wartime discourses allows for Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid to be seen as competitors and rivals, but also as equals and accomplices in the troublesome years that followed the military coup. Both Catalans and Basques and their governments systematically complained about not receiving the necessary support from the central government and staff in terms of military and material aid. At the same time, the two autonomous governments shared the feeling that as soon as they attempted to organise their own resistance, they were immediately admonished and constrained by the Republican central authorities.

From the central government's perspective, in turn, the challenge posed by the tangle of radical political parties and unions in Catalonia and the conservative and religious taint of the Basque Nationalists could not be ignored. If resistance against the rebels was, in the end, a state affair, the Republican government had to ensure that the numerous leftist factions attempting to gain influence and control over the military organisation in Catalonia were kept at bay. The balance between conciliatory and firm attitudes was not easy. Furthermore, it has been argued that the Soviet Union expected the predominance of the Communist Party not to be challenged in exchange for the support it was lending to the Republican troops. The crushing of the Anarchists in Barcelona in May 1937 is often used as an example of the Republican government's Communist allegiance.

In the Basque Country, the problem was almost the opposite: there, the lack of revolutionary zeal was regarded as almost synonymous with a lack of identification with the Republican cause. The Basque region's strong conservative tradition, very influenced by the Catholic church, was entirely incompatible with any attempt at social-revolutionary experimentation. The Basques' fundamental reason for supporting the Republic was that the central government approved the region's political autonomy in October 1936. And the Basque leadership was acutely aware that were the rebels to win it would terminate their new political status. There was continuous tension between the central and Basque governments.

Meanwhile, the central government and military staff tried to respond to the outbursts of revolutionary violence in Madrid, although very soon their main concern was holding back the rebel forces who approached the city from various directions. From the winter of 1936, the rebels' siege of Madrid began to consume much of the Republican government's energy, and it seems fair to say that it grew more inattentive to the other war fronts. The fate of the capital city never ceased to be a top priority for the Republican government, even after its move to Valencia.

Many wonder whether things would have ended differently had the alliance between Republicans and Basque Nationalists worked better and, more importantly, continued until a potential victory by the Republicans. Basque industry constituted a substantial asset that significantly improved the Nacionales' war machinery once they conquered Biscay. But the same question emerges with regard to Catalonia and Madrid. In what seems like a bizarre exercise of narcissism, each of these regions, especially their capital cities, perceived their role as the key determinant of the outcome of the war.

Spain, in general, was badly prepared for a war. The Republican army, and especially the militias, were poorly equipped. The government was unable to provide its troops with the same quantity and quality of materials that the rebels soon received from Germany and Italy, having ignored the international embargo imposed on both sides. The assistance that the Republicans obtained from the Soviet Union, France, Mexico and other countries came later, partly because of the international embargo; it was in any case not as substantial as that received by the rebels. Moreover, the coexistence of a highly centralist administration and the strong, but fairly recent, Catalan and Basque autonomist administrations was perhaps bound to trigger conflict. Reluctantly, the autonomous governments relied extensively on the instructions and supplies delivered by the central government and military staff. And, in spite of the autonomist fervour of their discussions, they somehow ended up acknowledging their dependency by presenting themselves as victims of the central government's abandonment when their expectations were not met. At the same time, the aid that Catalonia and the Basque Country sent to Madrid cannot be underestimated, nor the important role of port cities like Barcelona and Bilbao in receiving refugees from the rest of Spain, many of whom continued into exile by boat.

Of the three cities, Madrid was in the worst shape when the war ended. Three years of bombings and persistent artillery fire had left many of its neighbourhoods in complete ruins. Barcelona came second with the port and significant portions of its downtown urban fabric severely damaged by the rebel bombings. Bilbao was the least destroyed, and considering the ruins left by the rebel bombing raids in some of the nearby industrial towns, it is somehow surprising that the Basque capital city was spared more destruction.

3.4 Emergency reconstruction efforts

Both sides were quick to create emergency heritage protection services within their zones. In the Republican zone, the *Junta de Incautación y Protección del Tesoro Artístico* (Heritage Confiscation and Protection Committee) was created merely five days after the start of the war.[102] The Junta was responsible for provisionally confiscating any piece of real estate or art in danger. In the early stages of the conflict, religious buildings and art were particularly at risk in the Republican zone because of popular anti-clerical outbursts, which led to the destruction of thousands of religious buildings and art works. The Republican government strongly condemned this violence and tried to do its best to avoid it through the enforcement of legal measures and the organisation of educational campaigns to raise the population's awareness of the historic and artistic value of religious heritage.[103]

In the rebel zone, the *Junta Conservadora del Tesoro Artístico de Sevilla* (Seville Art Treasure Conservation Board) was formed after the rebels seized Seville at the very beginning of the conflict. Some time later, in January 1937, the *Servicio Artístico de Vanguardia* (Avant-garde Artistic Service) was created. The *Servicio General de Regiones Devastadas* (Devastated Areas General Service) was approved in January 1938 to address reconstruction proper. The *Servicio de Defensa del Patrimonio Artístico Nacional (SDPAN*; National Artistic Heritage Defence Service), the equivalent of the Republican Junta de Incautación, was established in July 1938 under the

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[102] Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, "Decreto Disponiendo Que La Junta Creada Por Decreto De 23 De Julio Del Presente Año Se Denominará De Incautación Y Protección Del Patrimonio Artístico," in *Gaceta de Madrid* (1936).
[103] See José Lino Vaamonde V., *Salvamento Y Protección Del Tesoro Artístico Español Durante La Guerra, 1936-1939* (Caracas, Venezuela: 1973).

leadership of architect Pedro Muguruza.[104] One of the fundamental goals of these highly militarised bodies was to restore religious buildings that had suffered the impact of anti-clerical violence and/or bombings. Among the rebels' first measures when they took over a locality was to rebuild the churches and reinstate the Catholic cult. Unlike its Republican counterpart, the SDPAN often didn't have access to the original plans and technical details of the buildings.[105] In spite of this, rebel authorities restored a number of churches during the conflict, relying on technicians' on-site assessments and local craftsmanship.

When the bombing campaigns—especially those carried out by the rebels—became more systematic, the *Juntas de Defensa Pasiva* (Passive Defence Boards) that were created in most localities in order to organise the protection of the population and their physical environment from the conflict soon found out that they had little or no previous experience to fall back on when it came to safeguarding people and buildings from the bombs. The few designs for protective devices and refuges that were available were not conceived to resist the impact of the size of the bombs dropped. Moreover, the local Passive Defence Boards often lacked adequate construction material, and could only accomplish more modest protection works. Some of the most eye-catching shielding structures (or at least most photographed) were built in Madrid, and included the protective structures for the Prado Museum and the nearby fountains *La Cibeles* and *Neptuno*, which were buried beneath layers of sand and brick in what looked like small hills. As will be explained in Chapter 6, the government created a special committee to address the wartime problems of the capital city. These were simply too substantial for the local administration to deal with on its own. In Barcelona, on the other hand, the local passive defence board worked in close collaboration with the fire brigades and the numerous voluntary associations that took on the responsibility of constructing air-raid shelters. Bilbao's local emergency services were spared from designing the kind of sophisticated protective structures and refuges found in Madrid and Barcelona. One

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[104] Ministerio de Educación Nacional, "Jefatura Del Servicio Nacional De Bellas Artes.- Circular Disponiendo Quede Constituído El Servicio De Defensa Del Patrimonio Artístico Nacional En La Forma Que Se Determina," in *BOE* (1938).
[105] For a closer examination of wartime heritage protection on both sides, see the Rosa Bustamante Montoro, "Salvaguardia Y Trabajos De Emergencia Durante La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)," in *Tratado De Rehabilitación. Tomo I. Teoria E Historia De La Rehabilitación* (Madrid: UPM, Editorial Munillaleria, 1999).

should also bear in mind that Bilbao was taken over much earlier in the conflict than the two other cities.

3.5 Post-war reconstruction

"Our aim is to build a new order that takes up the securities of the old."

Antonio Tóvar (Press Subsecretary of the Falange), 1941[106]

3.5.1 A new order

Between 1937 and 1939, two governments were virtually running Spain: the Republican and the rebel. While Franco and his military aids concentrated on winning the war, his civilian collaborators, notably Ramón Serrano Suñer, were gradually setting up the bases for the new legal and political order that would fully supplant the Second Republic after a rebel victory. This was not necessarily an easy task. Even though Franco had gradually enforced unity and discipline on the rebel movement by removing the most dissenting voices and making increasingly clear that both his person and will were utterly indisputable, his supporters' diverse ideological pedigrees could not be ignored.[107] How could the more radical socio-economic claims of Falange be merged with the reactionary demands of the traditional financial aristocracy? How could the Carlists, who defended an alternative branch of the Bourbon dynasty, be reconciled with the traditional monarchists? How could the military's straightforward notions of order be made compatible with the more sophisticated legal arrangements propounded by rightist jurists and intellectuals?

The only thing these different groups agreed on was the unity of Spain. The *patria* was sacred and had to be protected from internal autonomist and independence claims as well as foreign powers' excessive influence, be they Fascist, Liberal or Communist. There was also a shared sense of pride for Spain's imperial past. A strongly patriotic rhetoric of national regeneration evolved from these elements, solidifying in the state party-like *Movimiento Nacional* (National Movement). The Movimiento borrowed some of the spirit of the late nineteenth-century *regeneracionista* movement, and mixed Falange's national-syndicalist revolutionary rhetoric, the Catholic Church's family and

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[106] Cited in Carlos Moya, *El Poder Económico En España (1939-1970). Un Análisis Sociológico* (Madrid: Tucar Ediciones, S.A., 1975) 146.

[107] For an exhaustive account of Franco's rise to and permanence in power see Paul Preston, *Franco. "Caudillo De España"* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 2002) or Paul Preston, *Franco. A Biography* (London: Fontana Press, 1995).

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charity-based principles, and the conservatives' stern defence of the virtues of a traditional, socially stratified Spain.

National reconstruction was understood as physical rebuilding, moral regeneration and economic renewal. In this view, physical rebuilding and moral regeneration went hand in hand. It was deemed that one of the reasons for the spread of "bolshevism" in Spain and the outbreak of the Civil War had been the increasing class resentment experienced in the cities, where workers, often recent migrants from the countryside, were concentrated in marginal, poor and unhealthy districts. It was thought that the construction of clean, ampler homes for workers in socially mixed neighbourhoods, adequately serviced by the municipality and the Church, would prevent the danger of these workers becoming class conscious and ensure the harmonious yet hierarchical coexistence of Spaniards of different social backgrounds in the cities. Simultaneously, it was expected that the construction of modern, rational agricultural units in the countryside would anchor potential new migrants in non-urban environments, thus reinforcing the traditionally more conservative values and aspirations of rural Spain.

Economic renewal would build on agricultural modernisation and state-sponsored industrialisation.[108] Spain lacked a significant entrepreneurial, capitalist class to which industrialisation could be entrusted. Moreover, during the Second World War, foreign investment was almost absent, and continued to be so subsequently for some time as a result of Spain's diplomatic isolation. At this early stage, the regime's only choice seemed to be to continue relying on the traditional financial oligarchy, which after all had backed the coup and financed the Nacionales throughout the war. This financial aristocracy (as it has also been called) was largely made up of nobles, conservative landowners and private bankers, who were hardly bent on risk-taking and much more concerned with preserving (and recovering) their long-standing properties. The group was nonetheless ready to place money in state-sponsored industrialising ventures in exchange for the regime's protection of social privilege and traditional values.

From 1941, the *Instituto Nacional de Industria* (National Industry Institute), led by members of the military, coordinated the regime's industrialisation programme. The

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[108] See, for example, Pedro Muguruza Otaño, "Sistematización Técnica En Un Plan Nacional De Resurgimiento," in *Instituto Técnico de la Construcción y Edificación* (1940), 3.

leaders' military discipline and love for the *patria* ensured there was a considerable level of professional commitment, but their attempt to carry through a strict, autarchic development scheme largely failed, and an inefficient form of protectionist state capitalism emerged. Aside from the fact that Spain's resources were exhausted after the war, and that it was probably not in a position to build an autarchic economy, the rigorous and impartial attitudes required for such an economic programme were far removed from the kind of particularistic, family and surname-based relationships that the financial oligarchy was used to, and imposed on the organisation of the public companies it helped f(o)unding.[109]

In the end, the securities of the old world proved incompatible with any kind of new order. Towards the end of the 1950s, the autarchic programme and the National-Syndicalist doctrine were little more than hollow rhetoric, and the nation was plunged into economic stagnation, which no longer favoured even the financial aristocracy. Only a few arrivistes, who thrived on the black market, felt comfortable in this situation. The regime was forced to catch up with reality. Dogmatic discourses and heavy bureaucracy were eventually transmuted into technocratic language and managerial practices. This was the beginning of Spain's economic boom. At this point, the physical reconstruction of the country was deemed accomplished. But how was the reconstruction of Spanish cities, towns and villages carried out during the two decades of autarchy?

3.5.2 Organisation of reconstruction

3.5.2.1 Regiones Devastadas

Various reconstruction efforts took place during the war, and urban planning continued despite the conflict. The *Servicio Nacional de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones* (Devastated Areas Department), which Franco's wartime government in Burgos created in early 1938, initially depended on the Ministry of the Interior. Joaquín Benjumea was appointed head of the Service. It aimed to supervise and coordinate reconstruction in the rebel zone, which by then encompassed a considerable portion of the Spanish

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[109] For a detailed explanation of the structure of economic power in post-war Spain, see Moya, *El Poder Económico En España (1939-1970). Un Análisis Sociológico*, Ramón Tamames, *La Oligarquía Financiera En España* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1977). For how the Spanish economy worked during the war, see Pablo Martín Aceña and Elena Martínez Ruiz, eds., *La Economía De La Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, Ediciones de Historia, S.A., 2006).

territory. Every reconstruction project, regardless of its volume and cost, had to receive the approval of Regiones Devastadas. According to Eugenia Llanos, this rule was applied to the letter.[110] After the war, in August 1939, the Service became the *Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas* under the wing of Serrano Suñer's powerful *Ministerio de Gobernación* (Governance Ministry), and José Moreno Torres replaced Benjumea. It has been estimated that 1,327 million euros were spent by Regiones Devastadas on reconstruction between 1939 and 1957.[111] More than 150 technicians, 108 architects, 46 engineers and 180 experts worked for the Department across 30 regional offices[112] with the "essential mission" of

> "orientating, facilitating, and in certain cases, directly implementing the reconstruction of the damage suffered in the villages and towns that were the bloody scenario of the holy and victorious liberation Crusade, or irrefutable witnesses to the barbarous and merciless violence deployed by the hordes, who instructed by Russia, showed all their hatred towards everything representing the basic and secular principles of the Christian and Spanish spirit."[113]

Two things were made clear in this paragraph: first, destruction was deemed an unfortunate result of the liberation Crusade, when it was not viewed as the direct outcome of the Reds' violence. Second, the Department's fundamental commitment was to *orientate* and *facilitate* the reconstruction process, and only *in certain cases*, which will be discussed later, would it be responsible for carrying out the works. In all other cases, the initiative was left to local authorities and private owners, who still had to comply with Regiones Devastadas' regulations. They were also granted the possibility of applying for state funding to undertake their works.

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[110] Eugenia Llanos, "La Dirección General De Regiones Devastadas: Su Organización Administrativa," in *Arquitectura En Regiones Devastadas* (Madrid: MOPU, 1987), 43.

[111] This is the updated (August 2008) equivalent of the figure that Gloria Otero gave in 1987 (96,000 million pesetas) in Gloria Otero, "La Reconstrucción De Regiones Devastadas, En La Sala De Exposiciones Del M.O.P.U. Arquitectura Para Después De Una Guerra," *Revista MOPU*, no. 340 (1987). The new equivalent was calculated on the webpage of the Instituo Nacional de Estadística, see http://www.ine.es/calcula/calcula.do.

[112] Ibid.: 93.

[113] "Entres los organismos estatales de nueva creación figura la Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones, cuya misión esencial es la de orientar y facilitar y, en ciertos casos, llevar a la práctica directamente la reconstrucción de los daños sufridos en los pueblos y ciudades que fueron sangriento escenario de la santa y victoriosa Cruzada de liberación o testigos irrefutables del bárbaro y cruel ensañamiento de las hordas que, aleccionadas por Rusia, mostraron su odio hacia todo lo que significaba representación real de los principios básicols y seculares del espíritu cristiano y español." "Organismos Del Nuevo Estado. La Dirección General De Regiones Devastadas Y Reparaciones," *Reconstrucción* 1940.

5.2.2 The Instituto Nacional de Crédito

In March 1939, the regime created the financial branch of Regiones Devastadas, the *Instituto de Crédito para la Reconstrucción Nacional* (*ICRN*; Credit Institute for National Reconstruction), drawing on the ostensibly successful experience of the Italian administration after the First World War. In a booklet published at the time, José Moreno Torres, head of Regiones Devastadas, explains how, unlike France and Belgium—which had relied on unsuccessful compensation laws—Italy had established a system of public loans coordinated by the *Istituto Nazionale di Credito per la Cooperazione* after the end of the Great War. Moreno Torres points out that a compensation law would in any event not have been possible in post-civil-war Spain since there was no other nation from which to exact reparations.[114]

The ICRN's funds would be extracted from exclusively "national sources" since "all the flattering offers from foreign companies, who saw in the material destruction of [Spain] a spring of easily obtainable benefits, ha[d] been systematically rejected".[115] That the regime boasted about having turned down several investment offers was congruent with the autarchic economic line it aimed to follow. It is also likely that the offers diminished in any case once the Second World War had started. Various national sources, on the other hand, were specified in the law that gave birth to the ICRN. Among the less orthodox ones were the income brought by the confiscations and economic sanctions imposed on individuals who had remained on the Republican side during the war and were now being summarily tried for their political responsibilities, and the revenues that private companies would pay the state for hiring war and political prisoners to be employed in construction work (including, of course, reconstruction works).[116] The term *prestaciones personales* or payment in kind was used euphemistically to refer to these exceptional sources.[117] In the end, reparations *were* exacted, not from another nation, but from the other half of the Spanish nation.

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[114] Jose Moreno Torres, *La Reconstrucción Urbana En España/Urban Reconstruction in Spain* (Madrid: 1948).
[115] "Organismos Del Nuevo Estado. La Dirección General De Regiones Devastadas Y Reparaciones."
[116] See Jefatura del Estado, "Ley Creando El Instituto De Crédito Para La Reconstrucción Nacional," in *BOE* (1939).
[117] "Organismos Del Nuevo Estado. La Dirección General De Regiones Devastadas Y Reparaciones."

5.2.3 The "scheme of cancellation of penalties by work"

Republican prisoners of war were engaged in forced labour for the first time in the Biscayan mines.[118] This was during the war, and it was merely the beginning of what became an extensive and well-developed officially coordinated practice after the war. The *Ley de Responsabilidades Políticas* (Political Responsibilities Law) that Franco passed in February 1939 gave the regime free hand to detain and try—and subsequently incarcerate or execute—any individual suspected of belonging or having belonged to any of the political groups that had been loyal to the Republican side or were against the new regime. It is estimated that 280,000 individuals were sent to prison. The use of prisoners as forced labour was given a legal and even charitable façade through the so-called scheme of cancellation of penalties by work. As suggested earlier (see Chapter 1, pages 37-38), political imprisonment and forced labour were presented as an opportunity for the Red convicts to redeem their sins and become good Catholics. The Church contributed to the scheme by placing priests in the detachments where the prisoners resided. In a document on urban reconstruction in Spain that circulated in both Spanish and English in 1945, Moreno Torres introduced the scheme as a "humanitarian law—the first of its kind in penal legislation anywhere".[119] According to Moreno Torres, the convict was allowed to cancel two days of his term of imprisonment by one day's work "in addition to which there were extra cancellations for good conduct, overtime, and outstanding proficiency".[120] In reality, the pace of cancellation of penalties changed over time depending on the number of prisoners and the demand for labour.[121]

The accounts of those who "benefited" from the scheme suggest that it was not as humane as the regime allegedly pretended. The prisoners lived and worked in extremely difficult conditions, usually isolated from their families, who received a minimal pension from the authorities. But the arrangement proved extremely efficient for the state from an economic point of view. The authorities were greatly satisfied with the results, openly arguing that the construction of many of the dams, for example, would

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[118] Isaías Lafuente, *Esclavos Por La Patria. La Explotación De Los Presos Bajo El Franquismo* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, S.A., 2002) 42.

[119] Moreno Torres, *La Reconstrucción Urbana En España/Urban Reconstruction in Spain*.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Lafuente, *Esclavos Por La Patria. La Explotación De Los Presos Bajo El Franquismo* 44.

have been almost impossible without the scheme.[122] Private companies would soon be allowed, if not encouraged, to hire prisoners of war and political prisoners, mainly for construction works. Companies paid the state the equivalent of a free worker's salary for each prisoner (of which the prisoner only received a minor proportion), but in exchange they had an exceptionally disciplined, efficient and submissive workforce at their disposal. Many companies benefited from the scheme, among them Babcock & Wilcox and Constructora Naval, two of the companies that were involved in the reconstruction of the bridges in Bilbao, as will be explained in Chapter 5.[123] However, it does not seem as if they employed prisoners for these particular works.

3.5.2.4 The "adoption law"

Through its loans system, the ICRN guaranteed at least partial funding to sympathetic "entities, companies or private individuals" wishing to reconstruct their property. It was then decided that Regiones Devastadas would step in directly and carry out reconstruction works in those towns and villages that had lost more than 60 per cent of their built-up area[124] or more than 75 per cent, according to earlier sources.[125] The so-called "adoption law" of 23rd of September 1939 established that "the State w[ould] fully take charge of the reestablishment of public services belonging to the State, the Church, the Province and the Municipality" in exceptionally damaged localities.[126]

A precedent to Franco's adoption law existed in the 1919 Belgian legislation, which had also envisioned a special administrative and financial status for the communities that had been most severely damaged during the Great War. Similarly, these could be "adopted" by the Belgian state authorities.[127] The adoption of towns and villages proved an excellent propaganda tool for the regime. Franco eagerly attended the inaugurations of the reconstructed adopted villages, ceremoniously handing over the keys of the new or rebuilt homes to their owners, and pictures of the ceremonies were circulated in the media, notably the *Noticiarios y Documentales* (*NO-DOs*), produced by the regime's "news and documentaries" broadcasting service and religiously shown

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[122] Ibid. 77, 78.

[123] Ibid. 311.

[124] José Moreno Torres, *La Reconstrucción Urbana En España* (Madrid: [s.n.], 1945).

[125] "Organismos Del Nuevo Estado. La Dirección General De Regiones Devastadas Y Reparaciones."

[126] Ministerio de la Gobernación, "Decreto Regulando La Adopción Por El Jefe De Estado De Localidades Dañadas Por La Guerra En Determinadas Condiciones," in *BOE* (1939).

[127] André de Naeyer, "La Reconstruction Des Monuments Et Des Sites En Belgique Après La Première Guerre Mondiale," *Monumentum (UNESCO-ICOMOS)* XX-XXI-XXII (1982).

in cinemas across Spain (and Spanish-speaking America). However, very often the adopted villages were inaugurated without having been finished, and sometimes they would never be. But there was little movement and exchange within Spain at the time and, arguably, few people, other than those who lived in these particular villages, had reasons to doubt the optimistic reports shown on the NO-DO or circulated in the press.

5.2.5 Other institutions involved in reconstruction

Parallel to Regiones Devastadas, at least another three key institutions were involved in the national reconstruction process: the *Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda* (*INV*; National Housing Institute), the *Instituto de Colonización y Desarrollo Rural* (*INCDR*; Colonisation and Rural Development Institute) and the *Dirección General de Arquitectura* (*DGA*; Architecture Department). The INV was created in 1939 within the Ministry of Labour with the aim of attending to the increasingly unmanageable housing demand. A pressing need for housing already existed before the war in most larger cities, notably Madrid, but had of course worsened as a result of the destruction brought about by the conflict. There was also an ideological purpose behind the INV's activity: fomenting worthy, proper, Christian households in which class resentment would not take root. The INV collaborated with Regiones Devastadas in rebuilding and constructing new homes in the adopted villages, which included some of the suburbs of Madrid. Over time, the projects for *vivienda protegida* or "protected housing" extended to areas that had not necessarily been damaged by the war.

The Instituto de Colonización was an immediate result of the regime's early autarchic economic programme, but bore some continuity with Republican initiatives such as the national plan for water works.[128] Franco's early ideologues were convinced that Spain was an eminently agrarian nation and that her industrialisation had to start by radically modernising agriculture. Efficient irrigation systems and rational agricultural production units were to be built across the country. This would also prevent the vast numbers of rural inhabitants uprooted by the war from migrating to the cities, which were allegedly already overwhelmed by homeless and unemployed peasants. The designers of the new colonisation programme looked back with a certain nostalgia to Spain's colonisation of America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but their

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[128] Eduardo Delgado Orusco, "La Experiencia Del INC - Una Colonización De La Modernidad" (paper presented at the Arquitectura, ciudad e ideología antiurbana, Pamplona, 14-15 March 2002), 86.

programme was probably closer to the enlightened Bourbon monarchs' eighteenth-century rural colonisation projects in southern Spain (when towns like La Carolina and La Carlota were founded).

Finally, the Dirección General de Arquitectura (*DGA*) was set up to oversee and coordinate planning and architecture. It was entrusted to Falange, the state party, and architect and academic Pedro Muguruza, who had earlier been appointed head of the SDPAN, was assigned the task of leading the new department. The DGA spent its first years trying to pin down the genuine architectural style of the New Spain. As shall be discussed later, the result of this quest was not particularly fruitful, but the process in itself is arguably interesting.

Finally, it has been said that the creation of multiple institutes to which different aspects of the national (re)building task were assigned frustrated the aim of producing unified town-planning policies, and possibly hindered a more effective reconstruction process.[129] This is probably true. As a means of ensuring his absolute leadership, Franco fomented institutional fragmentation by distributing small portions of power among the different ideological members of the Movimiento Nacional.

3.5.3 Cities in the reconstruction process

The priority of Regiones Devastadas was the restoration of town halls, *casas cuartel* (the civil guard's barracks), religious buildings and houses in smaller towns and villages. A report published in 1942 indicates that more than 4,600 new housing units were projected during the first two years of which 776 were finished by the time the report was published and another 1,600 were under construction. The plans for 23 new town halls had been approved of which five were finished and fifteen were under construction. The works for building 77 temples were approved, of which 48 were finished and 97 under construction (some of the works must have been initiated prior to 1939).[130] Emulating Spain's colonial town-planning principles, reconstruction started by setting up the urban core: the town hall, the church, and the police or military

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[129] Víctor Pérez Escolano, "Guerra Civil Y Regiones Devastadas," in *Arquitectura En Regiones Devastadas* (Madrid: MOPU, 1987), 140.

[130] See Ministerio de la Gobernación (Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones), "La Reconstrucción De España. Resumen De Dos Años De Labor. [with Illustrations.]," (Madrid: Ministerio de la Gobernación, Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones, 1942).

quarters. The regime's preference for rural environments, religious buildings and traditional architecture is apparent in *Reconstrucción*, the monthly magazine that Regiones Devastadas published between 1940 and 1953 as well as in the series of projects that Moreno Torres reported as accomplished works in the first illustrated summary of reconstruction achievements published by Regiones Devastadas in 1946.[131]

Most larger cities remained loyal to the Republic, as we know, and not prioritising their reconstruction was in some ways a means to punish them. There existed an open contempt for the city among some of the regime's early ideologues, who saw the "liberal" metropolis as the nest of anti-clericalism, anti-militarism and other sinful activities, usually ascribed to the left. In the typical Falangist rhetoric, radical and poetic, *Vértice*, one of Falange's cultural magazines, claimed:

> "The city gobbles up man and, with the mashed remains of him, raises those immense houses, builds those vast avenues, grows blind, squeezes out the air. It is the great sin to be fought; the babels will remain as the souvenirs of a great crime."[132]

The "great crime" was the "modern betrayal" that the "honest peasants" had committed when they fled to the city, only to end up living in filthy quarters where they had been "engendering degeneration and anomaly". But these sceptics of the city predicted that the countryside would rise once more and "destroy he who builds concrete over poppies and tall wheat"[133] (poppies and tall wheat, red and yellow, might also be seen as metaphors for the Spanish nation as represented by the Spanish monarchic flag, which the regime appropriated).

A compromise between the values of the city and the countryside was promoted by less visceral Falangist voices, who coined the expression "countryside urbanism and city

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[131] José Moreno Torres, *El Estado En La Reconstrucción De Las Ciudades Y Pueblos Españoles* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, 1946).

[132] "La ciudad devora al hombre y con lo que ha triturado levanta esas casas inmensas, construye esas grandes avenidas, se ciega, aprieta el aire. Es el gran pecado que hay que combatir; quedarán las babeles como recuerdo de un gran crimen." "Babel O La Ciudad," *Vértice*, July 1939. In Gabriel Ureña, *Arquitectura Y Urbanística Civil Y Militar En El Periodo De La Autarquia (1936-1945): Análisis, Cronología Y Textos* (Madrid: Istmo, 1979) 269.

[133] "Y aquellos que tuvieron en su sangre labriegos honrados que huyreon hacia la ciudad y se quedaron en sus arrabales sucios, engendrando degeneración y anomalía, se lamentarán en las ruinas de tanta ciudad por culpa de aquella traición moderna. (...) [O]tra vez la mano del hombre se manchará de sangre y arruinará al que levanta cemento contra la amapola y los altos trigos." "Babel O La Ciudad."

ruralism".[134] This group wanted to believe that peasants still possessed the honesty, good faith and attachment to tradition that the inhabitants of the city had allegedly lost. At the same time, they acknowledged that urban dwellers were more sensitive to progress and civilised practices. Therefore, Falangist intellectual Victor D'Ors advocated that, ideally, the countryside and the city ought to merge into a higher entity.[135]

Moreover, D'Ors and other Falangists saw the devastation brought by the war as a unique opportunity to change the course of urban development dramatically.[136] In their *Plan Nacional de Ordenación y Reconstrucción* (National Plan for Urban Planning and Reconstruction), the Falange proclaimed:

> "Cities, the most authentic monuments, everlasting and representative of the ways of being and acting of different peoples—developed in chaos under the liberal principles—have now the opportunity to unfold naturally, scientifically, orderly, under organic principles. These principles vibrate everywhere in nature and with increasing perfection in man as the direct fruit of divine creation."[137]

When looking back to the past, urbanism revealed itself as "one of the most eminent glories of Spanish science", "the eight centuries of *reconquista* and the American colonisation [having been] accompanied by first-class town-planning activities".[138] While the "realist, integrating and hierarchical" Spanish genius with its capacity "to impose total visions" was celebrated, "the French and English rationalist unilateralism or opportunism" was vehemently rejected. The authors pointed to the city of London as "the greatest monstrosity ever known to world art", rhetorically asking if this was all that liberal theories and English hegemony were able to produce. Acknowledging Spain's present backwardness, they urged the regime to turn the fact that everything

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[134] José Gascón y Marín, "Discurso" (paper presented at the Congreso de la Federación de Urbanismo y Vivienda, Madrid, 11-18 October 1940). In Ureña, *Arquitectura Y Urbanística Civil Y Militar En El Período De La Autarquía (1936-1945): Análisis, Cronología Y Textos* 293.

[135] Víctor D'Ors, "Hacia La Reconstrucción De Las Ciudades De España," *Vértice*, June 1937. In Ureña, *Arquitectura Y Urbanística Civil Y Militar En El Período De La Autarquía (1936-1945): Análisis, Cronología Y Textos* 249.

[136] D'Ors, "Hacia La Reconstrucción De Las Ciudades De España." In Ureña, *Arquitectura Y Urbanística Civil Y Militar En El Período De La Autarquía (1936-1945): Análisis, Cronología Y Textos* 249.

[137] "Las ciudades, monumento el más auténtico, representativo y perdurable de la manera de ser y ade actuar de los pueblos—desarrolladas caóticamente bajo los principios liberales—adquieren hoy la posibilidad de un desenvolvimiento natural, científico, ordenado bajo principios orgánicos. Estos principios son los que laten en toda la naturaleza, y en máxima perfección en el hombre, como fruto directo de la creación divina." Servicios Técnicos de F. E. T. y de las J. O. N. S., "Ideas Generales Sobre El Plan Nacional De Ordenación Y Reconstrucción," 8.

[138] Ibid. 9.

remained to be done into an opportunity to produce something different, ultimately surpassing the other (European) countries.

Some of these aspirations crystallised in the plan for Madrid, the "Imperial capital city", which the special reconstruction board that was formed to address reconstruction in the capital city designed. Madrid, in spite of its fierce resistance against the rebels, was granted a special role in the new order. It stood above the country's other regions, it was the nation's *head*, and was treated accordingly. Centralism was by no means new in Spain's political tradition, but the Franco regime made it into one of its banners, categorically propounding its virtues. Details of the plans for Madrid are not considered here, as they will be discussed in Chapter 6, but it is worth pointing out here the implications of Madrid's status, especially in comparison to the positions of Barcelona and Bilbao in the new order. The two cities no longer enjoyed the privilege of being the capitals of the Catalan and Basque autonomist regions. They had no more political status than Valencia or Seville in the new scheme of things, and initially even carried the stigma of having been the seats of nationalist governments, which had allegedly put at risk the integrity of the *patria*. But both Barcelona and Bilbao had enjoyed significant economic power since the turn of the century and would maintain it after the war. Barcelonan and Bilbaoan industrialists and financiers, even those who had sympathised with the autonomist governments and the Republican regime, were quite successful in transforming themselves into supporters of the dictatorship.[139]

Under Franco, Barcelona was predominantly viewed as a city for business, a place to host commercial fairs and negotiate trade agreements. It was stripped of its pre-war aura of political progressiveness and artistic avant-garde, and, of course, Catalan was banned. Bilbao continued to be seen as an industrial port city, but more significantly as the seat of Spanish finance. Several important private banks, originally founded by Basque financiers, maintained and expanded their headquarters in the city. The Basque language was banned, too, although it had not been as extensively spoken in urban areas as had Catalan before the war. Catalans and Basques were acknowledged to have made a specific contribution to Spain as a whole, including through their particularities (which mostly had to do with their industriousness and entrepreneurship), as had

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[139] See, for example, Rafael Abellá, *Finales De Enero 1939. Barcelona Cambia De Piel* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1992).

Andalusians and Extremadurans. Every corner of Spain was part of an organic whole, hierarchically subjected to the centre: Madrid. Ultimately, it could be argued that Madrid's recent past, her stern resistance against the rebels, was almost deliberately repressed under the weight of the symbolic and political significance that the new regime imposed on the city. Meanwhile, Barcelona and Bilbao were distracted from their past autonomist aspirations by allowing their elites to indulge in the apolitical accumulation of money.

Partly as a result of the regime's initial mistrust of cities, they did not receive the same attention from Regiones Devastadas, and were more or less left to design and fund their own reconstruction projects when needed. Some cities, like Barcelona, resumed pre-war plans as part of their reconstruction programmes. And when it came to funding, city councils found different strategies to meet their ends. They sought loans from *Banco de España*, the national bank, and private banks, and devised new local taxes to cash in gradually the amounts they needed to pay back the loans. Franco's adoption law did not initially include cities, but when city councils, including Barcelona and Bilbao, claimed that it should be applied to those of their districts that had suffered most damage (which, they argued, should be considered equivalent to the smaller localities specified by the law), the regime often ended up granting them subsidies and loans through the Instituto de Crédito. Bearing in mind the intimate relationship between the state and the private banking system, the difference between receiving money from the Instituto de Crédito, Banco de España or any of the private banks rested perhaps more on the application procedure and the conditions of the loan than on the ultimate source of the funds.

3.5.4 The national style(s): sources and influences

Discussions about which architectural style should be the specific brand of the new regime were intense during the initial post-war years among the most enthusiastic believers in the New Spain. Over the years, this aesthetic quest was abandoned for more pragmatic responses to the nation's building needs and parallel lack of resources. But until the 1950s various stylistic practices coexisted and sometimes overlapped; fundamentally, *fachadismo* (façadism), classical monumentalism, folkloric traditionalism and rationalism.

Fachadismo, or the early rebel propaganda architecture, consisted of the vast settings in wood and *papier mâché* that were installed in squares and open places for military parades and mass gatherings around the Caudillo. Conceptually similar to the scenarios from where Hitler and Mussolini captivated their audiences, the Spanish settings took inspiration from the Baroque Catholic liturgy tradition, offering an all the more eclectic appearance. Unfortunately, there is little if nothing left of these ephemeral pieces of architecture.[140]
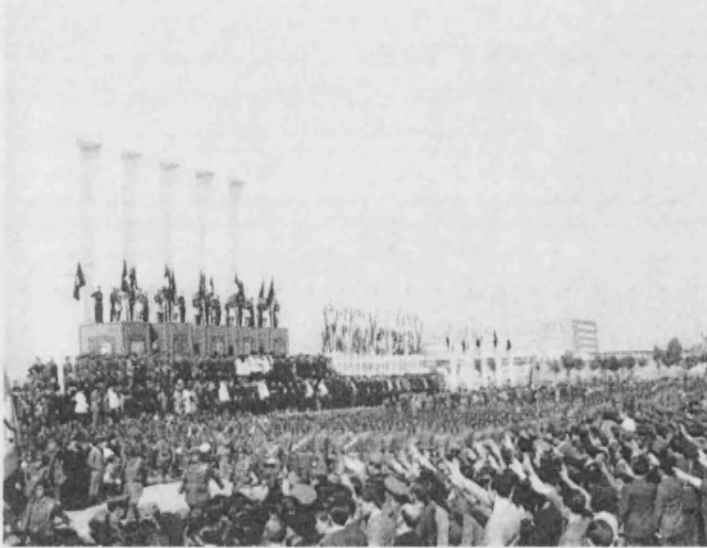
Fig. 3.1 Inauguration of Ciudad Universitaria (the university campus), Madrid, 1943 (adapted from the web).

Falange's preference for sober, classical monumentalism is most visible in the largely unaccomplished projects for Imperial Madrid. In the search for a new style, Diego de Reina, one of the most eager defenders of a neo-imperial capital city, suggested that such style should

> "truthfully reflect the national philosophy (…) with a contemporary, yet not modernist character, (…) it should aim at a unified expression without being monotonous, it should be sober but not poor, austere but not dry, static but not heavy, genuine and conceived in a human scale (…) and, above all, it should be universal, a quality that does not imply de-nationalisation (…)".[141]

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[140] Carlos Sambricio, "…"¡Que Coman República!" Introducción a Un Estudio Sobre La Reconstrucción En La España De La Postguerra," *Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo* Arquitectura para después de una guerra, no. 121 (1977): 28.

[141] "Debe ser reflejo fiel de la filosofía nacional (…) con un carácter de acusada actualidad sin ser modernista (…) ha de ser unitario sin monotonía, sobrio sin pobreza, austero sin sequedad, estático sin pesadez, verdadero y concebido a escala humana (…) y sobre todo ha de ser universal, cualidad que no

After putting forward these vague or perhaps overly ambitious requirements, Reina concluded that Spanish neoclassicism, notably represented by Juan de Herrera, ought to be the reference point for the new style. Juan de Herrera and his masterpiece *El Escorial* —commissioned in the sixteenth century by Philip II, son of the German Emperor Charles V—was henceforth acclaimed as the culminating point of Spanish architecture by the leading group of Falangist architects. The symbolic value of El Escorial was exploited in interesting ways. Not only was it presented as a product of the Renaissance and, hence, indirectly of Greece and Rome, but German purity and rectitude were said to be impregnated in its solid granite walls by way of its royal commissioner—maybe a convenient nod to the Third Reich.[142]

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quiere decir desnacionalización (...)." Diego de Reina de la Muela, *Ensayo Sobre Las Directrices Arquitectónicas De Un Estilo Imperial* (Madrid: Ediciones Verdad, 1944) 133, 34.

[142] Rafael Sánchez Mazas, "Herrera Viviente," *Arriba*, 2 July 1939. In Ureña, *Arquitectura Y Urbanística Civil Y Militar En El Periodo De La Autarquía (1936-1945): Análisis, Cronología Y Textos* 263.

Fig. 3.2 Johannes Blau, drawing of El Escorial, 16th century (adapted from a postcard).

Fig. 3.3 Luis Gutiérrez Soto, project for the Air Ministry, 1940s (adapted from *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*).

It was in many ways natural for the architects of the New Spain to turn to Nazi Germany for inspiration. Not only because of the supposed ideological affinities between the two political regimes, but also because there existed a much earlier, well-established tradition of cultural and intellectual dialogue between Spain and Germany.[143] A touring exhibition of German contemporary architecture arrived in Madrid in 1940. Albert Speer, who had recently visited Spain and manifested his admiration for El Escorial, was expected at the opening, but was unable to come at the last minute, and the mayor of Nuremberg and architect Wilhelm Kreis were sent instead.[144] Nevertheless, it was hard to ignore the fact that the nascent Spanish regime lacked both the ideological hegemony that characterised the Third Reich and the economic resources that would have enabled it to engage in the kind of ambitious projects that the Germans were designing at the time.[145]

One of the few official buildings that was erected in the "new" monumentalist style was architect José Gutiérrez Soto's Air Ministry in Madrid's Moncloa district. Both Speer and Paul Bonatz, who also visited Spain in these years, encouraged Gutiérrez-Soto to make explicit references to El Escorial in the design. As will be explained in Chapter 6, a similarly monumental edifice for Falange's headquarters was planned on the plot on which the ruins of the Montaña military barracks lay, but was never accomplished.

For the admirers of El Escorial and Nazi architecture, Fascist Italian architecture appeared more difficult to grasp. It seemed excessively diverse and inclined on radical, overly innovative propositions. Nonetheless, some of the younger architects like Francisco Cabrero went to Italy and found the kind of stimulation they sought. Cabrero's design proposal for the *Cruz de los Caídos* (Cross of the Fallen), the key element of Franco's megalomaniac project for a burial and memorial complex north of Madrid, testifies to his Italian experience and his encounter with Giorgio de Chirico. His design was not selected, however. Instead, Pedro Muguruza's more classic academic proposal was. In 1949, however, Cabrero's competition entry for the *Casa Sindical* (Syndical House) on Paseo del Prado, opposite the Prado Museum, was

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[143] See Joaquín Medina Warmburg, "Irredentos Y Conversos. Presencias E Influencias Alemanas: De La Neutralidad a La Postguerra Española (1914-1943)" (paper presented at the Modelos alemanes e italianos para España en los años de la postguerra, Pamplona, 25-26 March 2004).
[144] Ibid. 36.
[145] Pérez Escolano, "Guerra Civil Y Regiones Devastadas," 12.

selected. The large and rather prominent building is arguably one of the few official examples of Spanish modern, some would argue Fascist-inspired, architecture of the 1940s. Nevertheless, scholars seem to agree increasingly that the romance between Spanish architects and Nazi and Fascist Italian architecture was never as simple and straightforward as it has often been depicted. It spanned a relatively short time, and its real impact on Spanish architecture was less profound than the regime's rhetoric made it seem.
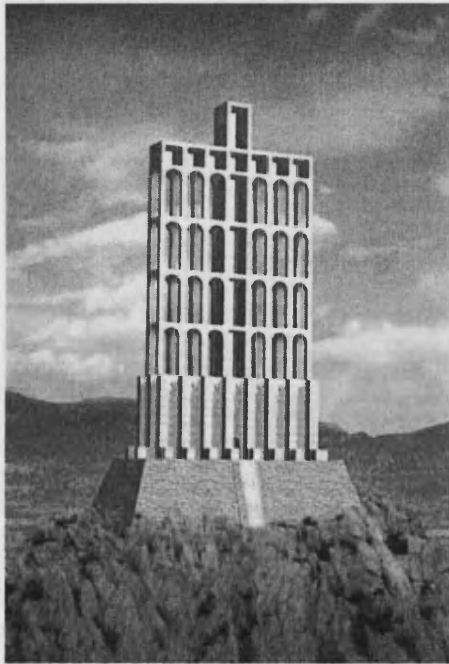
Fig. 3.4 Francisco Cabrero, project for the Cruz de los Caídos, *1941* (adapted from the web).

Fig. 3.5 Francisco Cabrero's Casa Sindical *(today's Ministry of Health and Consumption), constructed 1949-1955* (adapted from the web).

If, initially, classical monumentalism was reserved for the capital city—official buildings and commemorative crosses and arches, without forgetting the *Valle de los Caídos* (Valley of the Fallen)—folkloric traditionalism and regionalism were to inspire the reconstruction of the adopted towns and villages. In most cases, it was impossible to restore the villages to their exact former appearance since there were no plans and drawings available.[146] The architects of Regiones Devastadas tried to find a balance between the supposedly national style, ultimately based on a generic understanding of Spanish sixteenth and seventeenth-century architecture, and local and regional

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[146] See Manuel Blanco Lage, "La Gran Reconstrucción," *Revista MOPU*, no. 310 (1984): 68, 69.

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specificities. Traditional, often hand-crafted materials were used, especially in the first years, and simple and sober lines predominated in the new constructions.[147] Despite the emphasis on regional diversity and the actual incorporation of local elements in the designs, the buildings that Regiones Devastadas erected across Spain have a common, distinct flavour, which makes them easily recognisable.[148] Their straightforward, almost naive and sometimes cheerful, but simultaneously unpretentious, quality is indeed reminiscent of the colonial constructions in former Spanish America, for example, in Mexico.

Fig. 3.6 Brunete, street photographed by J. Salgado (private collection).

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[147] Fernando Pérez Rodríguez-Urrutia, "Las Nuevas Formas De Colonización De La Arquitectura De Postguerra En La Obra De Fernando De Urrutia Usaola: Arquitectura Para Regiones Devastadas, Los Poblados Hidroeléctricos Y Ciudades-Jardín En La Periferia" (paper presented at the Arquitectura, ciudad e ideología antiurbana, Pamplona, 2002), 160.

[148] See Otero, "La Reconstrucción De Regiones Devastadas, En La Sala De Exposiciones Del M.O.P.U. Arquitectura Para Después De Una Guerra," 94.

Fig. 3.7 Brunete, main square (private collection).

It has been argued that the architects of Regiones Devastadas proved quite successful at adapting to the ideological requirements of the regime while dealing with the severe scarcity of materials that Spain suffered at the time. The architects had probably little choice but to optimise the resources available. As it turns out, behind the traditionalist façades of the buildings often hid surprisingly rationalist solutions. Some of the architects were familiar with rationalism from before the war, and the commonsense of those who were not led them to avoid unnecessary ornamentation, structures and space divisions. It could be argued that the post-war circumstances favoured an undeclared rationalist response to the building needs in many of the devastated towns and villages. Over time, more explicit examples of rationalist architecture would become part of the accomplishments of Regiones Devastadas and the Instituto de Colonización such as architect José Luis Fernández del Amo's design for the small village of Vegaviana in Extremadura.

From the 1950s, more and more architects deemed the national, monumentalist style obsolete and unrealistic. And the folkloric traditionalism fostered by Regiones Devastadas, notwithstanding its proto-rationalist elements, was not so apt for the urban context. Many architects refused to continue to ignore foreign modernist architecture.

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Although still conditioned by post-war Spain's material scarceness, a more eclectic architectural panorama started to take shape.[149] Gradually Spain began to have access to the pre-fabricated construction materials used in Europe and the United States in the aftermath of the Second World War. These materials opened up new possibilities, especially for housing construction. In 1957, reconstruction proper officially ended. Regiones Devastadas was dismantled, and its remaining functions were absorbed by the new Ministry of Housing.

3. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to tie the wartime experiences of Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid to their fate under Franco's new post-war order. It has also offered a broad overview of the national reconstruction process, in which the new position of Bilbao, Barcelona and Madrid, and cities in general, is reflected accordingly.

Until they were seized by the rebels, Barcelona and Bilbao more or less systematically complained about not receiving adequate military and material support from the Republican government to face the challenges posed by aerial bombings and incoming waves of refugees. Although the two cities remained at the rearguard until well into the conflict, Barcelonans and Bilbaoans shared the sense of having been abandoned to an uncertain fate. In contrast, Madrid, as the capital city of Spain, besieged by the rebels as early as in winter 1936, occupied much of the Republican government's political and military activity. Barcelona's and Bilbao's sense of abandonment during the war was partly related to their otherwise prominent role as the seats of Catalan and Basque autonomous governments. And indeed, while the Catalan and Basque governments needed the support of the central government, the reverse was equally true.

After the war, Catalonia and the Basque Country were deprived of their autonomy, and their nationalist parties banned. This meant that Barcelona and Bilbao lost their status as political centres. They preserved, nonetheless, their economic position. In spite of Madrid's fierce resistance until the end of the war, the regime turned her into the absolute head of the New Spain, imposing its centralist and totalitarian logic on the city.

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[149] There has recently been significant interest in the Spanish architecture of the 1950s, which includes the work (mostly public projects) of architects Luis Cubillo, Rafael de la Hoz, José Luis Romany and many others. See José Manuel Pozo, ed., *Los Brillantes 50: 35 Proyectos* (Pamplona: T6, 2004).

Soon, few people would remember that Madrid had appeared as a paradigm of anti-Fascist resistance to the world.

The Franco regime's initial aim was to turn Spain into an autarchic economy, based on rationalised agricultural production from which, it was thought, industrialisation would gradually take off. Because of these early plans, rural reconstruction was considered of more importance than urban reconstruction, and except for Madrid, cities were considered less of a priority. Furthermore, the regime regarded cities as ideologically and politically unreliable. Largely populated by industrial workers, artists and intellectuals, they were seen as prone to liberal and revolutionary ideas and behaviours, which challenged the traditional notions of discipline and hierarchy that the regime wanted to (re)instil into Spanish society.

Reconstruction was organised around five institutions, which complemented but also competed with each other. The Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas was specifically created to address reconstruction nationally, but its activity would mainly focus on the exceptionally damaged towns and villages "adopted" by Franco. The Instituto de Crédito para la Reconstrucción Nacional was established to distribute funds among public and private entities seeking to reconstruct their property through a more or less efficient system of loans. The Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda became responsible for reconstructing housing and constructing protected housing units. The lack of housing was already a major problem before the war, but became far worse in the post-war years. The regime was far from successful in meeting the demand, but ensured its propaganda machine conveyed a different image. The aim of the Instituto Nacional de Colonización, in turn, was creating colonies or small villages attached to rational agricultural production units in order to alleviate rural migration and foster hygienic life-styles and traditional community values. The Dirección General de Arquitectura, finally, was expected to set up architectural and town-planning principles and supervise the building activity across the Spanish territory. Its early attempts to create a homogenous, national style based on what was allegedly the most glorious period in Spanish architecture, the seventeenth century, were largely frustrated, except perhaps for Regiones Devastadas' reconstructed villages, many of which bore some resemblance to the first colonial towns in Spanish America.

In spite of the attempts at homogenisation, several stylistic tendencies coexisted throughout the 1940s (from façadism and classical monumentalism to folkloric traditionalism and rationalism). Scholars seem to agree that the influence of Nazi and Italian Fascist architecture, on the other hand, was never as strong in practice as it seems to have been in theory in the early 1940s. From the 1950s, Spain's architecture became even more eclectic. Foreign magazines were again allowed and Spanish architects began to look at northern Europe and the United States for inspiration.

The early period of isolated experimentation during which the regime's architects sought to produce a genuine, uncorrupted Spanish style was extremely short, but it is interesting because of its very contradictory nature. It was modern in its aim to develop a national architectural programme, but reactionary in the kind of aesthetics it sought to establish. The period possibly fits the label *reactionary modernism*, which has been used by some authors to describe similarly paradoxical situations in both Weimar Germany and the Third Reich.[150]

The dictatorship's resources were scarcer than its ambitions. Many of its projects, including the reconstruction of the adopted villages, were not carried out or at least not to their full extent. At the same time, some of the architects who worked during the immediate post-war period have pointed to the scarcity of materials as a challenge, which forced them to be innovative regardless of the aesthetic principles that the regime tried to impose from above.

Despite the modest intellectual achievements and the gap between theoretical aims and tangible results of the first decade of physical reconstruction in Spain, the head of Regiones Devastadas, Moreno Torres, seemed keen to disseminate the Franco regime's reconstruction programme. His report on urban reconstruction in Spain was translated into English in 1945 and circulated abroad.[151] Unfortunately, it is difficult to know how much attention it received. Pedro Muguruza Otaño, head of the Dirección General de Arquitectura, on the other hand, was invited to deliver a lecture on recent developments

[150] See Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism. Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge - New York - Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[151] José Moreno Torres, *Urban Reconstruction in Spain* (Madrid: Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas, 1945).

in Spanish architecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London in 1946.[152]

These are perhaps anecdotal instances, and could be indicative of the Franco regime's wish to realign itself with the victors of the Second World War, but they could also stem from a genuine belief that the lessons from post-war Spain could be useful to other nations.

[152] Pedro Muguruza Otaño, *Recent Developments on Architecture in Spain. Lecture Delivered in the Royal Institute of British Architects, Etc. [with Plates.]* (Madrid: Ediciones y Publicaciones Españolas, 1946).

Chapter 4

Wartime destruction as a catalyst for urban redevelopment: the opening of Barcelona's Avenida de la Catedral after the Spanish Civil War

4. Introduction

The destruction and reconstruction of the area in front of the Cathedral of Barcelona during and after the Spanish Civil War illustrates how wartime destruction might work as a catalyst for urban redevelopment. Since the mid-nineteenth century there had existed the idea of opening up a broad, transversal avenue across the old district of Barcelona as a means of improving circulation, and facilitating communication with other districts. The project for the avenue, eventually referred to by planners as *Gran Via C* or Avenue C, was modified several times during the following decades. By the mid-1930s it seemed as if the works for the section between *Antonio Maura* and *Plaça Nova/Plaza Nueva*, in front of the Cathedral, where the *Barri de la Catedral* (the Cathedral neighbourhood) stood, were finally going to commence despite the protests of residents and a number of architects, who questioned the need to redevelop such an historically significant area. Then the Civil War broke out, and the project was abruptly interrupted.

Barcelona was regularly bombed during the conflict, especially in 1938, and several parts of the old district were seriously damaged, among them the blocks around the Cathedral. The Italian *Aviazione Legionaria*, which assisted the rebel troops, was able to set up an aerial base on Mallorca at a fairly early stage of the conflict from where it carried out regular raids over the Catalan and Valencian coasts. The systematic use of aerial bombings on downtown areas was unprecedented in military history. The inhabitants of Barcelona and other bombed cities were forced to improvise measures of passive defence, among them the construction of anti-air raid shelters. These constructive reactions to destruction were coordinated by local political and social organisations, and were largely possible thanks to the solidarity and camaraderie that emerged among the population that stayed in the cities—mainly women, children and the elderly.

After the war, and in spite of the drastic political and ideological change that followed, the project for Avenue C was resumed, and the already ruined blocks in front of the Cathedral were finally razed to the ground. Not only had the bombings facilitated the task of the pickaxes by destroying the houses that stood in the way of the projected avenue, they had also forced many residents to abandon the area, thus making it easier for the new municipal authorities to justify the expropriation and demolition of the buildings in which they had previously lived. The opening made it possible to continue the archaeological works aimed at unveiling the ancient Roman city-wall. This provided the post-war city council with a suitable argument with which to legitimise the opening of the avenue. Retrieving Roman Barcelona fitted the new Francoist authorities' rhetoric on the supremacy of the Roman and Hapsburg empires within Spain's historical trajectory. The project for Avenue C was never fully implemented, however. The city council ended up constructing only the section called *Avenida de la Catedral*, a large, open, rectangular square, which runs in front of the Cathedral, towards *Plaça Nova*—that is, where the Barri de la Catedral once stood—and a section running north-east towards Santa Catalina market place. This chapter focuses on Avenida de la Catedral.

The opening of Avenida de la Catedral was hence the result of an exceptional interaction between the kind of lengthy negotiation processes that urban interventions usually involve, and the abrupt interruption of an unrelated event, the Civil War, which incidentally changed the urban fabric, improving the prospects for carrying out the planned intervention—notwithstanding the controversies the project stirred both before and after the war. It is argued that such congruence between pre-war and post-war city planning, combined with the destruction caused by the war and the use of destruction to help the implementation of the project for Avenue C, along with the changing official rhetoric used to legitimise the opening, reflect an interesting tension between historical and practical continuities in the urban development of Barcelona and the material and ideological discontinuities resulting from the Civil War.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part commences with a succinct exploration of the historical evolution of the area in front of the Cathedral and the old western city-gate from Roman times to 1939, when the Civil War ended. This is followed by a summary of the successive plans that were designed for Avenue C from

the mid-nineteenth century. The third section looks at the destruction of Barcelona during the Civil War. The passive defence, especially the construction of anti-air-raid shelters, is examined in this section, where details of the specific raids that caused damage to the Barri de la Catedral are offered too. The section concludes with an attempt to grasp the emotional and visual experience of the ruined streets through the reflections of a famous writer and journalist in his wanderings across bombed Barcelona.

The second part of the chapter addresses the reconstruction and redevelopment of the area in front of the Cathedral. The first section in this part illustrates the challenges faced by the city council as it tried to put together the necessary funding for carrying out the various reconstruction projects. The following section discusses the different stages of the reconstruction works in the Barri de la Catedral as well as some of the public reactions to the transformations in this area, particularly the unveiling of the Roman city-wall. The third section seeks to identify the main discourses among both supporters and challengers of the opening of Avenida de la Catedral in the particular ideological context of the Franco regime.
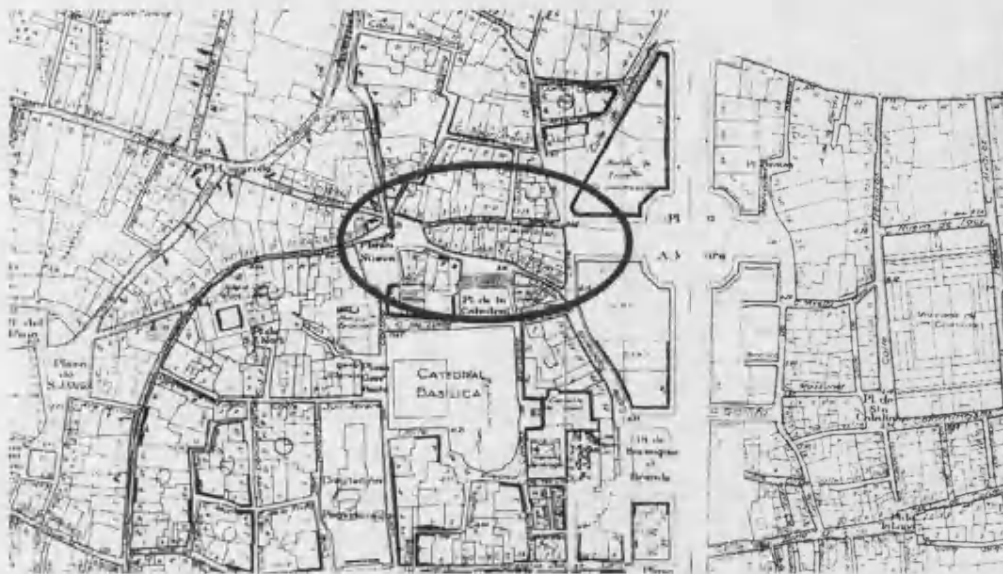
Fig. 4.1 Plan showing the old centre of Barcelona _before the war_. The dark circle shows the area that concerns this research (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).
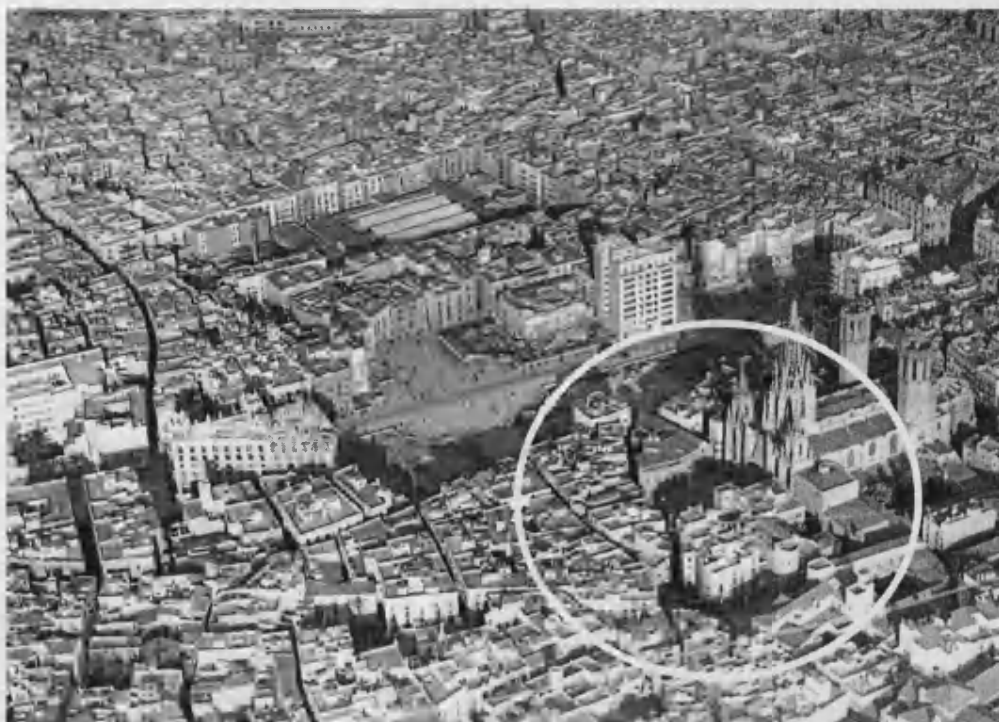
Fig. 4.2 Bird's eye view of the area taken by photographer J. Gaspar in March 1925. The white circle shows the area of concern in this chapter (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

Fig. 4.3 Contemporary map of Barcelona. The black circle encompasses old Barcelona and the environs of the Cathedral (adapted from the web).

Part I

4.1 A brief history of the area opposite the Cathedral and the western city-gate

4.1.1 The emergence of Els Arcs outside the Roman city-wall

The enclosed Roman city of Barcino was built between 15 and 13BC on the small hill called Mont Taber facing the Mediterranean. Outside the western gate of the city-wall one of the oldest suburbs, or *vilanoves* (in Catalan), began to flourish from the fourth century. The suburb became known as *Els Arcs* (The Arches), most likely in reference to the old aquaduct that ran above it.[153] The population gradually outgrew the walled city, in particular after the destruction of Tarraco (Tarragona) at the hands of the Goths in the 460s. Many Tarraconan families left the imperial city then, seeking refuge in nearby cities like Barcino, which could not absorb all the newcomers, pushing them to settle down in the emerging suburbs.[154] Both the aquaduct and the city-wall were incorporated by the new dwellers into the structure of their houses. This way, the old Roman stones were little by little embedded in the extramural neighbourhoods.

4.1.2 The formation of Plaça Nova/Plaza Nueva

The area outside the western gate became an increasingly vibrant marketplace, reaching its high point in the Middle Ages. A number of streets leading to the market square itself evolved, among them, Corribia, Palla/Paja, Bou de la Plaça Nova/Bou de la Plaza Nueva, Ripoll and Vigatans.[155] Workshops and guild houses, such as the shoemakers' and the inn-keepers', established themselves on these streets. By the fourteenth century, the neighbourhood had become a commercially flourishing district and the city council felt it was time to enlarge the square outside Porta del Bisbe (the Bishop's gate), as the western gate had become known. Some local urban historians suggest that the creation of Plaça Nova/Plaza Nueva, the New Square, in 1355 constitutes the first city-planning endeavour in Barcelona's history. An agreement was reached with the bishopric according to which the city council was granted a section of the bishop's garden in

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[153] Josep Maria Garrut, *600 Anys De Plaça Nova* (Barcelona: 1955) 19, 20.

[154] Ramón Aliberch, "Reforma Interior En Barcelona. Prosigue La Avenida De La Catedral," *Hoja del Lunes*, 8 January 1945, 11.

[155] Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Avinguda De La Catedral: De L'ager De La Colònia Barcino a La Vilanova Dels Arcs* (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Regidoria d'Edicions i Publicacions DL, 1992) 156, Agustín Durán y Sanpere, "En Vísperas De Reforma. La Plaza Nueva," *La Vanguardia*, October 20 1935.

order to enlarge the square in exchange for bringing water as far as the cathedral cloister.[156]

Failed crops in the fifteenth century led to extensive rural migration in Catalonia. In the suddenly overcrowded cities growing social tensions eventually resulted in a civil war between 1462 and 1472. Overcrowding also brought epidemics to cities like Barcelona, and a strong devotion to *Sant Roque* (Saint Roch)—who according to the legend had once saved Barcelonans from a terrible plague—emerged among the residents of Plaça Nova. In 1589, a special Sant Roque confraternity was instituted, although, as Durán y Sanpere ironically points out,

> "the rise and decline of the confraternity ran parallel to the proximity or remoteness of the epidemic, and such fluctuations were followed by the image of the saint, whose location often changed, from the corner of Boters to the tower of the Casa del Arcediano [the Archdeacon's House]".[157]

4.1.3 Continued transformations in El Barri de la Catedral

The area around Plaza Nueva and in front of the Cathedral continued to expand in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while undergoing some changes. A chapter house was built beside the cathedral in 1450 to accommodate the *Pia Almonia*, a charity institution that was already more than four hundred years old at the time. The building was subsequently enlarged in the 1540s at the expense of a number of houses on Corribia, which were demolished. The innkeepers' guild renovated their façade in 1556, as did the shoemakers' guild in 1565.[158] A Renaissance-inspired porticoed gallery joining the two towers that made up the western gate was constructed in 1614 to hide a water pipe that stretched between the two buildings. Towards the end of the century, the Episcopal Palace was refurbished, its façade gaining a more sober appearance. The building was only restored in the twentieth century, when its original Romanesque elements were revealed.[159] Along the same lines, the two Roman towers were plastered, and an equally

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[156] Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Avinguda De La Catedral: De L'ager De La Colònia Barcino a La Vilanova Dels Arcs* 157, Aliberch, "Reforma Interior En Barcelona. Prosigue La Avenida De La Catedral.", Durán y Sanpere, "En Vísperas De Reforma. La Plaza Nueva."

[157] Durán y Sanpere, "En Vísperas De Reforma. La Plaza Nueva."

[158] Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Avinguda De La Catedral: De L'ager De La Colònia Barcino a La Vilanova Dels Arcs* 159.

[159] Aliberch, "Reforma Interior En Barcelona. Prosigue La Avenida De La Catedral," 11.

smooth and sober result was obtained, matching the taste of early eighteenth-century neo-classicists.[160]

Large-scale urban planning became a fundamental concern in the nineteenth century. Several plans were designed throughout the century and a real construction boom took place between 1870 and 1910 in Barcelona, during which most of the new extended city, the *Eixample/Ensanche* (literally, the Extension), was built.[161] One of the first initiatives taken with regard to the Barri de la Catedral was the removal in 1820 of the porticoed gallery that connected the two Roman towers in order to give the area a more airy look. For the same reason, several of the streets such as Corribia, Arcs, Riera de Sant Joan and Bou de la Plaça Nova/Bou de la Plaza Nueva were straightened and widened and subsequently paved. A number of houses on these streets were rebuilt, often by renowned master builders like Jaume Brossa and architects such as Josep Oriol Mestres, Josep Fontseré and Antoni Rovira.[162]

In spite of these modern transformations and the increasing competition from malls and their products for mass consumption, the extraordinarily dynamic merchant activity that characterised the Barri de la Catedral since its early beginnings never waned. By the time the Civil War broke out in 1936, a multiplicity of businesses and workshops continued to exist in the neighbourhood. Corribia, for example, featured a print shop, a moving agency, a pharmacist, a linen-draper's shop, an antiquary and a beer-house oddly named *Celler Català* (Catalan wine-shop).[163] On Plaça Nova/Plaza Nueva one could still find Puig i Alfonso's legendary bookshop and Roura's sausage business with a sign on the façade that said "Supplier of the Royal House". Famous pharmacy De Balvey had been replaced by a new pharmacy store, and traditional drug-store Sagarro was now a pastry shop. Lathe-hand *Baqué*, whose latten-toys enticed young boys and girls, competed with the knick-knacks of another popular shop, called *dels rodolins*, on Bou de la Plaça Nova/Bou de la Plaza Nueva. Because of the closeness of various religious institutions, there were also numerous workshops related to religious activities

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[160] See Garrut, *600 Anys De Plaça Nova* 24.

[161] Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1992) 20.

[162] Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Avinguda De La Catedral: De L'ager De La Colònia Barcino a La Vilanova Dels Arcs*.

[163] Francisco Curet, "La Calle 'Corribia'," *Diario de Barcelona*, March 23 1956.

such as makers of sacred images and clerical clothing tailors. The offices of the Christian magazine *La Familia* were also located on Plaça Nova/Plaza Nueva.[164]

Fig. 4.4 Plaza Nueva and the Roman gate in a photograph taken by Pérez de Rozas in 1933 (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

Fig. 4.5 A closer view of the Roman gate. The white circle indicates the position of the image of Saint Roque in the left tower (March 2007) (photographed by the author).

4.2 The plans for a transversal avenue across old Barcelona

4.2.1 Cerdá's plan

Several urban plans were designed for Barcelona during the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the city's growing population. In summer 1854, the city-wall was demolished after years of controversy, and while some argue that the disappearance of the wall is what finally allowed planners to rethink Barcelona as a large, modern city, others contend that there was no need to remove the wall in order to create a modern Barcelona. Engineer Ildefonso Cerdá's extension plan, approved in 1859, was the first comprehensive urban reform plan for the city. Although its main goal was the extension of the city through the construction of rationally designed districts, the plan also envisioned some changes in the old town. There, Cerdá suggested

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[164] "Recuerdos De La Vieja Plaza Nueva," *Destino*, 21 December 1946. This description of the existing shops coincides with what Mrs Assumptió Planelles (age 94), who has lived her whole life in the area, told me in an informal conversation on 11 March 2007.

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opening up three broad streets or avenues as extensions of the avenues that he projected for the new Eixample/Ensanche.

Fig. 4.6 Cerdá's 1859 plan for Barcelona, which included a straight avenue across the old district (dotted black line). The black circle shows the area of concern of this chapter (adapted from the web).

Two of them, today's Layetana and Muntaner, would cross the old city in the direction from the mountains to the sea, and a transversal avenue would connect Campo Sagrado and Pallars running through the old town, perpendicular to the other two. The avenues would be 20 metres wide and 30 metres wide at their entrances and crossings, respectively. Some scholars suggest that the different widths were a means to break the inevitable monotony that Cerdá admitted was a characteristic of his grid-design.[165] Only one of Cerdá's planned extensions, today's Layetana, was fully accomplished, though not quite immediately, and not entirely according to his original plan.

4.2.2 Baixeras' plan

Nowadays, it is often argued that Cerdá's inner-city reform plan showed little sensitivity towards the compact and densely built old town, cutting mercilessly through it, ignoring religious edifices, palaces and other historical buildings. The disdain for the

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[165] Adolfo Florensa Ferrer, "Memorias De La Real Academia De Ciencias Y Artes De Barcelona. Cartografía Local. Planos De Reforma Interior De Barcelona," (Barcelona: Real Academia de Ciencias y Artes de Barcelona, 1961), 525.

irrational layout of the pre-Enlightenment city inspired the canon of urban reformers all over Europe at that moment, and it is perhaps not surprising that engineer Cerdá, a man of his time, felt the same. So did Ángel Baixeras, an amateur urbanist who passionately worked on a reform plan for inner Barcelona for several years until it was finally approved in 1889, the works commencing in 1908.
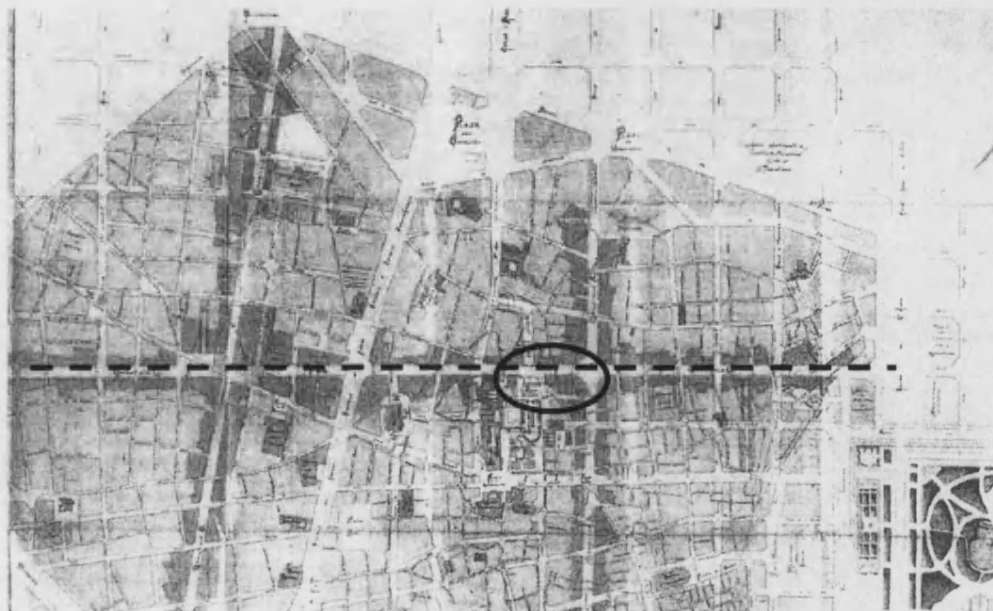
Fig. 4.7 Baixeras' plan for Gran Via C. The black dotted line follows Gran Via C. The area in front of the Cathedral lies within the black circle (adapted from the web).

Baixeras took up Cerdá's main idea of opening up three avenues through the old town to improve communication within and across the area, calling them avenues A, B and C. While maintaining the course of avenues A and C, he changed the route of avenue B, drawing it from Plaza de Universidad downwards, towards the port, instead of planning it as an extension of Muntaner as Cerdà had done. The main reason for this change was to avoid the demolition of recently built apartment buildings, which did not exist when Cerdá designed his plan. As a result of the pressure from private property owners and developers, new residential buildings were considered of more value than many of the ancient, historical structures, which very few individuals tried to defend at the time.[166]

4.2.3 Darder's plan

This attitude started to change as the works for Gran Via B or via Layetana progressed in the 1910s. The destruction of large sections of traditional neighbourhoods such as *La*

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[166] Ibid. 527.

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Ribera and the area around the market of Santa Catalina began to touch on the hearts of many Barcelonans who realised that the loss of these genuine pieces of history was irreparable.
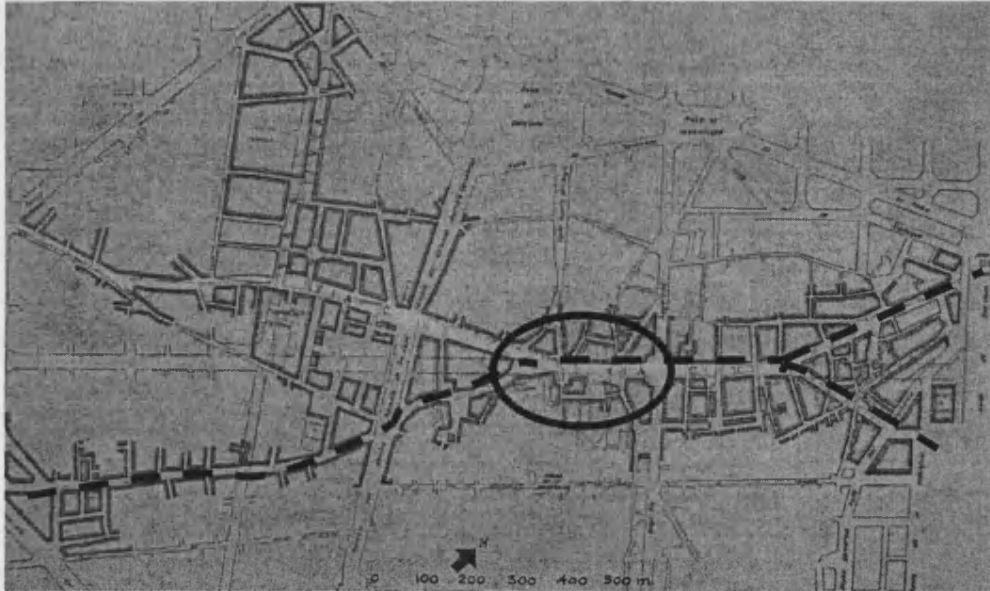
Fig. 4.8 Darder's plan for Gran Via C. The black dotted line follows the new course of Gran Via C. The black circle shows where the Barri de la Catedral was located (scanned copy from Florensa's *Memorias...*).

While people increasingly rejected the kind of drastic urban interventions that the opening of via Layetana epitomised, nobody really considered abandoning the inner-city reform plans. Instead, new attempts were made to soften the incursions into the dense, but also delicate urban fabric of the old district. Municipal architect Antonio Darder was commissioned to design a modified version of the previous plans (by Cerdá and Baixeras) that would respect the most significant or representative buildings which stood in the way of the half-accomplished Avenue B and the projected Avenue C. Unlike Cerdá and Baixeras, who had drawn the avenues as straight lines, Darder designed them by widening existing streets and following their course as much as possible.[167] Darder's project was approved by the city council in November 1918, and was well received by the public.[168]

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[167] To the west, Gran Via C would be formed by the existing streets of *Puertaferrisa*, *Carmen* and *San Antonio Abad*, which would simply be widened. To the east, towards Santa Catalina marketplace, Gran Via C branched off into two broad streets, the main one reaching *Arc de Triomf/Arco del Triunfo* and the other *paseo Pujadas*.

[168] See Antonio Darder, "Reforma Interior De Barcelona. Gran Via C.," (Barcelona: Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, Oficina Facultativa de Reforma, 1918).

4.2.4 Vilaseca's plan

Years passed and little progress was made towards the implementation of Darder's plan. In 1929, at the end of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, the city council decided to organise a competition to gather new inspiration. The ideas that emerged from the competition became the basis on which municipal architect Joaquín Vilaseca designed a new plan, which he entitled *Plano de reforma y urbanización y de enlace entre los puntos singulares del Casco-Antiguo de la Ciudad* (Plan to redevelop, urbanise and connect singular sites within the old district). The zone of *Ataranzas*[169] was the main target of Vilaseca's plan, and Vilaseca had taken account of Cerdà's and Baixeras' plans in his design.[170] His main concern was not to touch commercial zones, drawing the streets across areas that involved as little loss of wealth as possible, and trying to circumvent significant buildings—in other words, attempting to overcome the flaws of previous the plans.

Avenue C was now to run along Palla/Paja, Cardenal Casañas and Sant Pau/San Pablo, which were not significant commercial streets and therefore less problematic to appropriate. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that some historical buildings, such as the house of the shoemakers' guild in front of the Cathedral on Corribia, would be affected by the opening of Avenue C and Vilaseca suggested the building be reconstructed elsewhere. (One possible location, he argued, could be the new alignment that resulted from the projected transformation of *Piedad* street behind the apse of the Cathedral.) In Vilaseca's design, Avenue C was 25 metres wide, allegedly enough for two lines of vehicles to pass in both directions and another three pathways for the cars to stop—one pathway on each side of the avenue and one in the middle for cabs. The plan was not approved definitely by the city council plenum before the 28th of May 1934, and did not receive state authorisation until the 16th of March 1935.

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[169] The zone of Ataranzas encompasses *Ramblas*, *Ronda de San Pau/Ronda de San Pablo*, *Ronda de San Antonio*, *Pelayo*, and the street called *Marqués del Duero* at the time.

[170] See Actuación Patrimonial/Caja 045962/Expedientes 1185-1186/Año 1949, "Plano De Reforma Y De Urbanización Y Enlace De Los Puntos Singulares Del Casco-Antiguo De La Ciudad. Memoria. Barcelona, -- De Enero 1930.," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).
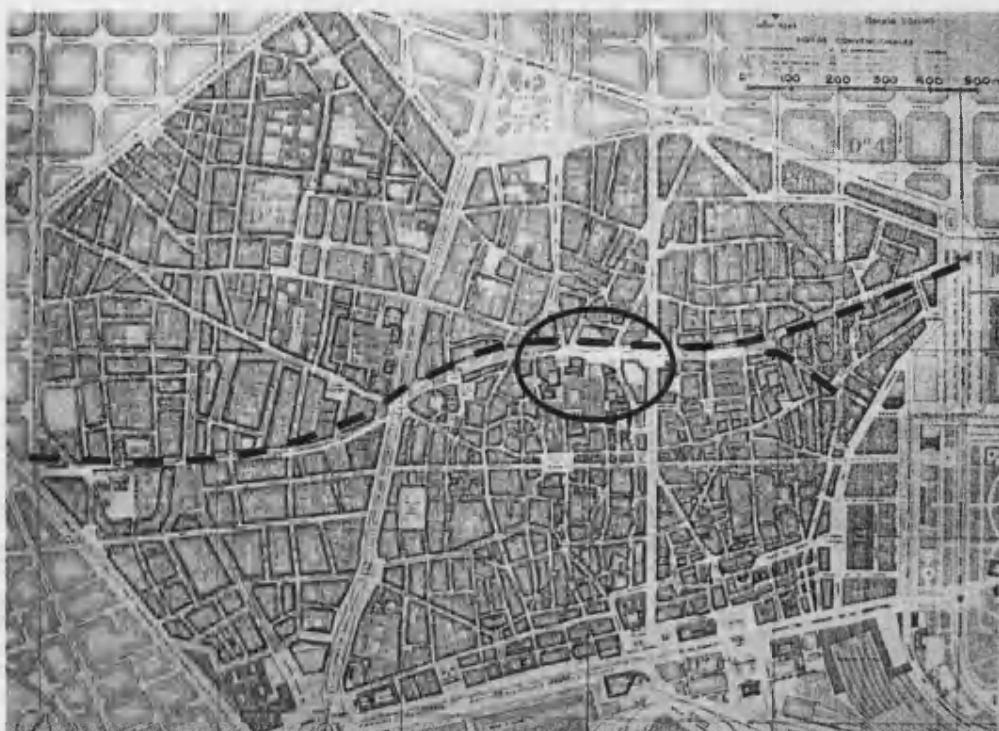
Fig. 4.9 Vilaseca's plan for Gran Via C. The black dotted line shows the changed course of Gran Via C and the black circle indicates the area in front of the Cathedral (scanned copy from Florensa's *Memorias...*).

4.2.5 Residents' objections to Vilaseca's plan[171]

Vilaseca's plan generated a number of public protests. As soon as the plan was approved for the first time at the beginning of 1930 by the *Comisión Municipal Permanente* (Permanent Municipal Commission), the *Associació de Veïns afectats per la Reforma Gran Via C* (Association of Local Residents affected by the Redevelopment of Avenue C) tried to stop it being implemented mainly because of the expropriations it involved, but also because of its allegedly negative impact on historic Barcelona. But instead of focusing on the content of the plan, the Associació attacked the procedures by which it had been approved. According to the Associació, the Comisión's consent had been merely "testimonial" as it had taken place on the 28th of January 1930, on the very same evening dictator Primo de Rivera announced his resignation, forcing an abrupt national political change. It is possible that the members of the Comisión met to approve the plan quickly in the face of Primo de Rivera's resignation, thus ensuring it was approved before they themselves had to resign. Be that as it may, the plan was subsequently passed to the provisional city council plenum, which briefly succeeded the

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[171] This section is based on the information contained in Urbanización y Reforma 2-D-3/Caja 15655/Caja 215/Expediente 1/Año 1934, "Expediente Promogut Per L'asociacio De Veins Afectats Per a La Reforma, Gran Via C," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

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plenum of the dictatorship. The plan was approved by the plenum and from there it went to the central government for authorisation. Meanwhile, the project was publicly exhibited and private and public organisations—among them, the Associació de Veïns—handed in a number reports and revisions to it. But, according to the Associació de Veïns, these were ignored by the local authorities, and by January 1931 the Associació filed a plea requesting the provisional city council to publicise all the reports. This did not happen, and the Associació decided to publish and circulate its own report summarising their various concerns.

With the advent of the Second Republic in April 1931, the Associació saw a new opportunity to make its voice heard. Playing on the sensitivity of the new Republican city council, the Associació claimed that Vilaseca's plan should be made available to the public so that it could be assessed again,

> "both because of its impure origins [it was approved under the rule of dictator Primo de Rivera] and the former city council's suspicious refusal to publicise the reports which different organisations and associations had prepared [when the plan was made public in 1930]".

It appears as if the Republican city council's intention was indeed to submit the plan to the plenum's consideration for a second time, thus acknowledging, in some way the plan's "impure origins" or that it had been approved under dubious circumstances. However, the city council did not appear to have contemplated going through the process of receiving public feedback for a second time. The *Comissió Municipal de Govern*[172] rejected the Associació's request in May 1934, arguing that Vilaseca's plan had already been publicised once and that all the reports received, including that of the Associació de Veïns, had been adequately examined and relevant suggestions incorporated in it.

But Josep Cardús i Arqué, president of the Associació, did not give up. On the 24th of May 1934, barely four days before the plan was definitely approved by the Republican city council plenum, he wrote another letter of complaint, insisting on the same issues. His plea was once again declined, and on the 28th of May the plan was approved. After that, Josep Cardús filed an appeal (*recurso de reposición*) before the city council, which

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[172] This was the Catalan name for the Comisión Municipal Permanente, and became the official name under the Second Republic.

was unsuccessful. It remains unclear whether the Associació went any further, bringing the case to the administrative court (*Tribunal contencioso-administrativo*), but if it did, it must have been unsuccessful again, because Vilaseca's plan moved forward and the works for Gran Vía C were about to commence in early 1936.

4.2.6 Architects' criticisms of Vilaseca's plan

In a slightly different vein, less personally involved perhaps than the Associació de Veïns, the GATCPAC,[173] a CIRPAC-affiliated association that grouped modernist Catalan architects since 1930, also voiced their views on the planned transformations in the old district. In the name of the GATCPAC, architect Josep Lluís Sert sent a letter to the town council dated 27th of May 1934, the day before the Plano de Reforma was approved.[174] Sert showed surprise at the announcement of the imminent commencement of the works. He wrote that, in view of the sudden decision, the members of the GATCPAC felt the urge to at least make a few observations on the plan. These related to sanitation, circulation, historical monuments, cost-effectiveness and the need for a more comprehensive urban plan for Barcelona.

To the GATCPAC, the main flaw of Vilaseca's plan was that it did not address the unhealthy living conditions in the old district. Broadening streets and creating new avenues without improving the existing housing blocks, Sert contended, would simply mean that the sanitation problems affecting the area continued. As an alternative, he proposed creating abundant green zones in between the housing blocks to generate a healthier atmosphere. While Sert and his colleagues agreed that improving circulation "from the mountains to the sea" by creating broad avenues was extremely important, they were not convinced by the opening of a transversal avenue across the old town. They believed this would simply attract traffic to an already congested area, and argued it would be better instead to direct traffic through transversal avenues further uptown.

The construction of Avenue C was partly driven by the principle of disencumbering. The idea was that the avenue would connect the main monuments of the old district, providing an orderly and comfortable view of the historical setting. Sert rejected the

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[173] Acronym for Grup d'Arquitectes i Tècnics Catalans per el Progrès de l'Arquitectura Contemporània.
[174] Urbanización y Reforma 2-D-3/Caja 15655/Caja 215/Expediente 1/Año 1934, "Expediente Promogut Per L'asociacio De Veins Afectats Per a La Reforma, Gran Via C."

principle of disencumbering and the plans to demolish many of the blocks that surrounded historical buildings like the Cathedral. The spirit of reconstruction (or perhaps recreation) of neat, stylistically homogeneous urban settings, which had permeated nineteenth-century inner-city reforms in Europe and Spain "had been universally abandoned", Sert argued, claiming that it was preferable "to accept the current setting with its superposition of styles of different periods" than to destroy the genuine architectural milieu surrounding single historical buildings.[175]

Sert also had recommendations on how to make Vilaseca's plan more cost-effective. For example, he argued that widening already existing streets was old-fashioned because it implied costly expropriations. Current urban theory, he wrote, recommended opening new streets "across large plots where the land is cheaper"; also, because these "new, previously inexistent routes" help in sanitising the urban fabric. Sert also emphasised the need to define different implementation stages on the basis of the available resources in order not to repeat the experience of the numerous plans approved by the city council in the past decades, which had suffered constant modifications over time and had never been fully carried out. But Sert also argued that the Plano de Reforma was only a partial plan and that Barcelona, on the contrary, needed a comprehensive urban reform plan to meet the requirements of the new era ("machinism, new speeds, etc.").[176]

Sert's letter illustrates the tension between more creative understandings of urban planning and the institutional approach to the matter during the Second Republic, which, on the other hand, is often branded as one of the most open and avant-garde periods in Spanish history. The outcome of the debate around Vilaseca's plan, and particularly the opening of Avenue C, reinforces the idea that there are significant continuities in urban planning over time, which transcend different political regimes.

Although "repeatedly brought back and forth and filtered to reduce its causticity", as Durán y Sanpere wrote in October 1935, Vilaseca's plan made its way through three

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[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.

distinctively different political regimes (not governments).[177] First approved in 1930 by the city council under Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and approved for a second time by the Republican city council in 1934, neither the fierce opposition of the residents affected by the transformations nor the recommendations of a renowned professional body in the field such as the GATCPAC were able to change the course of the plan. Perhaps some people thought that the outbreak of the war in 1936 would prevent its implementation. As it turned out, the war would simply assist the pickaxes by leaving in ruins a significant portion of the housing blocks that stood in the way of Avenue C. The rebel forces' systematic bombing of Barcelona—especially from 1938—would have a strong material and moral impact on the city. As will be explained in the next section, the air raids were justified by the rebels with the argument that the port city was an important recipient of military supplies by rail (via France) and sea.

4.3. The bombings
4.3.1 Barcelona bombed

"Barcelona, bombed. The city, ripped open on its four flanks at the will of the tragic hazardousness of the Italian bombers, spread out over the slopes of Tibidabo, plain towards San Andrés. Festooned by the treacherous sea, which does not allow for distinguishing the planes until they are within sight. The walls remain alone across the blue sky. A lonesome wall with windows of air in the air, balconies of nothingness; emptiness at the front and the back".[178]

The following note was circulated among the officers at the rebels' headquarters in Burgos in December 1937:

"General Headquarters of the Generalísimo

Staff—Second Information Section

Document n. 8

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[177] "Se avecina la realización de una nueva reforma en el núcleo antiguo de la ciudad. El proyecto ha sido trasegado y filtrado repetidas veces para quitarle causticidad, pero no por eso va a dejar de causar sus víctimas entre las pobres calles y plazas comprendidas en su campo de acción, algunas veces con harto dolor de los ciudadanos sensibles que verán desaparecer esos rincones tan evocativos que se llaman calle de la Corribia, plaza Nueva o plaza del Pino." Durán y Sanpere, "En Vísperas De Reforma. La Plaza Nueva."
[178] "Barcelona bombardeada. La ciudad abierta por los cuatro costados, el azar trágico de los aviones italianos, esparrancada en las laderas del Tibidabo y Montjuich, llana hacia San Andrés. Festoneada del mar traidor que no deja distinguir los aviones hasta que se avistan. Las paredes quedan solas al través del cielo azul. Una pared sola con las ventanas de aire al aire, balcones de nada; vacío por delante y por detrás." Max Aub, *Campo De Sangre* (Madrid: Santillana S.A.-Alfaguara, 1998 [1945]) 478, 80.

<u>Aragon Front</u>

<u>Deposits and Storage-rooms and other targets</u>

<u>Barcelona</u>

It is needless to underscore the importance of this garrison due to the number of targets of military interest to be found there such as factories, depots, official headquarters, military barracks, etc... Our Section is in possession of a detailed plan with the location of all these targets and a similar one has been forwarded to the Air Marshall. A great amount of material arriving from France is stored in this garrison and there is news that the trains departing towards the Aragon Front are not loaded at the train-station but at sheds numbers 2 and 7 by the pier."[179]

This was a sad prelude to the intense bombing campaigns on Barcelona that began on New Year's Day 1938. The city was deemed an important recipient of military material and other essential supplies from France and the rest of Europe. The material arrived in the city by train or sea. There it was stored and subsequently distributed to other garrisons, mainly the Aragon front. It became a priority for the rebels to stop this flow. Even though the city had been bombed prior to 1938, it was not until then that the Mediterranean flank and Barcelona gained a more prominent role in the war.

The first time the bombing of Barcelona resulted in deaths was on the 13th of February 1937, when the Italian warship *Eugenio di Savoia* bombed the city. The environs of the *Elizalde* factory, which made war equipment, were hit by various howitzers and seventeen people died. At the same time, the first Italian bombers, Savoia S-79s, were sent to Mallorca, and immediately used in various operations on the mainland. During the following months, more Savoia S-79s and now also S-81s arrived. These bombers were originally designed as passenger aircraft by engineer Alessandro Marchetti in

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[179] "*Cuartel General del Generalisimo*
Estado Mayor - Segunda Seccion Informacion
Documento no. 8
Frente de Aragón
Depósitos y Almacenes y otros objetivos
Plaza de Barcelona
No hace falta resaltar la importancia de esta Plaza por la cantidad de objetivos de interés militar que en ella existen, como fabricas, depósitos, centros oficiales, Cuarteles, etc... En la Sección existe un plano detallado con la situación de todos estos objetivos y otro igual ha sido remitido a la Jefatura del Aire. En esta plaza se almacena gran cantidad de material procedente de Francia y se tiene noticias que los trenes que salen con dirección al Frente de Aragón, no se cargan en la Estacion de f.c. sino en los tinglados 2 y 7 del muelle." Tomo I Ejército del Centro/Rollo microfilmado 19/Legajo 13/Carpeta 17, "Información Del Enemigo. Boletines Ejército Del Aire. Diciembre 1937.," (Archivo General Histórico Militar de Madrid).

1934, but his design was quickly and successfully adapted for military use. The bombers were equipped with three Piaggio P.XI RC 40 engines, enabling them to reach 475 kilometres per hour and a height of 8,500 metres. They could fly fully laden as far as 2,000 kilometres with a load of 1,250 kilograms of bombs. In addition, the bombers were equipped with three 12mm Breda-SAFAT machine guns and one 7.7mm Lewis gun to give them effective protection from enemy aviation.[180]

The port and adjacent industrial and storage facilities such as the fuel and gas depots of CAMPSA[181] became the rebel Savoias' main targets. CAMPSA, for example, was repeatedly bombed, although not always successfully.[182] Aside from these quite obvious military targets, the rebels claimed that part of the loyalists' war supplies were stored in the basements of regular downtown residential buildings, as the note cited earlier indicates. Therefore, the city centre—both the old district and the Eixample—not just the port area, became the target of aerial strikes, especially from January 1938. In total, 2,500 people were killed in Barcelona.[183] The Italian air force rehearsed the *martellamento diluito nel tempo* tactic on the city. This simply meant that the bomb raids were so continuous and systematic that the alarm systems were useless. As a result, the population could not figure out whether the sirens sounded to alert the beginning or the end of an air raid, and were therefore increasingly exposed to the peril of the bombings.

The bombing of civilians and residential neighbourhoods was justified militarily by the rebels with the argument that the Republicans hid military supplies in ordinary housing blocks. At the same time, there seems to exist sufficient evidence to claim that a large number—if not most—of the aerial attacks on downtown Barcelona aimed to cause more destruction and deaths among civilians than was strictly necessary to dismantle the Republicans' military infrastructure and destroy their supplies. The rebels' Italian

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[180] Nassaes, *La Aviación Legionaria En La Guerra Española* 223.

[181] CAMPSA stands for Compañía Arrendataria del Monopolio de Petróleos, Sociedad Anónima, and was the Spanish national energy company between 1927 and 1992, when it was dissolved under the EU anti-monopoly regulations. The name is still used as one of Repsol's (Spanish oil company) commercial brands.

[182] See, for example, a confidential note from Cuerpo Ejército Urgel (Urgel military corps) to the General Jefe del Ejército del Norte (Northern Army Chief-General) informing about the semi-successful bombing of the CAMPSA depots in June 1938 when the fuel depots were destroyed, but not those filled with petrol. In Tomo I Ejército del Norte/Rollo microfilmado 20/Legajo 15/Carpeta 19, "Informe Del Enemigo. Bombardeos Enemigos. Diciembre 1938.," (Archivo General Histórico Militar de Madrid).

[183] Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya i Font, *Catalunya Sota Les Bombes (1936-1939)* 234, 35.

supporters were enthusiastic believers in the demoralising effects of bombing raids on civilian populations. And there was also possibly the urge to punish fervently resistant civilians. In the end, the resilience of key cities such as Barcelona and Madrid seriously obstructed an earlier victory by Franco. It is therefore suggested that the aim of demoralising and punishing the population was more prominent in the rebels' air war strategy than any strictly military goal. Moreover, Barcelona, unlike Madrid, was never on the front line. This reinforces the idea that the systematic and intense bombing of downtown residential areas was not a means to move forward the front line, nor exclusively a way to crack down on the Republican wartime supply chain, but primarily a means to demoralise Barcelonans, forcing them to put pressure on the Republican leadership.

While Mussolini's view on Aviazione Legionaria's role in the Spanish Civil War perhaps emerges from his aggressive declaration in March 1938 about razing Barcelona to the ground, the rebels' position appears more ambivalent. Numerous foreign and international committees reported on the bombing of civilian populations in Spanish cities throughout the war. These reports were most of the time ignored and did not produce any practical outcome: the bombing raids on rearguard cities simply continued. However, occasionally, the rebels showed some concern for the image they were projecting to the international community. In early 1938, for example, a British Investigation Committee reported that one of the bombing raids carried out on Barcelona on the 1st of January had deliberately targeted civilian constructions. The British allegation was apparently taken seriously by the rebels, who tried to obtain information internally from the staff involved in that specific air strike with which to prove that the civilian constructions had not been intentionally hit. The night raid had been carried out by a squadron at 6:15 in the evening, and the alleged targets had been the pier and adjacent facilities. However, the chief of the squadron admitted that, "due to diminished visibility and the height from which the bombs were dropped, some of the bombs might have fallen outside the port area". In the same report, his superior, the *Jefe de la Región Aérea de Baleares* (Chief of the Aerial Region of the Balears), acknowledged that the potential strikes on civilian constructions was a "sensitive issue",

but argued that this was almost "inevitable when the targets are located as close to the city as in this case".[184]

The rebels' apparently ambiguous position perhaps resulted from how the raids operated in practice. They were mainly carried out by Italian and German bombers, flown by Italian, German and Spanish pilots, but it is not entirely clear how the chain of command linking the Italian Aviazione Legionaria, the German Luftwaffe and the Nacionales' troops worked. Sometimes it is argued that the German and Italian air force had considerable freedom of manoeuvre, others contend that Franco and the rebel generals had to authorise the attacks, and yet others argue that it was precisely this apparent confusion about who was ultimately behind the raids that allowed the rebels to benefit from the results of the strikes, while blaming the foreign military forces whenever the popular or international reaction against the bombings was exceptionally negative.

4.3.2 The construction of anti-air-raid shelters

Most Spanish cities that underwent regular aerial attacks during the Civil War soon organised passive defence boards to address the immediate consequences of the destruction and organise preventive tasks such as the construction of air-raid shelters, the protection of monuments, and the erection of supporting structures for damaged buildings that risked collapsing. The municipal authorities began to alert Barcelonans of the threat of aerial attacks well before the rebels started their systematic raids. As early as September 1936, the *Servicio de Defensa Pasiva* (Passive Defence Service) was created to this end. On the 9th of June 1937—as the aerial strikes became more frequent—the Catalan autonomous government created the *Junta de Defensa Pasiva de Catalunya* (Catalonia Passive Defence Board), a regional board that coordinated all the local passive defence boards in Catalonia.[185]

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[184] "Según informes del Jefe de la escuadrilla, gran parte de las bombas cayeron en el puerto, si bien se considera posible que debido a la dispersión natural de las bombas, a la altura a que se estaban llevando a cabo el servicio y a las malas condiciones de visibilidad, por ser de noche, cayeran algunas en zona no portuaria, cosa aunque sensible, inevitable cuando se trata, como en este caso, de objetivos tan próximos al casco urbano." Tomo I Ejército del Norte/Rollo microfilmado 20/Legajo 15/Carpeta 45, "Información Bombardeos Nacionales. Enero 1939.," (Archivo General Histórico Militar de Madrid).

[185] Andreu Besolí Martín, "Los Refugios Antiaéreos De Barcelona: Pasado Y Presente De Un Patrimonio Arcano," *Ebre 38: revista internacional de la Guerra Civil, 1936-1939*, no. 2 (2004): 183, 84.

The efforts of the *Junta de Defensa Pasiva de Barcelona* (Barcelona Passive Defence Board) are particularly well documented and there has recently been significant interest in detailing the construction of the approximately 1,400 shelters that existed in the city at the end of the war. Most of these, around 1,300, were built throughout the conflict by residents and volunteers organised by residents' associations, trade unions and political parties. Thus, the extensive infrastructure of shelters was mainly constructed by volunteers, and their work is often portrayed as an example of the strong sense of community and solidarity that emerged in Barcelona (and other Spanish cities) after the outbreak of the war. Moreover, as most men were sent off to the front, the works mainly relied on the voluntary labour of women, children and the elderly.

Most shelters were not built from scratch, however. Basements and underground stations were turned into refuges, and any existing subterranean hollow space could potentially be adapted for the same purpose. Institutions, private companies and urban estate owners wrote to the municipal authorities offering their buildings as public air-raid shelters, or asking for permission to accommodate shelters for their own workers or tenants.[186] A specifically created body, the *Agrupació Col·lectiva de la Construcció de Barcelona* (Barcelona Collective Construction Group), became responsible for coordinating the various municipal branches and other services involved in the inspection of potential refuges, delivery of construction materials, and employment of workers for the construction of about one hundred public shelters. The latter were larger and better equipped installations for general public use and built by non-voluntary workers.

Soon it became compulsory for residents to notify the authorities of any existing basements in their buildings. This was part of the requisition policy practised in wartime, revolutionary Barcelona. The Ritz Hotel, for example, was requisitioned and

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[186] For example, in November 1936, the General Consul of France offered to use the Consulate's building on Plaza Cataluña as a public air-raid shelter. In December, the director of the French company, *Société Lanière Barcelonaise* requested municipal permission to use one of its factory buildings as a shelter, and if the building proved unsuitable for this, to construct a new one. Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50764, "3.2 Solicituts De Ciutadans I Institucions," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

transformed into a public canteen, which became very popular—perhaps unsurprisingly—while its basement was converted into a public refuge.[187]
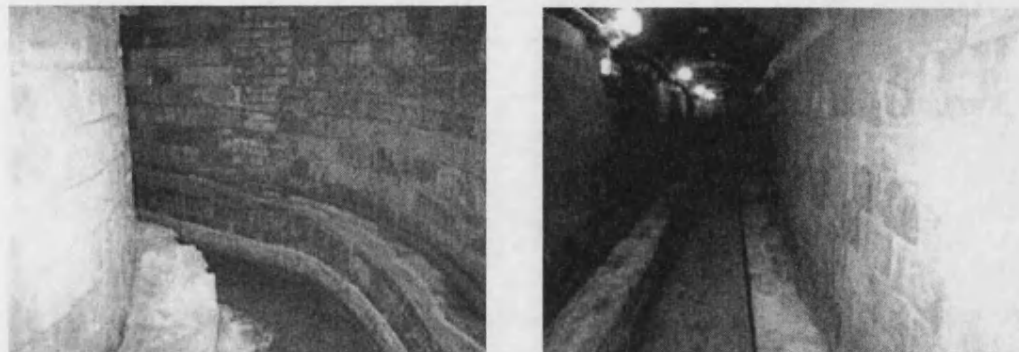
Fig. 4.10 Views of the anti-air raid shelter under Plaça del Diamant, *now open to the public* (adapted from the web).

The building of shelters was most intense during the spring and summer of 1937. As the war progressed, the Agrupació was increasingly unable to provide the voluntary teams with construction materials. The war made it difficult to renew the municipal stocks even if the debris caused by the bombings was recycled and reused as construction material. The available stocks were carefully rationed among paid workers and voluntary teams. From July 1938, the paid teams had to submit weekly reports detailing the progress of the works, possibly also as a means to control their adequate use of the materials. The reports reveal that some of the building works were interrupted for weeks because the local authorities could not pay the workers. Some of the shelters were never finished before the rebels took over the city at the end of January 1939.[188]

Each shelter was guarded by several individuals, usually residents in the area, who worked in shifts. If there was an alarm, the guard on duty had to "quickly, but calmly" open the doors to the shelter, light the oil lamps, and let people in in an "orderly way".[189] During the intense bombing campaigns of 1938, the alarms went off almost

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[187] There is a letter dated 23 February 1937 from the Committee of the *Federación Obrera de los Sindicatos de la Industria Gatronómica* (Gastronomic Industry Labour Unions' Federation) claiming that the windows of the basement of the hotel should be protected according to the passive defence regulations in order for the basement to function as a public shelter. Ibid.

[188] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50764, "3.3.5 Nota Setmanal Dels Treballadors Ocupats En Les Obres De Construcció De Refugis (1938-1939)," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

[189] These detailed instructions can be found in a leaflet dated 21 November 1936 that was probably distributed among the guards and possibly also the population. Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-

daily, but were not always followed by an actual bomb-raid. Sometimes, on the other hand, they were triggered with little notice, people barely making it to the refuges before the raid began. One of the reasons for the short notice was that the Italian bombers sometimes accessed the main land a few kilometres south of Barcelona, approaching the city from the mountains. This made it more difficult to catch sight of the planes and use the anti-aircraft batteries against them because it meant shooting at the planes over the city instead of the sea.[190]

With the advent of aerial warfare, the levels of danger faced at the rearguard and the front became increasingly similar. On the battlefield, each man took essentially care of himself, whereas women at the rearguard had to watch over children and the elderly, making sure everybody made it to the closest shelter at the sound of the alarm, not to mention the often hard, physical work involved in building the shelters.

4.3.3 Destruction in the Barri de la Catedral

During the intense bombing campaigns that followed the raids on the 1st of January 1938, the Barri de la Catedral was hit on at least three occasions. The bombing raids on the 30th of January, 12th of November and 23rd of November 1938 resulted in an unknown number of victims[191] and diverse damage to the buildings and streets in the area comprising the blocks opposite the Cathedral and around Plaça Nova/Plaza Nueva. The bombing on the 19th of August 1938, when one of the Cathedral domes was hit, but not irreparably damaged, should probably also be included in this account.

On the 30th of January 1938, the alarms went off at 9:01 a.m., going silent again about an hour later, at 10:11 a.m. At 11:22 a.m., they went off again for another hour, until 12:25 p.m.[192] Barcelonans were in suspense for two hours, and yet, according to Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law and foreign minister as well as chief of the Italian

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101/1936-1959/Caixa 50764, "3.5.1 Instruccions Personal De Vigilancia," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

[190] Besolí Martín, "Los Refugios Antiaéreos De Barcelona: Pasado Y Presente De Un Patrimonio Arcano," 184.

[191] The information available suggests that there were only reports of the total number of victims caused by each bombing raid; they didn't distinguish where exactly in the city each victim was killed. Consequently, it is not possible to give an exact figure for the people who died in the area in front of the Cathedral.

[192] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50763, "2.4 Relació De Bombardejos 26/12/1936 a 25/1/1939," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

Aviazione Legionaria in Spain, only nine bombers participated in the raids that day. The raids themselves did not last more than one and a half minutes in total.[193]

Fig. 4.11 Impact of the bombing raids of 30th January 1938 (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

This was apparently sufficient for the rebel aircraft to drop 44 bombs, killing 210 people and wounding 125.[194] A third of the victims were children in the infant school San Felipe Neri, not very far from Plaça Nova.[195] A total of 87 buildings were hit, out of which 21 were completely destroyed, 26 were partially destroyed and 40 suffered minor damage. The bombs fell in the port, on Barceloneta—the maritime neighbourhood—the old district and the Eixample.[196] Several houses in the Barri de la Catedral were affected.[197] On 10 Palla/Paja, for example, there was an air-raid shelter in the basement where a large group of people had sought refuge. A number of them were killed as the house partly collapsed.[198]

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[193] Villarroya i Font, *Els Bombardeigs De Barcelona Durant La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)* 53.

[194] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50763, "2.4 Relació De Bombardejos 26/12/1936 a 25/1/1939."

[195] Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya, *España En Llamas: La Guerra Civil Desde El Aire* 152.

[196] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50763, "2.4 Relació De Bombardejos 26/12/1936 a 25/1/1939."

[197] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva/M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50763, "2.1 Relació De Finques Afectades Per Bombardejos Del 13 De Febrer De 1937 a 28 D'agost De 1938," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

[198] Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya, *España En Llamas: La Guerra Civil Desde El Aire* 153.

The bombing raids on the 30th of January 1938 were the most serious attacks suffered by Barcelona throughout the war, aside from the exceptionally harsh raids that took place in March the same year under the direct and explicit orders of Mussolini. Scholars like Villarroya argue that the 30th of January bombings were a response to the Republicans' attacks on rebel cities in the previous days, but also to their subsequent attempt to negotiate a halting of the bombings on rear-guard locations.[199] The Republican National Defence Minister explained in a note made public on the 29th of January that the Republican army had been forced to respond to the rebels' persistent aerial strikes on innocent civilians by bombing Salamanca, Valladolid and Sevilla. However, he claimed, this was not in line with the principles of war the Republicans wished to follow, and he aimed to negotiate an agreement with the rebel military by which both sides would abstain from bombing rearguard civilian positions in the future. By attacking Barcelona with redoubled intensity on the very day after the publication of the Defence Minister's note, Franco's supporters made clear that they had no intention of changing their strategy. Any hope among civilians on both sides that there would soon be an end to the constant threat of enemy aerial attacks vanished.

The bombing raids in November 1938 were not as bloody as the ones in January, but nevertheless caused significant destruction.[200] Several houses on Boters and Palla/Paja were hit on the 12th of November.[201] One of the houses on Boters was so badly damaged that it was immediately pulled down by fire-fighters.[202] On the 23rd of November, the alarms went off in the morning at 10:45 a.m. and continued for almost an hour, until 11:50 a.m.[203] The raid affected several houses in the northern section of the Barri de la Catedral, sometimes for the second time.[204] There were another three alarms throughout that day. None of the accompanying raids damaged the Barri de la Cateral and its environs, however.[205]

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[199] Villarroya i Font, *Els Bombardeigs De Barcelona Durant La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)* 47, 49.

[200] Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya, *España En Llamas: La Guerra Civil Desde El Aire* 222.

[201] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/ Caixa 50763, "2.3.1 Relació De Bombardejos Del 4 De Setembre 1938 a 16 De Gener 1939," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

[202] Villarroya i Font, *Els Bombardeigs De Barcelona Durant La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)* 68.

[203] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50763, "2.2 Relació De Bombardejos Segons El Dietari Del Cos De Bombers 13 De Febrer 1937 a 25 De Gener 1939," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

[204] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50763, "2.5 Ubicació Impactes Dels Bombardeigs Del 23 De Novembre De 1938.," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

[205] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva/M-101/1936-1959/Caixa 50763, "2.1 Relació De Finques Afectades Per Bombardejos Del 13 De Febrer De 1937 a 28 D'agost De 1938."

Fig. 4.12 Impact of the air raids of 23rd November 1938 (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

One of the bombs dropped on the 19th of August 1938 struck one of the cupolas of the Cathedral, the Santa Eulalia dome, which protects the tomb of Santa Eulalia, Barcelona's patron saint.[206] Initially, the Republican press used the event to underscore the aggressors' insensitivity. How could the rebels, who portrayed themselves as Catholic crusaders, the most Catholic of Catholics, destroy the tomb of Santa Eulalia? Potentially, the damage to the Cathedral was a unique opportunity for the Republicans to launch some effective anti-rebel propaganda. However, according to the individuals who actually inspected the site after the attack, even though the dome had collapsed and severely damaged the interior of the temple, the tomb itself was intact and nothing was irreparably destroyed.[207]

Nonetheless, the picture of the collapsed Santa Eulalia dome circulated in the local press, contributing to the imaginary of a ruined Barcelona. Between the first and the last of the three raids that affected the Cathedral neighbourhood a whole year went by. Many residents abandoned the area as soon as they had the opportunity, especially after the devastating bombings of the 30th of January 1938. Mrs Assumpció Planelles, 96, is an example. Today, 70 years later, she sits in the same living room on number 33

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[206] Ibid.

[207] For a more detailed discussion on this event, see Villarroya i Font, *Els Bombardeigs De Barcelona Durant La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)* 63, 65.

Palla/Paja from where she and her family heard the recurrent whining sound of the alarms, and once saw a bomb pass through the floors of the building opposite to theirs. Even though she cannot recall on what date that particular bomb fell, she remembers the fatal winter morning of the 30th of January 1938 very well. In particular, she recalls how her father and other neighbours went to the nearby school Sant Felipe Neri after the air strike to assist the children who were injured and bury the dead. After that, her father decided that the whole family should leave the neighbourhood and move to a village in the countryside until the attacks were over.[208]

Other residents, possibly the more modest ones, were less lucky and had to stay. The usually lively Barri de la Catedral, now suddenly sparsely populated, must have had a strange appearance, almost daunting at times, like that of a ghost city or a cemetery of half-ruined houses. As journalist *Sempronio* suggests when speaking of the old Jewish neighbourhood, south of the Cathedral,

> "life has deserted [this place]. The ruins have transcended the dramatic stage of the day after the bombings; no screams of pain, no exclamations of indignation; they are frozen now [imbued by] the quietness of perfect things."[209]

To our unusual *flâneur*, the ruins might certainly have appeared as exemplars of quiet perfection, as powerful expressions of the vanity of life and the precariousness of a man-made world. He might have been struck by the pungent contrast between the latent threat of new instances of pain and destruction and the quietness of places which had already suffered the impact of the bombs and simply could not die again. For the empty and half-ruined buildings, another bomb, two, three or ten more bombs could hardly be compared to the first strike. It was the first bomb that suddenly turned the buildings' safe, cosy interiors into potential traps, forcing their occupants to leave and seek less dangerous dwellings. Human life fled from the bombed buildings and their suddenly menacing structures: loose stones, columns, beams and tiles had been turned into deadly weapons. At the feet of these devastated edifices, however, life took other shapes, reminding our wanderer of the invincible forces of nature. In Sempronio's walks across

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[208] Based on an informal conversation with Mrs Assumpció Planelles on 11 March 2007 at her home on Palla/Paja 33.

[209] "[...] n'ha desertat la vida. Aquestes ruines han superat ja l'etapa dramàtica de l'endemà del bombardeig; ni crits de dolor, ni clams indignats; ara estan ja glaçades en la serenitat de les coses perfectes." Andreu Avel·lís Artís "Sempronio", *L 'accent De Barcelona* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1985) 48.

the war-torn old city, he finally arrived at the Cathedral and Plaça Nova/Plaza Nueva, where he observed the following:

> "Around the ancient temples, the Cathedral and Santa Anna, at the feet of the towers on Plaça Nova, grass has grown in the crevices between the pavement stones after a few months of no human foot stepping on them. The chaotic forces that push from underneath the city take advantage of the smallest crack to surface, in the shape of a grass-straw, just skin-deep."[210]

Sempronio's observation could also be interpreted as a metaphor for the will of survival. On the 26th of January 1939, Franco's troops entered Barcelona. Two months later the war ended. For many Barcelonans, the imminent seizure of the city meant that they had to leave for an uncertain exile. For many of those who had sought refuge in the countryside during the conflict, on the other hand, the arrival of the Nacionales in Barcelona meant that the bombing ceased and they could return to the city. Peace did not immediately lead to prosperity. Everything was scarce, rationed and some families had lost their homes because of the bombings. While ordinary Barcelonans struggled to resume their daily living, the new city council appointed by the Nacionales began to work on a reconstruction plan and sought the means to fund it in the face of the destruction caused by their own military forces.

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[210] "Al voltant dels temples antics, de la Catedral i de Santa Anna, al peu de les torres de la Plaça Nova, l'herba ha crescut a les juntures de les llambordes, al cap d'uns mesos de no haver-se posat al seu damunt la petja humana. Les forces caòtiques empenyen sota la ciutat, el seu més petit oblit per a sortit-li, en forma d'herba, a flor de pell." Ibid. 76.

Part II

4.1 Funding the reconstruction of Barcelona[211]

4.1.1 The extraordinary budget

The three-year-long conflict, including the extensive construction of air-raid shelters, left the municipal treasury in bad shape. In October 1939, while overtly—and possibly contemptuously—blaming the preceding "Marxist" administration for the lack of resources, the new Barcelona city council approved an extraordinary budget for the reconstruction, urbanisation and improvement of the areas devastated by the war. The *Presupuesto Extraordinario para la Reconstrucción del Patrimonio Municipal Perjudicado por la Guerra y Nueva Urbanización y Mejora de las Zonas Devastadas en la Ciudad* was not extraordinary in that most Spanish cities passed this kind of special budget immediately after the war. The budget received the central government's authorisation at the end of February 1940. The city council aimed to cover the exceptionally costly clearing and building works it had to face as a direct result of the conflict, and more specifically the aerial bombing. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to address some pending projects and improvements in the affected areas. Reconstruction and redevelopment projects were sometimes indistinguishable as in the case of the opening of the transversal avenue, Avenue C, between Via Layetana and Plaza Nueva, in an area that had suffered particularly badly from the bombings. The project was one of the city council's priorities in the old district and was seen as part of the pending inner-city reform. Once the budget had received the various mandatory authorisations, the city council had to find its own way to fund the works. Three possibilities for obtaining financial backing were explored: state subsidies, state loans and private loans.

4.1.2 State subsidies

In November 1939 the president of Barcelona city council and *alcalde accidental* (provisional mayor), José Bonet del Río, began the negotiation of a state subsidy to cover the cost of the reconstruction works. First, he addressed the Director of the *Servicio General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones* (Devastated Areas General

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[211] This section—which addresses funding—is based on the documents contained in: Gestión Urbanística/Expediente 1972 (Areas devastadas)/Año 1939, "Expediente Relativo Al Presupuesto Extraordinario Para La Reconstrucción Del Patrimonio Municipal Dañado Por La Guerra, Y Nueva Urbanización Y Mejora De Las Zonas Devastadas De La Ciudad.," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

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Service) requesting the restitution of the city council for the damages caused by the war to the municipal infrastructure. Second, he wrote to the Director of the *Instituto de Crédito para la Reconstrucción Nacional* (National Reconstruction Credit Institute) reporting that Barcelona city council had approved an extraordinary budget for the reconstruction of the city, which needed the Instituto de Crédito's financial assistance in the form of a subsidy and/or a loan. The letter was accompanied by abundant explanatory documentation, according to which the total cost of the projects was 29,978,970 pesetas (excluding the cost of the expropriations that several of the projects involved).[212] The 29,978,970 pesetas were broken down into two amounts: one for basic tidying-up and clearing tasks and the other, larger, sum for redevelopment projects. The provisional mayor requested that the 6,210,000 pesetas allocated to cleaning-up and repairing streets and other public spaces, including the sealing of refuges, should be fully subsidised by the state. To justify such a claim, Bonet del Río referred to Franco's "adoption law". On the 23rd of September 1939, Franco's government had passed a decree according to which the Caudillo was committed to adopt those towns and villages that had been particularly damaged during the war. In these cases, the state would fully sponsor reconstruction. But article 10 in the decree also determined that:

> "Without attaining the full condition of adoption, the state may determine to financially assist a municipality, following a resolution of the Council of Ministers, when the damage caused to the buildings of the municipality is extraordinary in relation to [the municipality's] economic capacity."[213]

Barcelona city council aimed to be considered under this specific article. To complement and underscore Bonet del Río's request, a few weeks later, the mayor-president of the city council, Miguel Mateu y Plá, addressed the Minister of Government exposing the delicate situation of the city and the urgency of its reconstruction. Mateu y Plá contended that some of the districts of Barcelona could actually be viewed as separate, smaller, units, comparable in most aspects to any of the devastated small towns or villages that were contemplated by the "adoption law".

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[212] As a reference with which to compare the figures in this chapter it may be worth considering Spain's total budget during these years. In 1943, for example, the ordinary budget was 9.5 billion pesetas together with an additional extraordinary budget of 4.2 billion pesetas. Although the ordinary budget increased slightly in 1944 and 1945, the extraordinary budget decreased substantially (to 2.6 billion pesetas in 1945). See *Resumen general de los Presupuestos del Estado. Ejercicios económicos de 1943, 1944 y 1945* at http://www.ine.es/inebaseweb/search.do?os=25, accessed on 28 January 2009.
[213] Ministerio de la Gobernación, "Decreto Regulando La Adopción Por El Jefe De Estado De Localidades Dañadas Por La Guerra En Determinadas Condiciones," Art.10.

Eventually, it seems, the mayors' negotiations bore fruit. On the 15th of December, Franco's government issued a decree which recognised the right of Barcelona city council to receive the special treatment foreseen by article 10, granting it 6,200,000 pesetas to clean up the city.

4.1.3 State loans

As for the larger sum of 23,778,970 pesetas for redevelopment projects, Bonet del Río had asked if this sum could be granted by the Instituto de Crédito as a loan at low interest rates and convenient mortgage conditions. A formal loan proposal was prepared and submitted to the Instituto. Among other things, it was suggested that the city council's guarantee for the loan could be, on the one hand, the revenues from the sale of municipal ground plots, and, on the other, the income from a special tax applied to residents of the devastated areas in indirect payment for the improvements resulting from the reconstruction works. The Instituto granted the loan in March 1940 under several conditions, among them that the money was only to be spent on the repair of areas damaged by the war, excluding projects co-funded by other public entities, and the Instituto would only make payments retrospectively, once the works were finished and officially recognised as such. Furthermore, the sole acceptable guarantee for the loan were the lands that the city council would gradually acquire as it carried out the works (through expropriations) and the public services it might set up on the plots.

These conditions differed from the ones proposed by the city council, especially as regards the guarantee for the loan. Apparently, the Instituto preferred the guarantee of fixed assets over the monetary revenues from sales and taxes, which the city council had suggested. Moreover, it seems as if the Instituto was determined to exert firm control over the projects it financed, not leaving much room for public funding deviation—on paper at least. The administrative process by which the details of the loan were agreed and each document received the mandatory endorsements was fairly long and tedious. Several state departments, branches, sections and so on were involved, and the state loan did not become effective until August 1941.

4.1.4 Private loans

Parallel to the above process, the negotiation of a loan with Banco de España, the national bank, got under way. In January 1940, Mateu y Plá formally asked the governor of Banco de España for a loan of 48 million pesetas, carefully explaining the city council's precarious economic situation and its need for additional funding to support the various urban redevelopment projects. The mayor offered Banco de España a different kind of guarantee for the loan based on the revenues from a particular municipal tax, which land and factory owners had to pay in municipalities with exceptionally high unemployment rates. Barcelona city council had recently been granted such fiscal privilege by the central government for the twelve years to come, beginning in January 1940, and Mateu y Plá was confident that the additional income would allow the city council to return the loan, including interests, while carrying out the projected reconstruction works. A long series of bureaucratic procedures and exchanges, similar to the ones described earlier, commenced, and in the process, the loan was increased to 50 million pesetas.

It has been argued that Banco de España's immediate willingness to back the reconstruction works in Barcelona was partly motivated by the bank's vested interest in the opening of Avenue C. As it happened, Banco de España's new headquarters in Barcelona were built between 1930 and 1939 on the north-western corner of plaza Antonio Maura, almost opposite the Cathedral.[214]

4.1.5 Urban estate owners complain

The *Cámara Oficial de la Propiedad Urbana de Barcelona*, Barcelona Urban Property Official Chamber, formally expressed its disagreement with the expropriations and supplementary property taxes proposed by the city council as a means of funding reconstruction. President Juan A. Mas Yebra and secretary Carlos Cardelús addressed a written complaint in November 1939 where they demanded that the extraordinary budget only include reparation and reconstruction works, excluding any other works for which the city council would be forced to collect supplementary taxes. Mas Yebra and Cardelús had in mind the proposed new tax for residents of devastated neighbourhoods benefiting from urban improvements. They argued that Barcelonans were already

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[214] See Aliberch, "Reforma Interior En Barcelona. Prosigue La Avenida De La Catedral."

paying significant amounts in taxes, especially considering their struggle to overcome the shortages caused by the war. Moreover, they claimed, the demolition of low-rent dwellings, which several of the budgeted projects involved, would suddenly leave hundreds, maybe thousands, of small traders and citizens of more modest means in the street. In their view, the immediate post-war period was clearly not the right moment for embarking on ambitious redevelopment projects such as the opening of Avenue C.

The city council responded that the redevelopment projects affected the neighbourhoods that had been most damaged by the war and were therefore fully justifiable. Moreover, it was argued that the circumstances were unusually good for carrying out expropriations since many of the buildings affected by the projects had been destroyed during the war and were often already deserted. The Cámara's demand to revise the extraordinary budget was rejected, but Mas Yebra and Cardelús had already prepared an administrative appeal (*recurso de alzada*), which circulated as a twenty-page, pamphlet-like publication summarising their concerns.[215] Essentially, they maintained, the application of the urban improvement tax and the supplementary unemployment tax meant that the most substantial part of the budget for the reconstruction of Barcelona (48 million out of 71 million, according to their figures) would come from the pockets of real estate owners. Once again, they complained, the city council was fundamentally relying on private property to meet its ends. Nothing new, they declared in a slightly dramatic tone, pointing to the spirit of "animosity against private property" that had permeated the different city councils for the past 25 years, thus implying that, in this respect, there existed little difference between the city councils under Primo de Rivera, the Second Republic and now Franco.

4.2 Reconstruction and redevelopment in the Barri de la Catedral

4.2.1 Clearing the area

During the conflict, the Junta de Defensa Pasiva removed part of the rubble resulting from the bombings, but it was not until after the war that more systematic clearing initiatives could take place. Debris was carried away, dumped or recycled, damaged facades were supported, and buildings threatening to collapse were pulled down. Most

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[215] See Cámara Oficial de la Propiedad Urbana de Barcelona, "Recurso De Alzada (Redactado Por La Comisión Especial Nombrada) Contra Ordenanza Del Impuesto De Mejoras Formulado Por El Ayuntamiento De Barcelona Para Que Rijan En El Presupuesto Extraordinario De Reconstrucción Y Nueva Urbanización Y Mejora De Las Zonas Devastadas Por La Guerra," (1940).

of these clearing works took place between April and July 1939. Private contractors were hired and paid by assignment, usually under 1,000 pesetas for each job.[216]

As explained earlier, the housing blocks facing Plaza Nueva and the Cathedral had been hit on at least three occasions during the war (30th of January, and 12th and 23rd of November 1938). Number 15 on Corribia, which hosted the association of bar and tavern owners, for example, was in particularly bad shape at the end of the war. In October 1939, the *Negociado de Reconstrucción* (Municipal Reconstruction Department) reported that the upper part of the façade was in "a state of imminent ruin", which made it "most pertinent to order either its demolition or consolidation", and to inspect the remainder of the building to ensure that no other parts were at risk. A protective fence around the building was also recommended.[217]

Several other buildings in the area were ruined. But a municipal regulation established that house owners in areas encompassed by the reconstruction plans were not allowed to carry out works "leading to [the] permanent consolidation [of their houses] and inappropriately delaying the completion of the planned improvements". In other words, since the buildings would be realigned or expropriated sooner or later as part of the reconstruction and redevelopment plans, it was argued they should remain untouched, and definitely not rebuilt if they had been totally destroyed by the bombs. The logic was that if reparations were made to the buildings, the projected reconstruction works would be slowed down, partly because the reparations potentially increased the value of the buildings, forcing the city council to pay larger indemnification sums.

In the eyes of some officials, the measure seemed excessively restrictive. The *Ponencia de Reconstrucción* (Reconstruction Assembly Committee) prepared a plea arguing that owners of buildings that were not going to be realigned or expropriated *immediately* should have the right to repair them provisionally, making them habitable. To neutralise the argument that improvements would increase the value of the buildings, they

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[216] Actuación Patrimonial/Caja 46143/Expediente 6195/Año 1939, "Cases Afectades Per La Guerra (Cuentas De Derribos Y Descombros)," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).
[217] Junta Local de Defensa Pasiva M-101/1936-1959/ Caixa 50764, "Nota Sobre Derribo Del N° 15 Calle Corribia, 19 Octubre 1939," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

suggested that the potential value increase resulting from reparations should not be included later in the indemnification price paid to the owners.[218]

Expropriations became a prominent issue after the war in most Spanish cities, but Barcelona's mayor Mateu y Plá showed unusual interest in the matter. As early as June 1939, he began to lobby in support of more straightforward regulations for forced expropriations, partly as a means to speed up the rhythm of reconstruction. Essentially, he argued, the public administration aimed at the common good, and should therefore follow different legal procedures than those provided for private citizens. Mateu y Plá's ideas seemingly coincided with those of the regime, and a few months later, in October 1940, a law for urgent expropriations was passed by the government. The law established that the Council of Ministers should determine whether a particular expropriation was urgent or not. The Council of Ministers was expected to ensure that private property rights were respected. On paper, the law seemed committed to both speeding up the expropriation procedures and protecting owners and tenants. The fact that the Council of Ministers had to determine the urgency of expropriations, on the other hand, did not seem to make the process particularly effective, and was more likely aimed at reinforcing the central government's supervision of local administrations' activities.

In spite of the state law and the various municipal regulations, years passed and many tenants of expropriated buildings refused to abandon their dwellings, forcing Barcelona city council to devise new measures ensuring that the occupants of the expropriated buildings left before the pickaxe team arrived on site to undertake the demolition. Some of these measures—like directly charging defiant occupants for water, electricity and other utilities—seem surprisingly bland in the repressive context of the dictatorship.[219]

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[218] Gestión Urbanística/Caja/Expediente 68/Año 1939, "Reparació Cases," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

[219] Gestión Urbanística 2-D-3/15709/Año 1941, "Expediente [320] Relativo a Una Proposición Acordando Que Se Requiera a Los Municipios De Las Fincas Expropiadas Con Motivo De Los Proyectos Contenidos En El Presupuesto Extraordinario De Reconstrucción Para Que Dentro De Tres Meses a Contar De Dicho Requerimiento Procedan a Desocupo De Las Expresadas Viviendas," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

Fig. 4.13 View of Corribia street from the Cathedral entrance before the war. Anonymous photograph (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

Fig. 4.14 Same view of Corribia street after the war with damaged façades and hollow interior. Anonymous photograph (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

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4.2.2 The works on Avenida de la Catedral[220]

A small but symbolically significant event took place in May 1939, blessing in its own way the commencement of the reconstruction and redevelopment works in the Barri de la Catedral. A pious lady had donated a "beautiful image of San Roque to replace the one which the red barbarism [sic] had destroyed on Plaza Nueva".[221] (The image was probably removed during the anti-religious outbursts in the months preceding the war or during the conflict itself.) The residents of the square, the bishop and the local authorities met to discuss the necessary arrangements for the transfer of the patron saint "to the little chapel in which it ha[d] been venerated since olden times".[222] Bearing in mind Durán y Sanpere's observation that the saint's location on the square during the Middle Ages reflected the proximity or remoteness of the epidemics, the solemn act of returning the image to its prominent location in one of the Roman towers possibly conveyed the message that although peace finally reigned in Barcelona, the experience of the war was still very close.

Fig. 4.15 Ruined and half-demolished houses in the Barrio de la Catedral, between Corribia and Bou de la Plaza Nueva. Photographed by Ramirez in August 1942 (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

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[220] The documents that constitute the basis for this sub-section stem from various files found under the keywords "Avenida Catedral" and "Maura" and were part of the section *Gestió Urbanistica*, years 1942, 1943 and 1944.

[221] "Barcelona Tradicional Y Religiosa. Nueva Imagen De San Roque En La Plaza Nueva," *El Correo Catalán*, 14 May 1939.

[222] Ibid.

Fig. 4.16 View of the area from above after the complete demolition of the ruined houses. Photographed by Ramirez in November 1944 (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

When the urbanisation works in the area commenced in June 1939, under the protective, yet distant gaze of San Roque, the city council was praised for its determination to be quick to resume the opening of Avenue C:

> "Not even four months have passed since the triumphal liberation of Barcelona, to whose beautiful urban body [...] the anarcho-separatists caused deep and wide wounds, and we already see something miraculous and surprising happening; the work, undoubtedly, of the renovating and creative spirit of the New Spain. [...] The disintegrating ideas and the destruction [that spread across] those parts of Spain that were dominated by the Marxists, begin to rub out, quickly disappearing. In addition, renovating construction initiatives are taking place [...] [such as] the Redevelopment [sic] of Avenue C in the section running from Via Layetana to Plaza Nueva. It will be necessary to pull down a number of buildings—old buildings for the most part. And the demolition works have already started on Plaza Nueva and the street of 'els Arcs' (...)."[223]

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[223] "Apenas van transcurridos cuatro meses de la triunfal liberación de Barcelona, a la que tan profundas y extensas heridas causaron los anarcoseparatistas en su maravilloso cuerpo urbanístico y en el de sus habitantes, y vemos ya en ella algo milagroso y sorprendente, obra, sin duda alguna, del espíritu renovador y creador de la Nueva España. [...] Las ideas disolventes y las destrucciones de la parte de

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Journalist Manuel Ballester Ferrer openly contrasts the destructiveness of the Red-Marxists with the New Spain's constructive spirit, evoking the anti-clerical raids that took place in Barcelona at the beginning of the war, which resulted in the destruction of numerous churches and convents. However, few Barcelonans would question that most of the destruction caused to the city during the war was the result of the rebel bombings. Beyond this fairly blunt rhetorical exercise, what is perhaps more interesting in Ballester's quote is his emphasis on renovation and creation at the expense of that which is old—the old houses that had to be pulled down. At this early stage, there seemed to be a genuine expectation that regeneration, even the creation of something new, would be the outcome of the war and Franco's victory. Such expectation waned over time, but should probably not be underestimated when attempting to understand the enthusiasm with which many reconstruction works were planned and commenced.

By the beginning of 1943, the section of Avenida de la Catedral, as Avenue C was now called, between plaza Antonio Maura and Doctor Joaquín Pou, was finished, paving included. The 115-metre-long section between Doctor Pou and Plaza Nueva, which had a particularly irregular incline, remained unfinished. The works continued on the 30-metre-wide avenue (the width Cerdá's and Darder's plans had envisaged): a 17-metre-wide central lane flanked by two 6-metre-wide sidewalks. A more spacious section was created in front of Plaza de la Catedral to locate a small parking lot surrounded by gardens. Different paving stones were used in different sections of the avenue, the aim being to use up existing materials still in the municipal warehouse. The masonry of better quality was reserved for the sidewalk along the Cathedral. Thirteen street lamps of centrifuged mortar topped by American "globes" with 200-watt lamps were soon set up on the sidewalks.

España, dominada por los marxistas, se van borrando, desapareciendo rápidamente. Y por añadidura se ejecuta también obra renovadora en lo que se refiere a la construcción. Aquí mismo, en Barcelona aparte las obras de reparación que se están haciendo—, se ha emprendido por nuestro Ayuntamiento una importantísima mejora urbana. Se trata de la Reforma de la Vía C, trozo comprendido desde la Vía Layetana hasta la Plaza Nueva. Será preciso derribar muchos edificios—viejos edificios en su casi totalidad—. Y los trabajos de derribo empezaron ya en la Plaza Nueva y la calle 'dels Archs' [...]." Manuel Ballester Ferrer, "Desde La Vía Layetana Hasta La Puerta De Don Quijote," *El Correo Catalán*, 4 June 1939.

4.2.2.1 Homogeneous façades[224]

At the beginning of 1944, the city council's interest shifted from the pavement to the façades of Avenida de la Catedral. It was suggested that the façades facing the avenue, opposite the Cathedral, should harmonise with the neighbourhood's older architecture. The façade of the nineteenth-century house encompassing numbers 9 and 11 of former Bou de la Plaza Nueva—the only building left intact by both the war and the pickaxe— was subsequently replicated in the houses facing the avenue. Although it was not deemed "exceptionally remarkable",[225] the façade had nonetheless a "profoundly nineteenth-century-ish ['*ochocentista*'] appearance", which Barcelonans associated with "a certain restraint".[226] Such restraint was much welcomed by those who, like the Catalan chronicler and writer Ramón Aliberch, feared the irruption of some "Le Corbusier emulator" who would design "a malfeasance opposite the most venerable stones Barcelonans possess[ed]".[227] The post-war project for homogenous façades was in many ways what the GATCPAC had feared before the war when it opposed the attempt to recreate stylistically homogenous neighbourhoods.

4.2.2.2 Past and present on display

Little by little, the Avenue came closer to its current appearance, although at the cost, many thought, of the disappearance of the Barrio de la Catedral. In 1946, a "sentimental exhibition"[228] in one of the Roman towers explained the history of vanishing Plaza Nueva. Drawings, paintings, old architectural plans and a few photographs were exhibited along old and new writings describing the life and characters of the beloved old "New Square". "Nobody understands the need to disencumber the surroundings of our Basilica", the editors of *Destino* wrote on the occasion of the exhibition, claiming that "on the contrary, clothed by the old, large houses, [the Basilica] gained in charm and proportion". To them, "Plaza Nueva was an incomparable entrance hall to the so-called "Barrio Gótico" [Gothic neighbourhood]", creating the right, secluded

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[224] This sub-section is based on the information contained in Gestión Urbanística/Expediente 323/Año 1944, "Façades Nova Urbanització," (Arxiù Municipal de Barcelona).
[225] "[...] y esto en atención al valor decorativo de su fachada, la cual, sin ser excepcionalmente notable, es una forma de principios del siglo XIX, de cierta singularidad". "Estilo Arquitectónico De Las Casas Que Sean Construidas En Frente a La Catedral Estará En Armonía Con El De Los Edificios Cercanos," *Solidaridad Nacional*, 19 January 1944.
[226] "Se va a la formación de un lienzo de casas desde la calle Ripoll a la de Capellans, que tenga un aire profundamente ochocentista, ya que precisamente el siglo XIX fue para Barcelona, en arquitectura, de una cierta contención." Ramón Aliberch, "La Unidad Arquitectónica Frente a La Catedral," *Hoja del Lunes*, 28 February 1944.
[227] Ibid.
[228] "Recuerdos De La Vieja Plaza Nueva."

atmosphere for the visitor before she or he went in to admire the "magnificent compound of temples and palaces" on the other side of the gate.[229]

While some Barcelonans wept for the irretrievable loss of Plaza Nueva, the city council found it timely to let Franco visit the area. In early June 1947, the head of state officially visited the Cathedral, where significant restoration works had just been accomplished. Franco was escorted by "a retinue of horses of the mounted police, motor-drivers, and the Moorish Guard in its spectacular garments", something impossible before the war when the only means to reach the main entrance of the Cathedral was the narrow street of Corribia.[230] The new, broad avenue seemed to provide an exceptional architectural framework for hosting official receptions in Barcelona. A month later, Eva Perón, the Argentinean first lady, visited Barcelona and was also invited to admire the restored Cathedral. She too arrived at the temple by car.[231] The editors of *Destino* claimed the disappearance of Plaza Nueva meant the loss of a unique "entrance hall" to the Barrio Gótico, but allegedly, a monumental "reception hall", Avenida de la Catedral, was created in its place, possibly better suiting the ceremonial needs of the Franco regime.[232]

4.2.3 The disclosure of the remains of the Roman city-wall[233]

When Vía Layetana was opened in the early twentieth century and several blocks that were once built outside the Roman stronghold were demolished, the remains of a 75-metre-long section of the ancient city-wall emerged along Tapinería street. It took several decades to clean and restore the Roman ashlars, which were buried almost two metres beneath the ground, but this was merely the beginning of what became a long-term project to reveal the ancient military belt. In 1952, municipal head of excavations Agustín Durán y Sanpere and municipal architects Adolfo Florensa Ferrer and Joaquín

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[229] "Si unas reformas urbanísticas han tenido poco ambiente popular, son las practicadas en la Plaza Nueva. Nadie ha comprendido la necesidad de despejar los alrededores de nuestra Basílica, que arropada, en cambio, en los viejos caserones, ganaba en encanto y en proporciones. La Plaza Nueva ere incomparable antesala del llamado 'barrio gótico' y su portal, sin puertas, proporcionaba no obstante al visitante la sensación de auténtico umbral, que daba paso al magnífico conjunto formado por los templos y palacios. Hoy, el 'barrio gótico', en su frente septentrional, puede asaltarse de cualquier modo, sin la preparación ambiental que eran las estratégicas brechas de la Plaza Nueva y de la calle de la Corribia." Ibid.

[230] For a description of Franco's visit, see, *Hoja Diocesana*, 1 June 1947.

[231] See Ibid., and *Hoja Diocesana* July 1947.

[232] See "En La Avenida De La Catedral," *La Vanguardia Española*, 28 November 1956.

[233] The information in this sub-section can be found in Gestión Urbanística/Expediente 3320/Año 1954, "Excavaciones Arqueológicas (Cerca De La Catedral)," (Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona).

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Vilaseca found fragments of the Roman city-wall and towers (as well as the older cathedral and primitive Christian burials) under Plaza de la Catedral, where works aiming at lowering the square to reduce the gradient with Avenida de la Catedral were taking place. Additional funding was put into protecting the archaeological findings by relocating the sewage system in this area and creating a subterranean gallery running parallel to the Roman foundations.[234]

4.2.3.1 The chapter house and the archdeaconry

Before the street disappeared, the chapter house stood where Tapinería met Corribia. The building was originally L-shaped, partly following the course of the city-wall, which makes a turn left here, further marked by the presence of a polygonal tower. For centuries a block of houses stood in front of the chapter house, hiding as it were the building's L-shape and the remains of the Roman wall that were part of the houses' inner wall. This block was also demolished as part of the project for recovering the ancient city-wall. In its place, a small garden was created to complement the view of yet another freed-up section of the wall.

There was particular interest in freeing up the wall section that ran from the Cathedral towards the two Roman towers on Plaza Nueva, where rows of houses concealed the north-eastern façade of the archdeaconry, built in the twelfth century and subsequently remodelled in the early sixteenth century. Numbers 2, 4 and 6 on Corribia and numbers 10 to 13 on Plaza Nueva were directly attached to the Roman wall, the solid, massive stonework having been turned into part of the houses' inner wall. The city council ordered the demolition of the three houses on Corribia in early January 1955,[235] while numbers 10 to 13 on Plaza Nueva remained for another year and a half, until October 1957, when they too were removed.[236]

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[234] For a summary of the works aimed at restoring this part of the city's ancient legacy, see Florensa's two articles in *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*: Adolfo Florensa, "Murallas Romanas En Barcelona," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 132 (1953), Adolfo Florensa, "Restauraciones Recientes En Barcelona," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 161 (1955).

[235] *Gestió Urbanística*, Expediente 8245, 1955, "Enderroc cases C. Corribia", Arxiù Municipal de Barcelona.

[236] "Derribos en la Plaza Nueva", *Diario de Barcelona*, October 13, 1957.

Fig. 4.17 View of the last remains of the houses on Corribia-Plaza Nueva that were attached to the façade of the House of the Archdeacon. The unveiled façade includes sections of the ancient city wall and two polygonal towers. Unknown photographer, photo dated 1958 (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

Fig. 4.18 The same view in 2006 (photographed by the author).

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The disclosure of the archdeaconry's Renaissance façade simultaneously revealed the remains of the ancient military belt, which had been incorporated in the building when it was originally constructed. Moreover, the removal of the houses on Plaza Nueva, and the virtual disappearance of the square, significantly improved the view of the Roman gate. At the feet of the left tower, the base of one of the pillars that once upheld the aquaduct which brought water to ancient Barcino was found.[237] As a means of further recreating Roman Barcelona, the municipal team of architects decided to reconstruct the first arch of the aquaduct.[238] The reconstructed arch, surrounded by a small gravel garden, still stands by the towers today.

Fig. 4.19 Reconstruction of the first arch of the Roman aquaduct. Unknown photographer, picture dated 1958 (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Arxiu Fotogràfic).

Fig. 4.20 The same arch in March 2007 (photographed by the author).

4.2.3.2 Resurrecting Roman Barcelona

In February 1958, when the disclosure works were almost finished, the weekly magazine *Revista de Actualidades, Artes y Letras* praised the result of the project, celebrating that

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[237] "Un Pilar Del Acueducto Romano De La Calle De Los Arcs," *Diario de Barcelona*, 18 February 1958.
[238] "El Primer Arco Del Acueducto," *Diario de Barcelona*, 29 April 1958.

"the beautiful house of the Archdeacon, where the Historical Archive of the City is located, shows a new façade, which was previously confined behind *less noble elements of concrete and brick*" (italics added).[239]

The reference to the "less noble elements of concrete and brick" is interesting when placed against the writings of one of the first ideologues of the regime, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, who suggested that

"[s]tone, in Spanish architecture, is the essential and traditional element: Roman (…) [and] brick: earth, mud, grime, dust, the soil itself, the people itself, the lowest people of Spain, in their secular fight against the stone, dominating and Arian. The fight between stone and brick ([between] Christian and infidels, Nacionales and Reds) lasted for several long, medieval centuries in the architectural front of Spain without reaching a settlement (…)."[240]

In the stone and brick metaphor, Giménez-Caballero conceives the nation's history as a permanent civil war between the genuine Spain—always Christian, now supportive of Franco—and the false Spain, invasive, foreign—once the Moors, now the Communists. From this point of view, it was thus legitimate to demolish the brick houses in the environs of the Cathedral, regardless of their age, in order to bring out the eternal stone.

When *Revista de Actualidades, Artes y Letras* several years later explained that the aim of the restoration works was to "discover Roman Barcelona's fourth-century walls, in order to present them anew to our time's busy Barcelonans, with the *straightened pride* of its towers and strongholds" (italics added),[241] the implication seemed to be that the visual presence of the ancient fortification would help contemporary Barcelonans to identify with the city's respectable Roman past, and perhaps also associate the sentiment of pride with the regime which had made the disclosure of the "glorious"

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[239] "[…] la bella casa del Arcediano, donde se encuentra instalado el Archivo de Historia de la Ciudad, descubría una nueva fachada, encerrada antes por elementos poco nobles de argamasa y ladrillos". M., "Pulso De La Ciudad. Plaza Nueva Y Torres Viejas," *Revista de Actualidades, Artes y Letras*, 1-7 February 1958.

[240] "La piedra, en la arquitectura española, es el elemento matriz y tradicional: romano […] [y] el ladrillo—: tierra, barro, marga, polvo, suelo mismo, pueblo mismo e ínfimo de España, en su lucha secular contra la piedra, dominadora y aria. La lucha entre piedra y ladrillo (cristianos e infieles, nacionales y rojos) duró largos siglos medievales sin resolverse en el frente arquitectónico de España […]." Excerpt from Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Madrid nuestro* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 1944) cited in Ureña, *Arquitectura Y Urbanística Civil Y Militar En El Período De La Autarquía (1936-1945): Análisis, Cronología Y Textos*.

[241] "[Los trabajos se orientaron] al descubrimiento de las murallas del siglo IV de la Barcelona romana para presentarlas de nuevo, con el orgullo de sus torres y baluartes, a los apresurados barceloneses de nuestros días." M. "Pulso De La Ciudad. Plaza Nueva Y Torres Viejas."

remains possible. Moreover, the association of the Roman stone with military masculine qualities—such as straightness, pride and hierarchy—can be detected in other descriptions of the area such as *Destino*'s depiction of "the *sinuous* Paja street", as not only "a *festoon* of the Roman wall", but as a place that had recovered its declining "prestige with *agility*" and "where antiquity" was "*hierarchically* organised" (italics added).[242] Here, the association becomes even more evident as the masculine attributes are set against potentially feminine qualities such as sinuousness and ornamentation— Paja is seen as a garland that follows the course of the wall.

In a similar vein, the two Roman towers were metaphorically depicted as guardians of the city and educators of the citizenry by *El Noticiero Universal*:

> "[I]n a clearly civic spirit, [the towers] have formed around them devote and prudent citizens who in the stones that surround them love the past glories of Barcelona, which had on its Plaza Nueva a gracious centre of faith and hope and a place of extraordinary urban vitality."[243]

By ascribing moral values to the Roman stones, their preservation became almost unquestionable. In contrast, the preservation of the remains of the medieval *vilanoves* or suburbs, often associated with flourishing commerce, and possibly with Jewish and Phoenician traditions, was arguably less favoured by the Francoist city council. However, as already intimated, the project to unveil the ancient Roman city-wall preceded the war and Franco's dictatorship. Two of the key figures behind the excavation works, Adolfo Florensa and Agustín Durán y Sanpere, served both the Republican and Francoist city councils. After the war, they essentially resumed the excavations and demolitions aimed at gradually disencumbering the military belt. As it turned out, in this particular section of the Roman precinct, the works were significantly facilitated by the opening of Avenida de la Catedral.

As already suggested, such continuities in urban planning between the two regimes coexisted with the ideological discontinuities that resulted from the Civil War and the

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[242] "La sinuosa calle de la Paja, festón del muro romano, recobra ágilmente su prestigio un tanto alicaído en los últimos años." "La Calle De La Paja. Donde La Antigüedad Está Jerarquizada," *Destino*, 22 April 1944.

[243] "Las torres formativas de la ciudad romana de nuestra ciudad, con un claro espíritu cívico, han sabido formar a su vera, devotos y prudentes, a unos ciudadanos que aman en las piedras que les rodean las glorias pasadas de esta Barcelona que tuvo en la Plaza Nueva un centro entrañable de fe y esperanza y un lugar de vitalidad urbana extraordinaria." Sempronio, "60 Años De Plaza Nueva," *Diario de Barcelona*, 29 October 1955.

advent of the dictatorship. The Francoist rhetoric which celebrated the disencumbering of the city-wall as a resurrection of Roman Barcelona for its connotations with empire and historical supremacy was significantly different from the Republican discourses that celebrated the excavations for their historical and archaeological interest.

4.2.4 A "functional" building for Plaza Nueva

In 1958, the *Colegio de Arquitectos de Cataluña y Baleares* (Association of Architects of Catalonia and the Balearics) organised a competition for their new facilities opposite the recently unveiled archdeaconry, at the confluence of Archs and Plaza Nueva. After a first round, in which some candidates ignored the city council's new street realignments, the jury, including Dutch architect Johannes Hendrik Van den Broek and Italian architect Gio Ponti, made a second call where the criteria were clearly established.[244] Joaquín Busquets won the final competition with a project that was deemed daring and innovative. It was described as "most beautiful" and "contemporary "functional" by Joaquín Folch y Torres, renowned Catalan writer and intellectual at the time, who admitted that there were those who felt enthusiastic and those who felt scandalised by the emergence of the "functional" in the Gothic neighbourhood.[245] Would the eagerly sought aesthetic harmony of Avenida de la Catedral be disturbed by this new architectural creation?

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[244] "Edificio Social Del Colegio De Cataluña," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 200 (1958): 6, 7.
[245] "Y el proyecto premiado (a mi juicio bellísimo) corresponde, por su estilo, como es normal, a la llamada arquitectura funcional de nuestros días. Romano, gótico, barroco-neoclásico, neoclásico-ochocentista y finalmente lo 'funcional' de ahora. Y ante la aparición de lo 'funcional' y en el 'Barri gòtic' se entusiasman unos, se escandalizan otros, y otros ponen a las cuestiones que la cosa plantea varios interrogantes reflexivos." Joaquín Folch y Torres, "Los Viejos Edificios De La Plaza Nueva Y El Edificio Nuevo En La Vieja Plaza," *Destino*, 29 November 1958. See also Paolo Sustersic, "Entre América Y El Mediterráneo. Arquitecturas De La Eficiencia En La Barcelona De Los 50" (paper presented at the Arquitectura, ciudad e ideología urbana, Pamplona, 2002).

Fig. 4.21 View of Plaza Nueva (western section of Avenida de la Catedral) with Busquet's building to the right. Photographed from the windows of the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat in the former Archdeacon's House in March 2007 (photographed by the author).

Twelve years earlier, when the project for homogenous façades was approved and readily supported by influential commentators such as Ramón Aliberch, it would probably have been more difficult to convince the municipal authorities of the adequacy of Busquets' project. But things were different at the end of the 1950s. The regime had begun to show increasing openness and a certain keenness on modernising Spain, and young architects in particular were gaining prominence in the public sphere. One of the original aims with the construction of Avenida de la Catedral had been to create a modern avenue, and Busquets' building seemed to do justice to such motivation. It was not finished until 1961, and by then it included friezes by Norwegian artist Carl Nesjar based on designs by Picasso (who Busquets knew). The so-called Mediterranean friezes covered the building's three façades (towards Plaza Nueva, Arcs, and Capellans), each representing children, giants and the Catalan flag. Two were placed indoors, depicting *sardana*[246] dancers and the wall of Arcs, that is, the remains of the Roman aquaduct. The fact that such potentially nationalist elements as the Catalan flag (the *senyera*) and

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[246] Sardana is a traditional Catalan dance.

the sardana dancers were allowed in an institutional building might seem surprising at first. It is likely, however, that the regime viewed these more as regional, folkloric representations than as subversive, nationalist symbols. The dictatorship's arguably patronising and stereotypical celebration of Spain's regional diversity over the decades was far removed from any recognition of autonomous political rights for historic political entities like Catalonia.

4.3 Reactions to the opening of Avenida de la Catedral

4.3.1 Praising progress

The transformations in the area in front of the Cathedral were well received among those who, like Ramón Aliberch—who recurrently published in the newsletter of the Barcelona Urban Property Chamber—believed that urban economic development would follow. In one of his articles, Aliberch tells the story of Francisco Puig y Alfonso, the owner of the bookshop on Plaza Nueva and several other buildings in the area as well as the author of a book on the Barri de la Catedral, who in the midst of a bomb raid which destroyed one of his buildings exclaimed: "What an opportunity to improve the city!"[247] Aliberch praises Puig y Alfonso for his vision, but also for his rejection of any attachments to the past. His family had lived in the neighbourhood for generations, and yet, Aliberch argued, "beyond the fact that he was a proprietor, and certainly because he was one, [Puig y Alfonso] saw the greatness of the city and its need for expansion".[248]

To some observers, the opening of Avenida de la Catedral, including the disappearance of Plaza Nueva, indeed meant that "a phase of Barcelona's history in which closed and protected spaces predominated was solemnly conclude[d], and a [new] phase, which welcome[d] broad and cleared out avenues, should be seen as triumphant".[249] Hence, the opening of Avenida de la Catedral was conceived as a radical, if not historical,

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[247] Ramón Aliberch, "La Vieja Plaza Nueva. Su Pasado, Su Presente Y Su Porvenir," *Boletín de la Cámara Oficial de la Propiedad Urbana*, January 1945, Aliberch, "Reforma Interior En Barcelona. Prosigue La Avenida De La Catedral."

[248] "No veía sus edificios, ni el establecimiento que había sido suyo y de su padre en la Plaza Nueva, ni la casa en que había nacido, ni el recuerdo de las viejas calles de Barcelona. Por encima del propietario y seguramente por serlo veía la grandeza de la urbe y su necesidad de crecimiento." Aliberch, "Reforma Interior En Barcelona. Prosigue La Avenida De La Catedral."

[249] "(...) se dará entonces por solemnemente conclusa una etapa de la historia de Barcelona en que predominaron los espacios cerrados y recogidos, y por triunfante, la etapa presente, propicia a las anchas y despejadas avenidas". "En La Avenida De La Catedral."

change of urban paradigms in old Barcelona. Yet the opening of Vía Layetana in the early twentieth century had already brought radical change to old Barcelona, and from this point of view it seems a slight exaggeration to present the opening of Avenida de la Catedral as the inauguration of a new phase in Barcelona's urban history. However, it is still significant that the opening was introduced as a groundbreaking project. On the one hand, this might have to do with the fact that the area affected by the present works was more easily identified with the heart of Barcelona than were the blocks which Vía Layetana cut through a few decades earlier. Hence, the change might have seemed more fundamental. On the other hand, it might reflect the desire to maintain the regime's illusion of progress and modernity at a moment, the mid-1950s, when the effects of the economic autarchy had proved quite damaging for Spain, and the 1960s economic boom had not yet commenced.

When Vía Layetana was under construction during the first part of the twentieth century, many prominent institutions and private businesses were drawn to the emergent avenue. When the small section of Avenue C or Avenida de la Catedral was opened after the war, and the area was subsequently embellished and enhanced with monuments, investors saw in it a similar economic potential. As intimated earlier, Banco de España was perhaps one of the main supporters as well as beneficiaries of the redevelopment works in the Barrio de la Catedral.[250] Its new Barcelona headquarters on the corner of Vía Layetana and Avenida de la Catedral opened in 1939, the same year the war ended. Designed by Madrid-based architects José Yárnoz Larrosa and Luis Menéndez Pidal Álvarez in a monumental style, combining historicist and classical traits, Caja de Cataluña (Catalonia savings bank) moved into the building in 1955. In 1951, one of Barcelona's most famous hotels, Hotel Colón, relocated its facilities from Plaza Cataluña to Avenida de la Catedral, where it is today. The particular advantage of Avenida de la Catedral with respect to Vía Layetana was of course that it offered a privileged view of the Cathedral and the Gothic neighbourhood.

In an article published in 1955, journalist Federico Ulsamer referred to the numerous buses that arrived and parked on the new avenue, dropping off hundreds of tourists that

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[250] Aliberch, "La Unidad Arquitectónica Frente a La Catedral."

dispersed in the area.[251] Tourism in Spain was barely emerging in the 1950s, and Barcelona in particular was not launched as a tourist city until much later, but Ulsamer's comment points to the huge potential of the vast, empty space of the avenue. The space had proved useful for political-representative purposes, as noted earlier, but over time it also proved functional for receiving tourists, who could now comfortably stroll along the avenue, viewing the Cathedral and adjoining monuments, and sometimes also watch the sardana dancers who used to perform here.

4.3.2 Mourning the Barrio de la Catedral

As is often the case, the notions of vision, progress, urban development, embellishment and so on were challenged by those who feared that the disappearance of the Barrio de la Catedral would do away with an essential piece of Barcelona. As early as 1935, when the threat of the pickaxe seemed imminent, Durán y Sanpere had suggested that the only remaining thing to do was to capture the images and the spirit of the Barri de la Catedral, its *genius loci*,[252] before it disappeared forever. He took on the task himself and offered, among others, detailed descriptions of the yearly celebrations of Sant Roque and the *Feria de Belenes* in December during which nativity cribs were sold.[253] He also referred to Tomás Padró's illustrations for *El Quijote* (Don Quixote) where the illustrator imagines the arrival of the celebrated knight-errant and his faithful esquire through the Roman gate on Plaza Nueva.[254] While Cervantes never wrote where exactly the renowned couple entered the city, the image of Don Quijote and Sancho Panza in front of the two Roman towers helped to immortalise Plaza Nueva in Spanish literary imagination.

In 1955, on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of Plaza Nueva, journalist and chronicler Sempronio interviewed the oldest resident on the square, Señor Estruch, the owner of the tavern that bore his and his father's name (his father having started the

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[251] Federico Ulsamer, "La Puerta Del Barrio Gótico Debe Terminarse Urgentemente," *Solidaridad Nacional*, 27 September 1955.

[252] Architectural historian Christian Norberg-Schulz (1927-2000) recovered the ancient Greek concept of *genius loci* for architectural theory. Drawing on Heidegger, he suggests that a place is experienced as meaningful to its inhabitants, as an authentic dwelling, when it is perceived as having a particular character or identity, which allows things to "take place" in a certain way. See Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

[253] The Feria de Belenes has outlived the market square on Plaza Nueva. It continues to be organised in December every year on Avenida de la Catedral.

[254] Durán y Sanpere, "En Vísperas De Reforma. La Plaza Nueva."

business).[255] Señor Estruch was around 60 years old at the time, and Sempronio played with the figures, claiming the square was only as old as its oldest resident and not 600 years old as everybody else thought.[256] Sempronio argued that what really mattered in this case were the real men and women who had founded and re-founded the square over the centuries, implying that a new square was born with each generation. According to Sempronio's interview, Señor Estruch nonetheless admitted that in his heart, "the attachment to the old square battle[d] with the enthusiasm [that he felt] about the opportunity to see the result of the magnificent redevelopment works [...]".[257] Sempronio's laconic verdict to Estruch's words read: "[h]e is a philosopher and knows that life is, essentially, transformation".[258] But when Señor Estruch explained that every time he went out on the street he would glance at "the little hole where [he] used to play with [his] marbles" by the house door, the tavern-owner's affection for the square took on a very tangible meaning.[259]

The ambivalence contained in Señor Estruch's feelings was branded by journalists and writers as a battle between "urbanism and history", between the present and the past. *El Correo Catalán* suggested that, regardless of the outcome, the spirit of the square, its *genius loci*, would survive under the protective shadow of the two Roman towers, where the image of San Roque also found shelter.[260] This suggests that the Roman gate, which once marked the point of contact between the city and the suburb, yet with the potential, as it were, of closing or excluding the suburb and its residents in order to protect the city, was incorporated over time into the suburb, and its protective qualities symbolically appropriated. From the point of view of the inhabitants of the suburb, the once ominous and menacing towers that made up the Roman gate thus gradually became a treasured and comforting presence.

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[255] Estruch's tavern, by the way, reopened on Avenida de la Catedral after it was removed from its original location on Plaza Nueva, and seems to be a thriving business.

[256] Sempronio, "60 Años De Plaza Nueva."

[257] "En mi corazón, el apego a la vieja plaza lucha con la ilusión de poder ver un día realizada esta gran obra que tanto embellecerá el barrio gótico." Ibid.

[258] "Es un filósofo y sabe que la vida es, esencialmente, transformación." Ibid.

[259] "Mientras esto no ocurra, me aprovecho saboreando los recuerdos que la plaza guarda para mí. Frente al portal de mi casa, en el empedrado, subsiste aún el 'ou' de nuesro juego de bolitas. Todos los días, al salir de casa, le doy una mirada." Ibid.

[260] "Por la perduración de[l] espíritu [de la Plaza Nueva] velan las dos torres de las murallas romanas, a cuya sombra es venerada la imagen de San Roque." "Mirador De La Ciudad," *Diario de Barcelona*, 26 October 1955.

In a language with potentially interesting sexual connotations, Ana Nadal Sanjuán evoked the "humble, humid and extremely narrow streets, so modestly prudent, and even forgotten", praising their ability "silently and faithfully" to preserve their ancestral residents' customs and traditions.[261] Nadal de Sanjuán's description of the disappearing streets of the Barrio de la Catedral suggests that the spatial disposition of the area had long played the role of a vessel of old practices and traditions, akin to that of a nourishing, maternal womb. While critical of transformations in the neighbourhood, if extended further, Nadal de Sanjuán's argument might be interpreted as an allegory for the traditional distribution of gender roles according to which women stand for tradition and men for progress. In this view, the role of the Barrio de la Catedral could potentially be kept alive and performed by women once the neighbourhood was modernised—by men.

The emphasis these writings placed on the role of the residents could be interpreted as playing down the impact of space and architecture on the everyday life of urban dwellers. If each generation re-appropriates space in its own terms, it does not really matter if the urban fabric is drastically altered, and there is hence no need to mourn the loss of particular streets and buildings. On the other hand, the emphasis on the spirit, or the *genius loci*, of the Barrio de la Catedral could be viewed as an attempt by the Catalan-speaking, populace classes to preserve their language and traditions despite the regime's ban on them. Such an attempt was readily supported by writers and intellectuals such as Ricardo Suñé, who could not afford to appear as Catalan nationalists. Yet they found a subtler—perhaps even comfortable—way of celebrating the Catalan nation by depicting the Barrio de la Catedral and its residents as the quintessential Barcelona.

The ways in which these authors clung almost passionately to Barcelonan customs and traditions becomes apparent when Ricardo Suñé challenges

> "those who affirm that Barcelonan ochocentismo [nineteenth-century-ism]—our popular customs, which naturally originated in the second half of the nineteenth century—are only found in books and museums"

arguing,

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[261] Ana Nadal de Sanjuan, "Fragmentos De Historia Barcelonesa Que Desaparecen," *La Vanguardia Española*, 16 November 1943.

"[he could] categorically convince them of the falsehood of these ideas by urging them to attend the festivities of Plaza Nueva..."

and, finally, describing the old neighbourhood as a

"reliquary of military and trading Barcelona, thanks to which—we ought not to forget—urban Barcelona developed, with its vast avenues along which torpedo-automobiles slide away as if on a race-track".[262]

The reference to Barcelona's dual essence, military and trading evokes the suburb's initially liminal position—being part of the Roman military belt, while being located outside it—and the evolution of Barcelona from a defensive castrum to a commercial port city. In this case, therefore, liminality could be understood as a spatially and chronologically overlapping term. The suburb emerged outside the ancient city-wall— thus transcending a spatial boundary—as a result of Barcelona's transition from a Roman colony to a medieval city—a transition in time. In the debates about the opening of Avenida de la Catedral and the unveiling of the Roman city-wall such liminal quality of the Barrio de la Catedral seemed to nurture the dialectic between resurrecting the city's austere, monumental legacy (the stone) and preserving its popular, plebeian, qualities (the brick). In the end, Suñé implicitly suggests that modern and contemporary Barcelona owes as much to the Roman military structures as it does to the medieval market squares. Although his acknowledgement of the dual essence of the city and the liminal position of the Barrio de la Catedral seems conceptually appropriate, it does not necessarily solve the practical problem of what ought to be done about the Roman stones and the medieval brickwork which covered them.

4.3.3 By way of epilogue: the 600th anniversary of Plaza Nueva

In late October 1955, the 600th anniversary of Plaza Nueva was commemorated in the midst of its dismantling. Through a popular celebration, Barcelonans were vividly reminded of the birth of the old "New Square" six centuries earlier. Most local newspapers referred to the event, providing some historical background and detailed

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[262] "[...] a esos que afirman que el ochocentismo barcelonista—esas costumbres populares nuestras que tuvieron su natural asiento en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX—sólo se encuentra ya en los libros y en los museos, podría desmentirles en estos días de una manera rotunda diciéndoles id a las fiestas de la Plaza Nueva..." and "[...] aquel barrio, relicario de una Barcelona luchadora y menestrala, gracias a la cual—no lo olvidemos—pudo hacerse la Barcelona urbe de las grandes avenidas por las cuales los automóviles-torpedo se deslizan cual en una pista." Ricardo Suñé, "Recuerdos Del Barrio De La Plaza Nueva," *El Correo Catalán*, 16 August 1947.

descriptions of the celebrations, which were organised by the Comisión de Fiestas de San Roque (San Roque Party Committee). The programme of events started with a mass in the church of Santa María del Pino on the morning of the 30th of October, followed by a performance of sardanas on the square, against the backdrop of scaffolding and half-demolished buildings. José Maria Garrut's *600 anys de Plaça Nova* and Francisco Puig y Alfonso's *El meu barri*, two recently published books, which delved into the history and curiosities of Plaza Nueva and the Barri de la Catedral, were for sale. Both were written in Catalan, which is perhaps again surprising, considering the regime's prohibition on Catalan. Some possible explanations could be that the distribution was going to be very small, aimed only at the residents of the neighbourhood, or that the publishers had the support of some influential local leader, who, if necessary, could justify the publication before the central authorities—or both.

In the early afternoon of the 30th of October, the Comisión de Fiestas paid archbishop-bishop Modrego, "the most important resident of the square", a visit in the archiepiscopal palace.[263] The commemorative festivities culminated on the evening of the 31st of October with a special dinner that was organised for the residents of Plaza Nueva at Hotel Colón, which as noted earlier had recently opened its doors on Avenida de la Catedral.

The anniversary became an opportunity to pause and examine the recent history of the square as the heart of the Barrio de la Catedral. It was an intense history to look back on, including the lingering threat of various redevelopment plans before the Civil War; the traumatic experience of the war and the ruthless rebel aerial attacks; the application of Vilaseca's plan after the conflict, followed by demolitions; the elimination of streets; the disappearance of Plaza Nueva; the subsequent emergence of a short, vast avenue, which probably looked more like a rectangular square; and the simultaneous revelation of antique fragments of urban fabric: sections of the Roman city-wall and several of the ancient military towers.

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[263] "Barcelona Al Día. Seiscientos Años De Plaza Nueva," *El Noticiero Universal*, October 26 1955.

Fig. 4.22 View of the central section of Avenida de la Catedral from the windows of the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat (March 2007) (photographed by the author).

Hence, by October 1955, urbanism seemed indeed to have triumphed over history. A number of writers and chroniclers insisted, nonetheless, on the indestructible spirit of the Barrio de la Catedral. Apparently its residents continued to meet every fifteen days in a small tavern, perhaps more of a café, to discuss the future of the square and organise the yearly festivities of San Roque. The residents seemed resigned to accept the transformations of the neighbourhood as part of "the city's needs". They simply asked "the vaulted niche of San Roque [not to be] removed and that a plaque [would] remind future generations that the city's oldest square was once located there".[264]

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[264] "Ante las necesidades de la ciudad, nosotros sólo podemos pedir una cosa: que no desaparezca la hornacina de San Roque y que una placa recuerde a las próximas generaciones que allí existió la plaza más antigua de la ciudad." "Una Plaza Barcelonesa Cumple Seis Siglos. Sus Vecinos Afirman: 'Este Centenario Será El Último'," *El Correo Catalán*, 1 November 1955.

Fig. 4.23 View of Avenida de la Catedral, looking east, towards Plaça Antonio Maura (July 2006) (photographed by the author).

Fig. 4.24 Opposite view of Avenida de la Catedral, looking west towards Plaça Nova (March 2007) (photographed by the author).

Fig. 4.25 View of Avenida de la Catedral from the Cathedral entrance (July 2006) (photographed by the author). Compare with figures 4.13 and 4.14.

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4. Conclusion

By looking at the opening of Avenida de la Catedral in old Barcelona after the Civil War, the aim of this chapter has been to show how wartime destruction can act as a catalyst for urban redevelopment. The chapter began with a brief overview of the history of this part of the old city, which started out as the medieval suburb Els Arcs and gradually gained prominence as a place for commerce. Following this, the series of redevelopment plans that sought to modernise inner Barcelona from the mid-nineteenth century were examined, specifically the plans to open a transversal avenue across the old city. The idea of a transversal avenue to improve communication across Barcelona and sanitise the dense urban fabric of the old city was never abandoned in subsequent redevelopment plans. But the traumatic experience of the opening of Via Layetana, one of the vertical avenues projected by Cerdà, in the 1910s made both the population and the city council increasingly aware of the implications of this kind of urban intervention. Accordingly, the project for Avenue C, as the transversal avenue became known, was significantly softened. Nonetheless, when Joaquín Vilaseca's softer version of the inner-city reform was approved in 1930, the residents affected by the redevelopment works vigorously complained.

Arguably, residents affected by redevelopment projects usually complain, especially when they feel threatened by demolitions and expropriations. What is interesting in this case is that the Associació de Veïns chose to focus more on how Vilaseca's plan was approved, denouncing its dubious legality, and less on its actual content. The critiques the project received from the group of modernist architects GATCPAC under the leadership of Josep Lluís Sert, on the other hand, exclusively referred to its content. Both residents and architects agreed, nevertheless, that the opening of Avenue C was unnecessary and that it would do little good to Barcelona's historic centre.

The redevelopment works were about to commence when the Civil War broke out in July 1936 followed by a social revolution in Barcelona. It is impossible to know what would have happened in the long run had the Republicans remained in power and the then Barcelona city council continued with its plans. The Republican city council had not shown particular sensitivity towards the complaints of either residents or architects. At the same time, it is likely that the demolitions in the Barri de la Catedral (and other parts of old Barcelona, had the full avenue been opened) would have caused further and

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more serious controversy once they were to take place *de facto*. The war put Vilaseca's plan on hold for three years during which Barcelona was systematically bombed by the rebel air force and their Italian and German allies. The city's planning activities continued though through the unexpected construction of 1,300 anti-air-raid shelters, in which Barcelonans sought refuge each time the alarms went off. The construction of such an extensive refuge network was undoubtedly a huge accomplishment, in light of the fact that it was mostly carried out voluntarily by women, children, and the elderly, who stayed in the city while men went off to fight on the front.

The city council's funding shortages during the conflict are evidenced in its difficulties in purchasing construction materials and paying for the construction of public anti-air-raid shelters. At the end of the war, the municipal treasury was in even worse shape. The new city council appointed by Franco's supporters faced the challenge of reconstructing significant portions of the city, while it also aimed to take advantage of the destruction and address some of the pending redevelopment projects such as the opening of Avenue C. Like Bilbao and other cities, Barcelona was largely left on its own by the government, which—at least initially—did not offer any clear instructions on how to secure the necessary funding for reconstruction. Gradually, it became clear that city councils could apply for state subsidies and loans, which were only partial and worked retrospectively. Notwithstanding these restrictions, Barcelona city council negotiated a state subsidy for the most urgent clearing tasks and a state loan for reconstruction projects. The most substantial part of the funding, however, was negotiated with Banco de España, which, in the end was also a public entity. Both the state and the bank loan had to be returned, and the city council was forced to devise new fiscal strategies to cash in the necessary amounts. These supplementary taxes stirred the anger of urban estate owners who officially complained against the municipal budget, arguing that the reconstruction and redevelopment projects drew directly from their pockets and were also excessively ambitious. Their complaints were unsuccessful.

The project for Avenue C or Avenida de la Catedral, as it was now known, unfolded in various stages over two decades (between 1939 and the late 1950s). An essential, yet perhaps unexpected part of the works was the disencumbering of the ancient Roman military belt, largely accomplished with the unveiling of the archdeaconry's façade in

1958. This allowed for some curious comparisons between the Roman city and the medieval suburbs, between military and trading Barcelona, which took on particular meaning in the ideological context of Franco's dictatorship. As Giménez-Caballero's stone and brick metaphor suggests, the comparison sought to link the regime with the Roman empire, while playing down other historical periods, more closely associated with the presence of Jews and Moors, commerce, and brick as a construction material. This way, the demolition of the old houses that were attached to the Roman city-wall seemed perhaps more acceptable.

The neo-imperial and traditionalist connotations of these discourses contrasted with the arguments favouring the construction of Javier Busquets' winning project for the new facilities of the Architectural Association on Plaza Nueva in 1959. A functionalist project, featuring friezes with Picasso designs, the building did seem to challenge previous concepts of the avenue, which, among other things, had sought to create homogeneous and fairly discreet façades along the block opposite the Cathedral. It is usually argued that the regime's increasing openness from the late 1950s made modernist architectural projects possible again. But the argument could also be made that this kind of eclecticism, the exaltation of both the old and the new, the coexistence of discreet and eye-catching elements, can be found all along in the regime's aesthetic manifestations, initially highlighting Falange's conscious aim to synthesise modern technique and traditional values, and later reflecting the regime's pragmatism and the diverse ideological bases on which it sustained its legitimacy.

Moreover, the reactions to the opening of Avenida de la Catedral could perhaps serve as an example of how the preservation of the past and the celebration of the future were negotiated under Franco. When the works commenced in summer 1939, there were those who praised them as a sign of progress, an indication of the new era inaugurated by Franco's victory. But soon there were those who mourned the loss of the Barrio de la Catedral, which allegedly had meant so much to the evolution of Barcelonan customs and traditions. Moreover, to many, the disappearance of the Barrio de la Catedral might have symbolised the repression of the Catalan language and certain Catalan traditions. It is suggested that the defence of the Barrio de la Catedral was hence a reaction against both the future and the past, a subversive gesture in opposition to the culturally homogenising trend imposed by the city council's redevelopment projects, but also

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against the regime's overemphatic celebration of Barcelona's Roman past. While the regime tried to anchor itself in the Roman Empire and envision the future from there—a wide, modern avenue, full of cars, flanked by a pristine ancient military belt—the mourners of the Barrio de la Catedral struggled to keep the popular, Barcelonan "spirit" of the former suburb alive. Over time, they forcibly accepted the material outcome of the redevelopment works, eventually changing their grief for nostalgia.

Today, half a century later, few Barcelonans—except perhaps the oldest residents like Mrs Planelles—are aware of either the regime's archaic-futurist vision or the nostalgic sentiments that the disappearance of the Barrio de la Catedral generated in its former residents. The conjunction of existing redevelopment plans and the destruction caused by the Civil War led to the replacement of the age-old neighbourhood with Avenida de la Catedral. Yet one may wonder if Sempronio was right when he argued that the "spirit" of the Barrio de la Catedral would survive the neighbourhood's demise. What is certain is that Sant Roque, the neighbourhood's *genius loci* in the perhaps most literal sense, can still be found in the left Roman tower.

Chapter 5

Reconstruction as a marker of a regime change:
Bilbao's post-war bridges

5. Introduction

The destruction of the bridges of Bilbao by the Basque–Republican troops during the Spanish Civil War and their reconstruction by the newly appointed rebel city council illustrates how reconstruction can be used to mark a regime change physically and symbolically. The marking of Bilbao through the reconstruction of its bridges poignantly highlights the ideological discontinuities that resulted from the political change brought about by the Civil War. Such ideological discontinuities were in turn possible while, in practice, part of the administrative staff and practices involved in the reconstruction process were fairly congruent with the previous Republican regime. It is the fundamental tension between the rebels' use of the destruction and reconstruction of the bridges to mark an ideological break with the recent past, and the administrative continuities involved in the reconstruction process as such that constitutes the main argument of this chapter. Finally, while the extent of the destruction to the bridges during the Civil War was unprecedented, the eventful history of Bilbao's bridges reveals a long sequence of destructions by wars and natural catastrophes dating back to the foundation of the city in 1300, which might be identified as historical continuities in contrast with the above-mentioned practical continuities and ideological discontinuities.

From being essentially conceived as structures that secured communication between the two riverbanks, the bridges became part of a broader urban plan of accesses and thoroughfares in the early twentieth century. Around that time, too, the increasing availability of modern technical means called for the construction of drawbridges to improve the connection between the two riverbanks—including the recently annexed municipalities of Abando, Deusto and Begoña—without hindering navigation on the Ría as the Bilbao estuary is usually referred to. By the time the Civil War broke out in 1936, two drawbridges were under construction in Bilbao. As the largest industrial port city in the region, Bilbao was a busy city during the conflict, and the contractors of the drawbridges were urged to finalise the works as quickly as possible to alleviate circulation. The unfinished drawbridges were also used to hide military supplies and, in

so doing, became potential military targets of rebel air attacks. In the end, though, it was the Basque-Republican military who ordered the blowing up of the bridges on the 19th of June 1937 as the last troops left Bilbao in the face of the rebels' imminent seizure of the city. Communication between the two riverbanks was effectively broken.

The seemingly unnecessary destruction of the bridges from a military point of view gave Franco's supporters the opportunity to create a rhetoric of denunciation of the barbarism of the Republican and Basque-Nationalist troops while promoting their own efficiency as the re-constructors of the bridges in the unusually difficult circumstances posed by the war. Even though most part of the reconstruction of the bridges took place before the war finished and prior to Franco's complete take-over of the Spanish administration, the process already reflected the regime's approach to post-war reconstruction, whereby the central administration would rely on the local administration to undertake the reconstruction works, offering financial support, often retrospectively, through a scheme of loans and partial subsidies.

The use of reconstruction as a means of marking a change of political regime in post-war situations is perhaps easier to identify in the context of an emergent dictatorship such as Franco's, but can be found in other, not necessarily authoritarian, post-war reconstruction contexts such as the Italian in the aftermath of the Second World War.[265] The same applies to the specific organisational challenges faced by the rebels in Bilbao and other Spanish cities. New regimes replacing pre-war and wartime governments have the need to dissociate themselves from the preceding, vanquished regime, but often cannot afford to do away entirely with previous organisational structures. In the case of the reconstruction of Bilbao's bridges, the continuities observed in several administrative and corporate practices reinforce the hypothesis that neither the structures nor the staff of the local Republican administration were completely replaced after the rebels' take-over of the city. Examination of the discourse of the local leaders appointed by the rebels suggests, however, that considerable effort was made to convey the idea that a break had taken place and a new political era had been inaugurated.

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[265] One may think, for example, of the famous Pirelli Tower—designed by Gio Ponti—which was erected in post-war Milan in the early 1950s as a marker of the beginning of the new democratic, economically dynamic Italian Republic.

The new, more homogenised and sober ensemble of bridges that resulted from the relatively rapid reconstruction process—the bridges were rebuilt within approximately two years—had little aesthetic connection with the earlier bridges, several of which were built in typically eclectic nineteenth-century styles. Arguably, the new aesthetics contributed to mark the Ría, and Bilbao more generally, with the spirit of a new era, that of the Nacionales' triumphant New Spain, even though the design of the bridges was as much the outcome of the engineers' belief in rationalism, which they had been practising before the war, as their way of providing the most economic design solution for the works entrusted to them.

Something ought to be said about the case of Bilbao in relation to the selected sites in Barcelona and Madrid. Within the logic of this thesis, the bridges of Bilbao provide a contrasting case to the sites examined in Barcelona and Madrid because, unlike them, their destruction was caused by the Republican side only and in one single operation. The swiftness with which the bridges were reconstructed also contrasts with the much lengthier reconstruction processes encountered in the contexts of Barcelona's Avinguda de la Catedral and Madrid's Cuartel de la Montaña.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part seeks to contextualise the events of the 19th of June 1937 within the pre-war history of the bridges and Bilbao's role as a port city during the war. Following a section which briefly reviews the history of the fixed bridges, the construction of the two drawbridges—Begoña and Deusto—in the 1930s, before the outbreak of the war, is discussed. The impact of the war on the bridges, specifically on the drawbridges under construction, is explored in some detail in the third section. The final section discusses the Republicans' motivations for destroying the bridges and the practical and symbolic consequences of their destruction for the rebels: the initial challenges of managing a city divided in two, and the opportunity of condemning the Republicans' allegedly inexplicable destructiveness for propaganda purposes.

The second part of the chapter tries to elucidate the practical and symbolic impact of the immediate reconstruction of the bridges for post-war Bilbao and the post-war reconstruction process in Spain at large. In order to reflect the administrative separation between the reconstruction of the fixed bridges and the drawbridges, respectively, the

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two reconstruction processes are examined in separate sections, underlining the different challenges posed by these two groups of bridge infrastructures. The final section considers the inauguration of the Generalísimo Franco's bridge, formerly Deusto bridge, to illustrate further the tensions between the new authorities' need to emphasise symbolically the change of regime and their need to rely on previously existing staff and organisational arrangements for the administration of Bilbao.

Part I

5.1 Some historical background to the bridges in Bilbao

The bridges are essential for the understanding of the urban history of Bilbao. They are part of the city's distinctiveness and reflect many of the events, political and other, that have forged it throughout the centuries. For a long time, the aim of the bridges was simply to connect the two riverbanks of old Bilbao. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, the new goal was to connect the formerly autonomous municipalities which had been gradually annexed to old Bilbao. Finally, from the 1930s, the bridges became part of an extensive road network, and were no longer seen as independent infrastructures with the sole function of linking the two riverbanks.

Natural catastrophes, wars and urban redevelopment have decided the fate of Bilbao's bridges for centuries, and the city has had both fewer and more bridges than the ones it has today. However, while such historical continuities are significant, the scope of the destruction caused to the bridges on the 19th of June 1937 was unprecedented. Moreover, it was the first time the acts of destroying and reconstructing the bridges were appropriated to mark an ideological break with the recent past and the inauguration of a new political era. As a means of emphasising the unprecedented nature of such appropriation, but also providing some relevant historical background to the events of the Civil War, the following sections briefly examine the history of Bilbao's bridges.

Fig. 5.1 Old Bilbao and the San Antón bridge seen from the left riverbank, 1544. By Frans Hogenberg for Braun's and Hogenberg's atlas Civitates orbes terrarum *(1575)* (Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya).
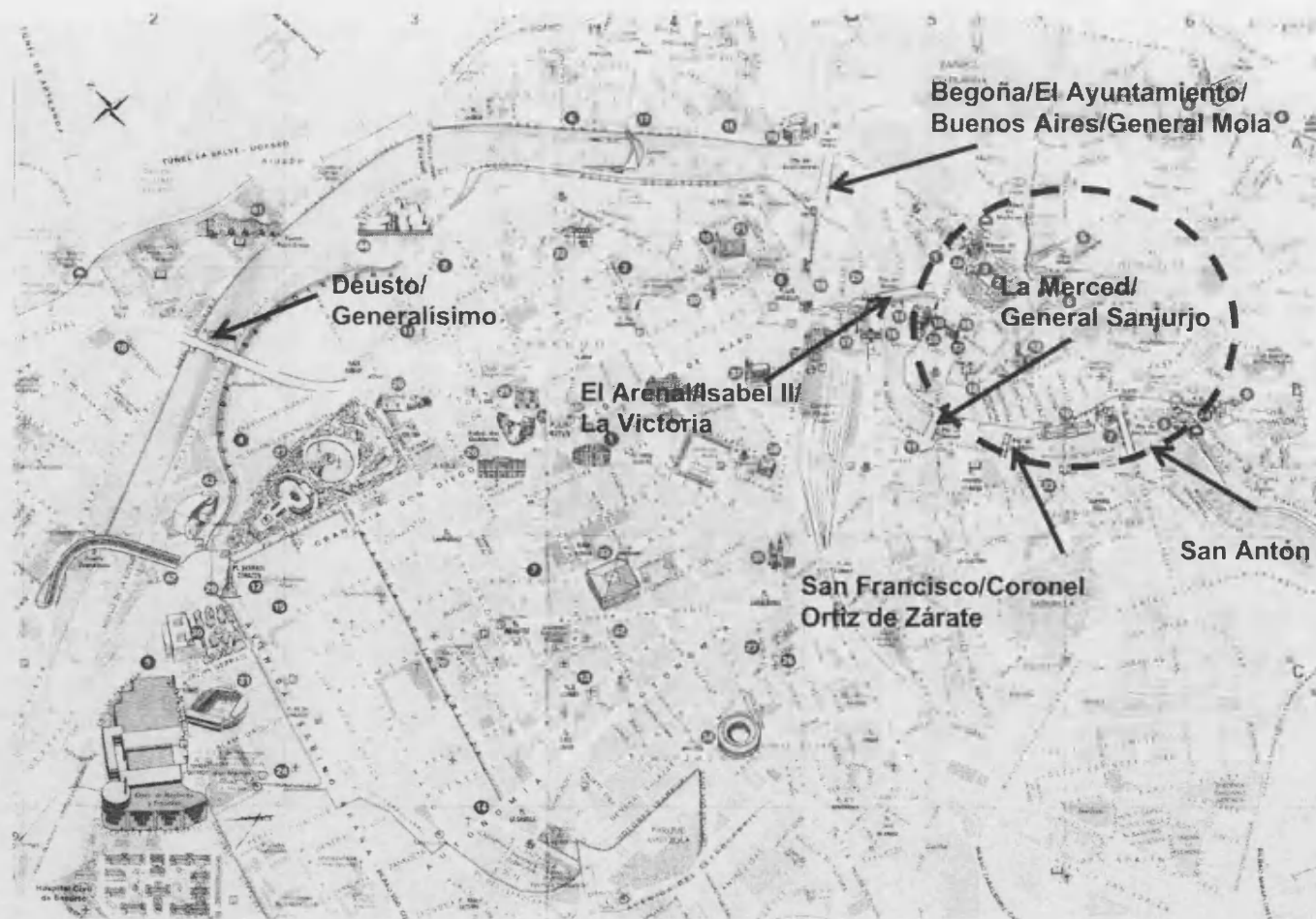
Fig. 5.2 Bilbao's bridges. From right to left, the six fixed bridges with their changing names followed by the two drawbridges Begoña and Deusto. The dotted circle shows old Bilbao (AGS. Cartografía Bilbao 2006).

5.1.1 San Antón, San Francsico and La Merced.

The bridge of San Antón existed before Bilbao was officially founded by Don Diego de Haro in 1300. For centuries, the stone bridge of San Antón was the only existing bridge in town. In 1506, the monks of San Francisco sought permission to build a bridge to link their convent directly to the city centre, but the Franciscan monks met strong opposition from the city council, which was probably keen on preserving the exclusiveness of the bridge of San Antón, and the commencement of the works was continuously postponed. It was not until 1732 that the monks were able to start the works. It took them three years to finish the first single-arch stone bridge of Bilbao. The nuns of the convent of La Merced, who were also keen on having a more convenient route downtown, erected a wooden bridge that connected the two riversides at the level of their convent. This bridge was substituted for a proper stone and brick bridge designed by engineer Ernesto Hoffmeyer in 1888.[266]

5.1.1.1 Destruction by floods and wars

The early bridges of Bilbao went through a number of devastating natural catastrophes, essentially floods and unexpected rises of the tide. The bridge of San Antón was destroyed several times throughout the Middle Ages. According to municipal records, high waters either partially or fully destroyed the bridge at least eight times between 1380 and 1650.[267] Reconstruction immediately followed on each occasion. After the last of these catastrophes, Master Juan de Setién proposed to add a third arch to San Antón as a means to avoid the consequences of the floods. On the 1st of November 1737, the bridge of San Francisco was destroyed by high waters that burst the riverbanks.[268] The Franciscan monks and their bridge were blamed for the disastrous consequences of the flood, and once again it took several decades, more than three this time, before the city council authorised the monks to reconstruct the bridge.[269] The works commenced in 1792 under the direction of the renowned Basque architect Alejo

[266] Ministerio de Fomento Signatura [15414] "Expediente De Autorización Para Sustituir El Puente De Madera De La Merced Por Otro De Fábrica. Solicita El Ayuntamiento De La Villa De Bilbao," (Archivo del Ministerio de Fomento).
[267] *Bilboko Zubiak/Puentes De Bilbao/Bridges of Bilbao*, (Bilbao: Ayuntamiento de Bilbao, Área de Obras y Servicios, 2002).
[268] Ibid.
[269] Sección Municipal/Fecha inicial 1741/Signatura Bilbao Sección Antigua 0058/002/001, "Puente De San Francisco," (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

de Miranda,[270] who designed a single-arch wooden bridge. The beautiful wooden bridge would not survive very long.

Like many other Spanish cities, Bilbao suffered the siege of Napoleon's troops in the early nineteenth century, and the Franciscans' wooden bridge was burnt down in 1813. For ten years, a pontoon bridge substituted for the disappeared wooden bridge, until Antonio de Goikoetxea's design for a bridge suspended by chains was completed in 1828. However, the maintenance of the new iron bridge in the damp climate of the Ría proved more challenging than expected. The increasingly rusty structure became more and more unreliable, and the city council decided to remove it in 1852.[271] A similar structure was erected, but collapsed during the trial period. In 1855, a new design, a suspension bridge was assembled instead. This bridge would last until 1874, when the Carlist troops[272] occupied Bilbao once again and destroyed the bridge. Six years later, the city council asked the royal administration for authorisation to construct an iron footbridge. Pablo Alzola, the designer, preferred to call his bridge a *pasadera*, hereby emphasising that the 42-metre iron bridge was intended only for pedestrians.[273] Alzola's was an ornamental and at the same time functional bridge that connected the newly formed working-class district of San Francisco with the old city centre.

The wooden bridge that connected La Merced with the right riverbank before Hoffmeyer's stone-and-brick bridge was built in 1891 was also destroyed during the Carlist siege of the city in 1874.[274]

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[270] Alejo de Miranda later collaborated in the design of the reconstruction of the city of San Sebastián—in the Basque province of Guipúzcoa—which was devastated during the French invasion in the early nineteenth century.

[271] The disastrous fate that similar bridges had met, such as the one in Angers (France), which suddenly collapsed in 1850 killing more than 200 people, made the city council wary of the iron bridge. See "Recuerdos De Bilbao. El Puente Colgante," *La Baskonia. La revista decenal ilustrada* 1933.

[272] The Carlists constituted a loose reactionary political group based in Navarra and the Basque Country, who defended the right to the Spanish throne of an alternative branch of the Bourbons. The Carlists started three wars during the nineteenth century. Prior to the 1936-39 Civil War, these were known as the Spanish Civil Wars.

[273] Ministerio de Fomento Signatura [15414], "Expediente Sobre Construcción De Un Puente En El Interior De Bilbao Sobre La Ría, Solicitado Por El Ayuntamiento De Dicha Villa.," (Archivo del Ministerio de Fomento).

[274] Juan Carlos de Gortázar, Ignacio de Gortázar, and Manuel María de Smith Ibarra, *Bajo Los Puentes De Bilbao* (1951).

Fig. 5.3 Alzola's San Francisco iron footbridge (1880) and Hoffmeyer's La Merced stone-and-brick bridge (1891) in the background (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

Fig. 5.4 La Merced bridge and San Francisco iron footbridge in the background (1893) (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

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5.1.2 Isabel II

The Isabel II bridge, which linked the two dock areas known as *El Arenal*, literally the sandpit, and the *Ripa* was also damaged during the second Carlist War (1846-1849).[275] The Isabel II bridge, also called Arenal bridge, was commissioned in 1844, apparently to commemorate Queen Isabel's victory in the first Carlist War (1833-1840), her acceptance of the validity of the Basque legal codes, and her decision to permit the railway connecting Madrid with the French border to go through Bilbao.[276] However, to the inhabitants of the then independent republic[277] of Abando on the southern side of the bridge, the construction of a proper bridge infrastructure, partly designed as a drawbridge, also reflected Bilbao's annexionist aspirations. After the bridge was badly damaged during the third Carlist War (1872-1876), a new, fixed stone bridge, designed by Adolfo Ibarreta, was constructed on the exact same spot, and inaugurated in 1878. The idea of having a drawbridge in this particular area of the river was not deemed workable any more. It became more important to ensure good and comfortable access to and from the new railway station on the left bank, and therefore a fixed structure seemed more convenient.[278] As a consequence, ships were no longer able to go any further up the Ría beyond the Arenal docks. In this way, the old city, which more or less ended at the Arenal bridge, was definitely sealed off from the Ría's industrious and dynamic, but also unhealthy and dirty, port life.

5.1.3 Perro Chico

The increasingly advanced engineering expertise permitted and even called for the construction of swing bridges and drawbridges in the Ría. In 1892, British engineer Hector Brahon was commissioned to design a swing bridge with a horizontally rotating span in front of the new city hall, which had been moved downstream to El Arenal docks from its primitive location in the area of San Antón. The *Puente Giratorio* (literally, swing bridge), as it was officially named, soon became known as *El Perro Chico* (literally, the little dog) because of the toll—five cents—that pedestrians had to

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[275] Adolfo de Ibarreta, "Proyecto De Reconstrucción Del Puente De Isabel II En Bilbao. Memoria," *Revista de Obras Públicas* 1 (19), no. 24 (1876).

[276] See Fernando de la Quadra Salcedo, "Calles De Bilbao. Puente De Isabel II," *Propiedad y Construcción* 1934.

[277] Villages in Biscay have historically been referred to as *repúblicas* or republics because they used to enjoy representation rights in the Gernika assembly. This made them politically equal to larger localities.

[278] Ibarreta, "Proyecto De Reconstrucción Del Puente De Isabel II En Bilbao. Memoria."

pay. Five cents was the smallest existing currency unit at the time, and was popularly called a *perra chica.*

Both new constructions, the bridge and the spectacular neo-baroque city hall, mirrored Bilbao's increasing economic power and geographical scope of influence. As the inhabitants of Abando had feared when the Isabel II bridge was constructed in the 1840s, Bilbao eventually succeeded in annexing the historically independent republic. This occurred in 1872. Half a century later, in 1924, the *anteiglesias*[279] of Begoña and Deusto followed the same fate, becoming part of modern Bilbao. The plans for an extension of the city on the left bank, across the former republic of Abando's domains, began to materialise, as did the project for a more secure iron drawbridge with which to replace the swing bridge Perro Chico, and another project for a new drawbridge between Abando and Deusto.

Fig. 5.5 The Perro Chico with the city hall in the background (1894) (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

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[279] *Anteiglesia*, literally "ante-church", is another term traditionally used in the Basque Country to refer to a village or municipal district that used to enjoy representation rights. The term suggests that these nuclei once emerged close to or around rural churches.

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5.2 Building modern Bilbao—the construction of two new drawbridges

5.2.1 Urban plans

The bridges played a significant role in the design of modern and contemporary Bilbao as soon as they became key sections of the major thoroughfares or axes that structured the layout of the city. Furthermore, the exact location of the drawbridges had to be planned in accordance with the new extension proposals. A brief chronological review of the most relevant urban plans brings us back to July 1872, when the city council approved the first plan for the extension of Bilbao in the recently annexed fields of Abando. The project, which built on earlier plans that never materialised, was designed by architect Severino Achúcarro and engineers Pablo de Alzola and Ernesto Hoffmeyer.[280] This was merely the beginning of a series of planning initiatives that picked up in the 1920s. In 1921, Secundino Zuazo designed a new partial street plan for Bilbao in response to the need to incorporate the traditional street grid of old Bilbao into the new grid of the extended city. Zuazo's much praised *Reforma viaria parcial del interior de Bilbao* (Partial inner street-grid reorganisation) was based on creating a broad axis across El Arenal bridge. The plan was never implemented, but remained a guiding principle for future projects. Ricardo Bastida's *Plano de Enlaces de Bilbao* (Road Connection Plan) followed in 1923. To the architect, Bilbao encompassed more than what strictly belonged to its municipal boundaries. Bastida anticipated Bilbao's transformation into a metropolitan area in need of well-designed, large-scale urbanisation and road plans. He is often regarded as a visionary, and even though his plan was never carried out, it allegedly inspired later interventions. After the urban planning competition that was held in 1926,[281] municipal technicians, notably Estanislao Segurola, took over the development of a definitive proposal, using some of the ideas presented in the competition. In the summer of 1929, a comprehensive urban plan for Bilbao and the newly annexed areas was officially presented and approved.

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[280] As noted earlier, Alzola was the designer of the new San Francisco bridge, and Hoffmeyer had designed the stone and brick version of La Merced bridge.

[281] Among the entries was a much commented avant-garde contribution by German architect Otto Bünz and Spanish Fernando García Mercadal, a member of the GATEPAC—the Spanish branch of the CIRPAC. International urban planning competitions became more and more common in Spain after 1924 when a law was passed officially regulating their terms and conditions.

Fig. 5.6 Bilbao ca 1900, showing the old city on the right bank and the gradually growing extension on the left bank across the fields of Abando. The black lines show the rail system (Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya).
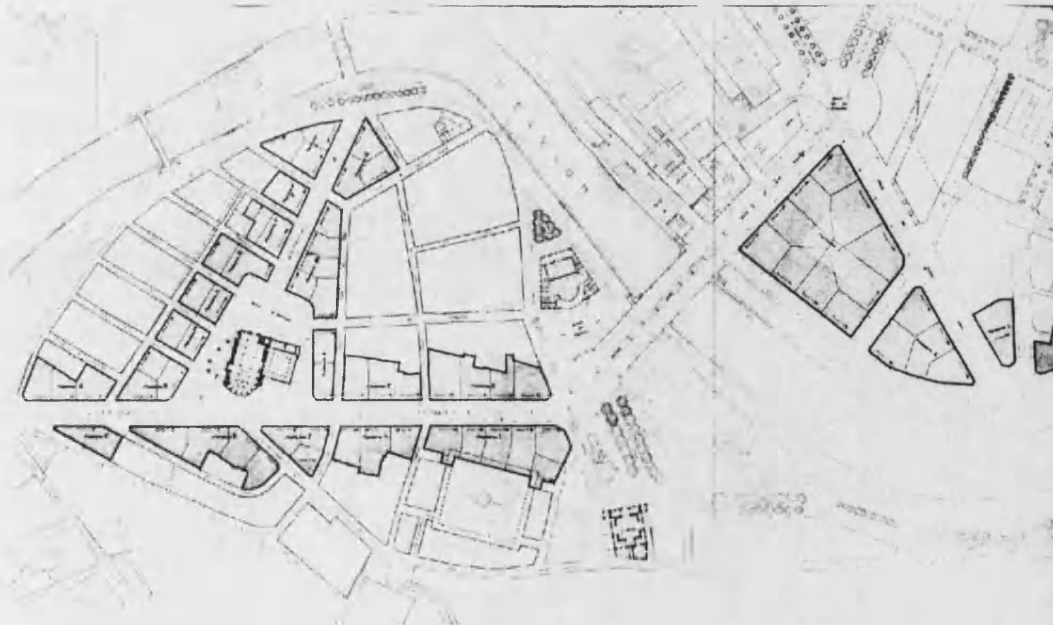
Fig. 5.7 Section of Zuazo's 1921 Plan, showing the plan to develop the Arenal bridge (to the right) into a key axis communicating Abando and old Bilbao (Ayuntamiento de Bilbao).
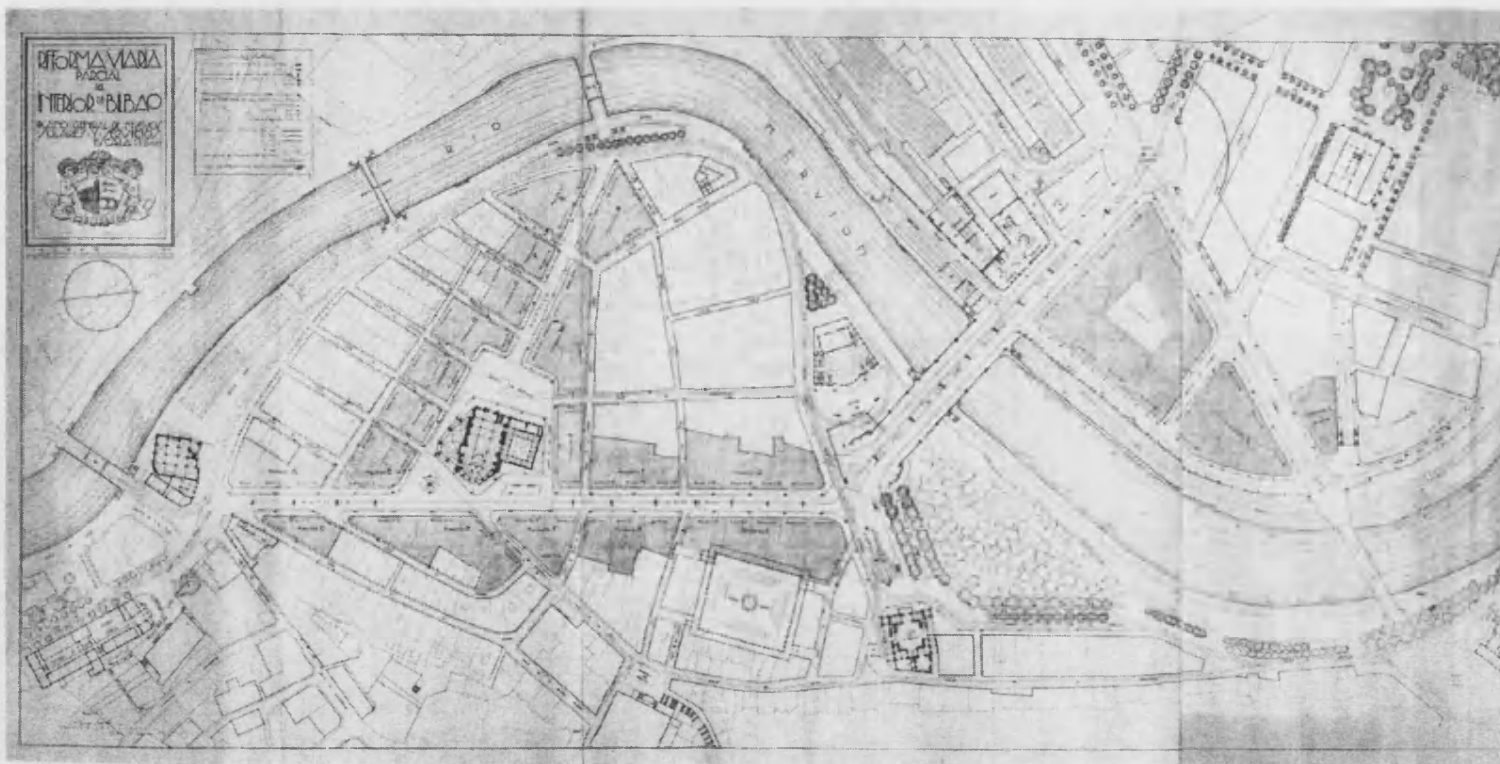
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Fig. 5.8 Secundino Zuazo. Reforma viaria parcial del interior de Bilbao *(1923)* (Ayuntamiento de Bilbao).

Fig. 5.9 Ricardo Bastida. Plano de Enlaces de Bilbao con los pueblos colindantes *(1923)* (Ayuntamiento de Bilbao).

5.2.2 The drawbridges

The debate around the construction of the drawbridges ran parallel to the urban planning discussions and went on for several years, sometimes becoming quite controversial. The bridges were costly projects, and not everyone was convinced of their necessity. Those who defended their construction—among them Ramón de la Mar, a professor at the Nautical School of Bilbao—pointed to foreign examples such as the Madison bridge in Chicago, emphasising that ship traffic in the Ría had to remain dynamic and that these were the best bridge infrastructures available to ensure that the river was not sealed off further downstream by additional fixed bridges.[282]

Eventually, in June 1928, engineers José Ortiz de Artiñano and Ignacio de Rotaetxe were commissioned for the definitive projects for the two new drawbridges, the *Ayuntamiento* (Council) bridge and the *Deusto* bridge. Of the two, the Ayuntamiento bridge, in front of the city hall, was deemed the most urgent.[283]

5.2.2.1 The project for the Ayuntamiento or Begoña bridge

Less than a year later, on the 1st of April 1929, the engineers handed in the project for the Ayuntamiento bridge, and the construction works soon commenced.[284] At the time, probably few people expected that it would take more than a decade to complete the new drawbridge, which in the meantime became known as the Begoña bridge and also the Buenos Aires bridge. In a way, each of the three names highlighted the different motivations behind its construction. It was the Ayuntamiento bridge because it was built in front of the city hall with the aim of creating a direct link between the new administrative centre of Bilbao and the modern extension of the city in Abando. In fact, the new location of the city hall itself seemed to be the result of a compromise between not abandoning the right riverbank, where old Bilbao was founded, and moving as close as possible to what gradually had become the residential headquarters of the industrial bourgeoisie, and soon the actual city centre. Furthermore, it was the Begoña bridge, because it ensured that the annexed district of Begoña effectively became part of the

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[282] Ramón de la Mar, "Del Bilbao Futuro. El Puente De La Calle De Buenos Aires," *Vida Vasca* 1927.
[283] Apparently, recent floods had badly affected the docks at La Ribera and part of the foundations of El Arenal bridge. It therefore seemed sensible to construct a supplementary bridge to secure road traffic communication between the two riverbanks in case El Arenal (Isabel II) failed. See Ibid.
[284] Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 765/Número 1292, "Proyecto De Construcción Del Puente De Deusto," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

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new Bilbao. Finally, it became known as the Buenos Aires bridge because it was the continuation of Buenos Aires street. The two latter denominations point to the increasing importance of city planning and traffic regulation. As already implied, when conceiving of the new bridges and deciding on their location, these were seen less as independent infrastructures with the sole aim of securing communication between the two riverbanks, and more as elements of a general plan of streets and accesses.

A special office, the *Oficina Municipal Técnica de Puentes Móviles (OMTPM*; Drawbridges Municipal Technical Office), was created to manage the construction of the two bridges and the contract for the works was awarded to *Sociedad Española de Construcciones Babcock & Wilcox*, the Spanish branch of a renowned company from the United States that specialised in the design of steam boilers for power supply.[285] It was agreed that the Ayuntamiento bridge would be financed at three governmental levels: the city council (50 per cent), the Biscay provincial deputyship (25 per cent) and the central administration (25 per cent).[286] The municipal records suggest that the works suffered several delays from the start probably because of the alterations that were introduced to the original design as the works progressed and the sometimes difficult relations between the city council and the contractor.[287]

5.2.2.2 The project for the Deusto bridge

The project for the Deusto bridge took longer to design, partly because its location was not as clear to the city council as that of the Begoña bridge. The *Junta de Obras del Puerto*, the port authority, had recently approved a plan to exploit commercially the *San Mamés* lowland on the left riverbank, which the new bridge was purportedly going to cross, hence forcing the OMTPM to adapt the bridge to this earlier plan.[288] The city council requested that the Biscay provincial council sponsor 50 per cent of the works since, it was argued, the Deusto bridge was in the interest of the provincial council as it

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[285] Babcock & Wilcox, today a large multinational company, was founded in 1867 by two partners in Rhode Island. In 1902, the company powered the first underground in New York City.

[286] Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 718/Número 3, "Construcción Del Puente De Begoña (Continuación) (Ejecución De Obras)," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

[287] See Ibid.

[288] Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 765/Número 1292, "Proyecto De Construcción Del Puente De Deusto." See also, Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 766/Número 1294, "Estudio De La Reforma De Proyecto Del Puente De Deusto En Relación Con La Utilización De Los Terrenos De La Vega De San Mamés Por La Junta De Obras Del Puerto Zona Marítima," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

would become part of Biscay's wider provincial road network.[289] In early February 1931, the city council organised the bid for the works. The project presented by Babcock & Wilcox for the construction of the metallic parts, internal mechanisms and electric equipment in the moving section was selected and approved, while *Compañía Anónima Basconia* was commissioned to construct the foundations, the viaduct and the pillars. Thus, the responsibilities for the fixed and the moving parts of the drawbridge were clearly separated. As the works progressed, several other companies became involved such as *Sociedad Española de Construcción Naval, Construcciones Gamboa y Domingo, Sociedad Retolaza y Compañía Limitada* and *Sociedad Anónima Entrecanales y Távora*, which had all taken part in the initial bidding. However, Basconia continued to act as the leading company.
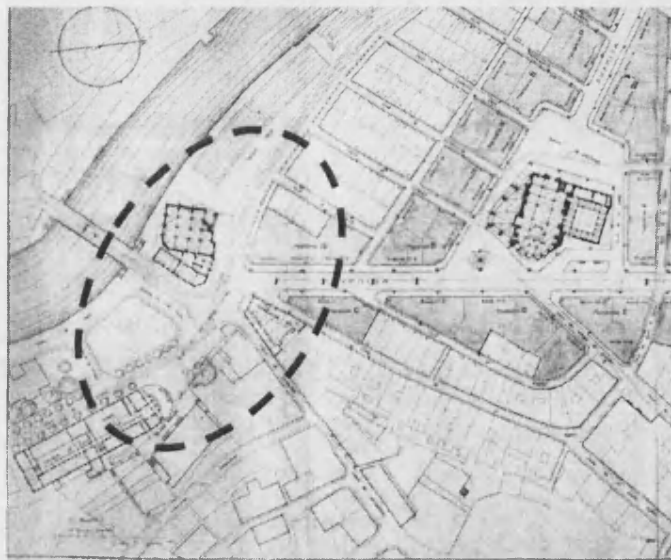
Fig. 5.10 The San Mamés lowland (within the dotted line) and the projected bridge in Zuazo's Plan (Ayuntamiento de Bilbao).

Significantly, perhaps, the works commenced on the 14th of April 1932, which was the first anniversary of the proclamation of the Second Republic. Engineers Roatetxe and Otriz de Artiñano, who designed the original projects, were hired to direct the works, which developed in clearly differentiated stages. The initial stage entailed a number of expropriations, which resulted in the accumulation of large amounts of materials from the expropriated and demolished buildings and constructions. Most of these were

[289] There had long been plans for a tunnel north of the city, through Artxanda. The Deusto bridge would lead incoming traffic directly to the centre of modern Bilbao.

recycled.[290] The total time for completion of the bridge had been estimated at 30 months, and this was apparently the duration officially agreed on. Thus, the Deusto drawbridge should have been ready for use by mid-October 1934.

5.3 The war and the bridges

By mid-July 1936, when the military coup took place, the drawbridges remained unfinished. The conflict that spread across the Spanish territory forced port cities like Bilbao into exceptionally challenging political and administrative situations. Although shipping traffic continued to use the port of Bilbao after the outbreak of the war, it became more and more threatened by the close presence of rebel ships and by the hundreds of mines that the rebels, mainly their German allies, placed in the immediate area of the port. In view of these challenges, and to complement the efforts of the Republican naval force, the Basque government created its own military fleet. The aims were to protect merchant ships carrying food and (military) supplies and foreign ships trading with other loyalist port cities in northern Spain, to obstruct the traffic to and from the rebel ports in the north-west, to clear the coast-line from mines and, finally, to secure maritime communication with France. The latter became indispensable for the Basque government as the northern fringe was soon cut off from the main Republican zone and the only possible route to reach the Republican central government was through France.[291] The relevance of the port of Bilbao was further manifested during the spring of 1937 when, as the rebel troops progressively advanced into Biscay, a number of ships—many of them British—left the port carrying thousands of refugees, mostly children, to other countries in Europe and America.[292]

5.3.1 Material shortages and pressure to finish the drawbridges

When the war commenced, the teams responsible for the works on the drawbridges faced sudden shortages of materials, while at the same time they were being pressurised by the city council to accelerate the completion of the bridges. As early as August 1936,

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[290] Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 766/Número 1299, "Demolición Y Aprovechamiento De Materiales De Los Edificios Expropriados Para La Construcción Del Puente De Deusto," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

[291] José Antonio Aguirre, *El Informe Del Presidente Aguirre Al Gobierno De La República. Sobre Los Hechos Que Determinaron El Derrumbamiento Del Norte (1937)* (Bilbao: Editorial La Gran Enciclopedia Vasca, 1978).

[292] For a detailed account of the British Royal Navy's role involvement in the transportation of Basque refugees, see James Cable, *The Royal Navy and the Siege of Bilbao* (Cambdrige, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

Babcock & Wilcox called for a three-month extension to complete the works on the Begoña bridge, alleging it was impossible to receive the materials required on time because of the growing insecurity on the roads. Some essential building parts were kept in Barcelona and others in Germany. Moreover, the Basque Defence Committee had imposed restrictions on the consumption of electric power, which had a direct impact on the rhythm of the works, as had the reduced availability of staff since many workers had been called to the front. By early December 1936 the situation had not improved. Babcock & Wilcox now tried to request an indefinite extension of the contract for as long as the "circumstances that had caused the military uprising" lasted.[293] But Spanish administrative law did not permit such a possibility, and the company was left to ask for the maximum extension once more—another three months. The city council was keen on opening the bridge as soon as possible, even if only for pedestrians at first.[294] According to secondary sources, the Begoña bridge was provisionally opened on the 12th of December 1936.[295]

Basconia and partners, the contractors for the Deusto bridge, also encountered problems in getting materials delivered from other cities in Spain.[296] And other difficulties emerged too. A particularly dramatic letter from the Sociedad Española de Construcción Naval, one of the subsidiary companies involved in the works, arrived at Basconia's offices in August 1936. In the letter, the director of the Bilbao branch of Construcción Naval explained that the factory had been completely cut off from its headquarters in Madrid (no mail, telegraph or telephone communications were any longer possible). As a result, the local office ran out of funds to pay its 1,500 employees. The director feared that the workers would eventually find the situation unsustainable and organise a protest, something which, he argued, could have unpredictable consequences in an already politically critical situation. He therefore urged the city council to disburse part of the payment for the works carried out on the Deusto bridge to enable the company's staff to be paid.[297] In the early days of the war in

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[293] Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 718/Número 3, "Construcción Del Puente De Begoña (Continuación) (Ejecución De Obras)."

[294] Ibid.

[295] See Iñaki Uriarte, "Los Puentes Levadizos De Bilbao," *Periodico Bilbao*, December 2006, 39.

[296] Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 360/Número 848, "Apertura Provisional Al Tráfico Del Puente De Deusto," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

[297] Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 493/Número 679, "Relaciones Valoradas De Las Obras De Construcción Del Puente De Deusto," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

the Basque Country, the threat of social upheaval was something that both the Basque industrialists and Bilbao's municipal administration took seriously.

5.3.2 Provisional opening of the Deusto bridge

There was also significant pressure from the city council on the contractors working on the Deusto bridge. In mid-September 1936, the city council requested that Basconia and partners promptly devise a plan to open the almost finished drawbridge, even if it had to be on provisional terms and subject to restrictions. Along with increased port activity, the war had brought growing car traffic to Bilbao, which particularly burdened the environs of the railway station, the Arenal bridge and other nodal points in the city, and the Deusto bridge was expected to alleviate such burden.

By late November, the conditions for a premature opening of the Deusto bridge were agreed. The bridge would be open to vehicles and pedestrians only during daytime, from seven in the morning to five in the afternoon. Measures were also taken to ensure that the circulation of cars and pedestrians were not to obstruct the works that would continue to take place on the unfinished parts of the bridge.[298]

As the military line moved closer to Bilbao, new problems in relation to the Deusto bridge arose. In May 1937, the municipal guard, who had been responsible for the surveillance and provisional operation of the drawbridge, was apparently no longer able to take up his post. Without somebody supervising the opening and closing of the drawbridge, there was a high risk of accidents, and the engineers overseeing the works on the bridge advised the city council to find a solution to this problem quickly. Almost at the same time, the mayor received a communication from the Basque Defence Department requesting the council to authorise the use and accommodation of a section of the substructure of the bridge to locate a group of military vehicles. The Defence Department contended that the substructure of the bridge was a particularly adequate location because it could not be seen from the air, in other words, by the enemy aircraft.

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[298] Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 360/Número 848, "Apertura Provisional Al Tráfico Del Puente De Deusto."

5.3.3 The use of the Deusto bridge to hide military supplies

The city council had probably little option to refuse the Defence Department's demand and issued the requested authorisation. However, it soon turned out that the military's use of the Deusto bridge was not limited to the storage of vehicles. The mayor received a number of reports that indicated that various workshops (mechanical, metallurgical, electric and carpentry), a general storage room and 60 vehicles were being installed under the left section of the bridge. Towards the end of May, the mayor wrote to the Defence Department claiming that the city council's authorisation had not envisaged the kind of facilities that were being put into place. According to the mayor, these "turned the Deusto bridge into a war objective, creating a serious risk for such an important and costly public work".[299] He offered alternative accommodation in the basements of various new buildings downtown, which he deemed safer and better located. Finally, he requested that building to accommodate the workshops and other facilities under the bridge be put on hold.

Either the Defence Department did not change its orders or the troops in Bilbao ignored the new orders, but new reports reached the city council stating that the installation works were continuing. In early June, not even two weeks before the rebel occupation of Bilbao and the loyalists' destruction of the bridges, the city council agreed to refer the issue to the Defence Department for a second time. The council members were particularly concerned about the military staff's use of the transversal beams for hanging utensils and machinery since this could potentially damage the general structure of the bridge. In their appeal to the Defence Department, the city council demanded that if the use of the bridge for other purposes than the ones it had initially authorised was indispensable, the military should at least allow the presence of a municipal technician to supervise the works in order to avoid any potential harm to the structure.[300]

This kind of misunderstanding and recrimination was not uncommon during the war in the interactions between, on the one hand, military and civilian authorities, and on the other, central, regional and local authorities. In times of war, the logic of exception that

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[299] Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 718/Número 3, "Construcción Del Puente De Begoña (Continuación) (Ejecución De Obras)."

[300] Ibid.

underpins much decision-making, especially military decisions, seems to coexist with the logic of normality, which civilian institutions continue to apply in their attempt to carry on with things as usual for as much and as long as possible.

5.4 The offensive against Bilbao and the destruction of the bridges

5.4.1 The dynamiting of the bridges

While the city council tried to stop the military's hazardous appropriation of the Deusto bridge, the rebel troops approached Bilbao at a rapid pace, thanks to their successful air–land cooperation strategy. In the second week of June 1937, they were able to break through the fortification system that the Basque-Republican troops had built in the mountains around the city, the so-called *cinturón de hierro* or iron ring of Bilbao. The loyalist troops began to retreat from the hilltops in increasingly chaotic formations. The Basque government decided to evacuate civilians, and soon the city was under direct attack from the rebel artillery. The rebels drew near the city from the south, advancing from the hills *Malmasín* and *Pasagarri*, and the few loyalist troops that remained in Bilbao desperately tried to resist the artillery fire and the air-raids throughout the 17th and 18th of June, soon realising they were powerless against the rebels' numerical advantage and the superiority of their technical means.[301] A last move to prevent the enemy from taking over the city was attempted by blowing up the bridges over the Ría. Although it is somewhat unclear who exactly gave the order to dynamite the bridges, some sources point to Jesús María de Leizaola, a member of both the Basque government and Bilbao's Defence Committee. Hence, on the eve of the 19th, the remnants of the Basque and loyalist troops abandoned the city and moved westward, leaving behind them the smoking ruins of San Antón, La Merced, San Francisco, El Arenal, Begoña, Perro Chico, Deusto and Vizcaya. Eight bridges in total were wrecked.

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[301] See Luis María and Juan Carlos Jiménez de Aberásturi, *La Guerra En Euskadi* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1978) 50, 91.

Fig. 5.11 View of the Begoña bridge destroyed, seen from the right riverbank (July 1937) (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

Fig. 5.12 The Deusto bridge destroyed (1937) (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

5.4.2 Motivations for the destruction of the bridges

The destruction of the bridges across the Nervión river was a standard military procedure aimed at obstructing the occupation of localities regardless of whether, in this case, the formula would effectively hinder the rebels' seizure of Bilbao. There are other, similar, instances of last-minute, militarily pointless destructions of bridges such as the Nazis dynamiting Heidelberg's bridge at the end of March 1945, one day before the Allies took over the German city. Like most acts of war, the interpretation of these instances of destruction seems to depend on the perspective from which they are looked at.

5.4.2.1 A Basque-Republican perspective

From a perspective that is sensitive to the situation of the Basque-Republicans, it is suggested that the destruction of the bridges of Bilbao can be interpreted by considering three factors. First, the wartime debate within the Basque-Republican leadership on the rationality of destroying Bilbao's factories before they were taken over by the rebels. Second, the Basque population's sense of abandonment, their perception that the central government had not adequately supported them, especially as they had not sent them more aerial support. And third, the defection of a number of Basque-Republican officers towards the end of the campaign in Biscay.

In his 1937 report to the Republican government, José Antonio Aguirre, the Basque president, explained why the northern front had fallen, and claimed that the total destruction of Bilbao's factories—mainly metallurgical factories and shipyards—was never contemplated by the Basque authorities. Instead, the aim had been to render the industrial machinery useless by removing or destroying small but key parts. According to Aguirre, the Basque-Republican leadership envisioned their possible return to Bilbao and "did not want to recall their own barbarism represented in the destruction of the work of various generations", adding that "this might seem quite romantic from the outside, [b]ut this is what our people thought".[302] But, as Aguirre himself noted, there were also many who had argued against the preservation of the Bilbaoan industries,

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[302] "[...] y no quisiéramos recordar nuestra propia barbarie representada en la destrucción del trabajo de varias generaciones. Esto desde fuera podrá parecer un tanto romántico. Pero así pensaba el pueblo." Aguirre, *El Informe Del Presidente Aguirre Al Gobierno De La República. Sobre Los Hechos Que Determinaron El Derrumbamiento Del Norte (1937)* 186.

claiming that the factories would notably improve the rebels' war capacity if they came into their hands.

Furthermore, many Basques shared the feeling that the Republican central government had held an ambivalent attitude about defending the Basque Country as this involved defending Basque autonomy too. As explained earlier, the autonomy was granted three months after the conflict broke out. Thus, the central government's apparent unwillingness to send air support to resist the Luftwaffe's relentless raids was interpreted by some Basques as a sign of the Republican leadership's half-hearted acceptance of the Basques' new political status. Aguirre's report included a compelling series of official notes exchanged between members of the central government and the Basque government which point to these underlying tensions.[303]

If abandonment was an increasingly recurrent sentiment among the Basque-loyalist troops in the weeks prior to the fall of Bilbao, defection was soon added to the picture. The number of Basque-Republican officers who fled or changed sides increased as the prospects of a Republican victory declined. Among them was military engineer Alejandro Goicoechea, the main designer and coordinator of the construction of the iron ring of Bilbao and two of his aides, who were caught *in flagranti* passing the plans of the ring to rebel officials. While his aides were arrested and executed by the Republicans, Goicoechea managed to cross to the rebels' side, taking all the plans with him. He was hence able to inform the rebel commanders about the weakest points of the unfinished ring, which, it has been argued by officers who fought defending Bilbao, was in any case not as solid and unbreakable as it had been made to seem. Ultimately, the Basque-Republican troops' excessive trust in the defensive iron ring might even have contributed to their defeat, stopping them from devising alternative defensive strategies which might have been more effective.[304]

In view of all the above, the decision to dynamite the bridges might also have been a more or less conscious reaction to the cautious approach taken to the Bilbaoan industry. Since the factories were essentially spared, the destruction of the bridges was possibly

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[303] Many years later, Aguirre himself acknowledged that the shortage of air support had probably been the result of the central government's practical inability to assist the Basques—having to attend various fronts at the same time—rather than any premeditated unwillingness to do so.

[304] Jiménez de Aberásturi, *La Guerra En Euskadi* 190.

seen as a last opportunity to undermine the rebels' victory. Moreover, among the few Basque-loyalist leaders and troops that remained in Bilbao until its fall, the sentiment of abandonment and despair must have been strong. These men might have felt little incentive to ponder the consequences of the destruction of the bridges, even if they possibly contemplated a Republican re-conquest of the city. Ultimately, the dynamiting of the bridges constituted a standard military procedure aimed at leaving havoc behind, and making reconstruction difficult for the enemy.

5.4.2.2 From the Nacionales' perspective

The rebels or Nacionales' accounts of the fall of Bilbao coincide with the appreciation that the iron ring was not as strong as it had been made to seem, its technical weaknesses soon detected by their troops.[305] There was probably a need to exaggerate the military incompetence of the Republicans in these accounts, but what seems unquestionable is that the Bilbaoan fortification system lacked second and third defence lines to which the loyalist troops could have retreated. So, once the first defence line was breached there was nothing else stopping the rebels from progressing into the city.

While the iron ring was retrospectively mocked by the rebels as a kind of a giant with mud feet, the destruction of the bridges was dramatically condemned. Franco's supporters were keen on underscoring that there was absolutely no military reasoning behind the Republicans' destruction of the bridges, since the city was completely surrounded when the latter were blown up and it served little purpose to cut off the two riverbanks. According to the rebels, the destructive act could only be attributed to the barbarous and soulless behaviour of the Basque-Republican troops as they fled Bilbao.

Indeed, the image of half-sunk decks, twisted iron frames and massive chunks of debris in the midst of the smoking waterscape left by the explosions of the bridges must have constituted a spectacular and disturbing scene. The rebels quickly turned the situation in their favour. The expression "Red-Marxist and separatist barbarism" as the motivation for these destructive acts was soon coined, and would appear with slight variations in most post-war discourses portraying the events of the 19th of June. Aside from this relatively successful propaganda exercise aimed at discrediting the Basque-

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[305] See, for example, Spectator, "Bilbao Y El Famoso Cinturón De Hierro, Meta De La Campaña De Vizcaya," *Reconstrucción*, November 1940, 15.

Republicans, the rebels turned the destruction of the bridges into an opportunity for providing the Ría with an early marker of what they saw as the triumphant New Spain. The new bridges would be introduced to the public as one of the first great reconstruction achievements of the new regime. Moreover, in emphasising "the Red-Marxists' barbarous destruction" against the new regime's efficient reconstruction process, an image of construction from scratch rather than reconstruction of what was already there was implicitly transmitted to Bilbaoans.

Fig. 5.13 View of the destroyed Perro Chico in the foreground and the Begoña bridge in the background (July 1937) (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

Fig. 5.14 Provisional gangway supported on the destroyed San Francisco bridge (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

Part II

5.1 The reconstruction of the fixed bridges: shaping the New Spain

5.1.1 Commander Arbex's pontoon bridge

Provisional bridges were set up during the first days after the explosions. Some years later, mayor Zuazagoitia referred to the "almost magical emergence of Commander Arbex's pontoon bridge" in the days immediately after the Nacionales took over Bilbao.[306] It may be worth noting that commander Arbex was in charge of part of the Basque-loyalist battalions but defected to the rebels shortly after their seizure of Bilbao. In 1951, the brothers Gortázar and Smith Ibarra dedicated one of the verses in their long "poem" on the history of the bridges to the pontoon bridge, which was provisionally laid out close to the ruins of El Arenal. The bridge was improved as days went by and remained for months before it was removed. A number of photographs show soldiers and ordinary Bilbaoans crossing the structure as if it were a regular bridge. Today, a plaque by the river reminds passers-by of the bridge's ephemeral, yet notable existence.[307]

Fig. 5.15 The pontoon bridge next to the destroyed Arenal bridge (1937) (Archivo Foral de Bizkaia).

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[306] Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 277/Número 109, "Inauguración Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco Y Demás Actos Que Se Celebrarán El 25 De Octubre De 1939. Año De La Victoria Y Monumento a Churruca.," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

[307] Gortázar, Gortázar, and Smith Ibarra, *Bajo Los Puentes De Bilbao.*

On the 24th of June, five days after the rebels' entry in Bilbao, the newly appointed city council decided to "immediately and definitely reconstruct the six bridges that had been totally or partially destroyed by the red-separatist [sic] barbarism".[308] In order to finance these works, the city council initially set up an exceptional credit account, which it regularly credited with the funds from the *Presupuesto Extraordinario* (Extraordinary Budget) that had been approved for 1937. Later on, the city council would seek the support of other administrative entities, but the main priority was to begin the reconstruction of the bridges as quickly as possible.[309] Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the names of the bridges were changed to honour the rebels' victory and their war heroes, except that of San Antón bridge, which was allowed to keep its name because of its importance in Bilbaoan tradition. It was probably not in the interest of the Nacionales to upset traditionalist Bilbaoans, whose support was, of course, welcomed. The San Francisco footbridge became Colonel Ortiz de Zárate's bridge; La Merced, General Sanjurjo's; and El Arenal became La Victoria (The Victory) bridge. The most important names were reserved for the drawbridges: Begoña was named after General Mola,[310] and Deusto after Generalísimo Franco.

By mid-August, barely two months after the explosions, the city council agreed to organise a public exhibition of the projects for the fixed bridges.[311] There is no evidence of when and where the exhibition was held, nor what the public's response to it was. What seems clear, however, is that the municipality was keen to accelerate the reconstruction process as much as possible by avoiding unnecessary internal negotiations and paperwork. In October, the *Comisión de Fomento*, the municipal Public Works Committee, decided to hand over full responsibility for the reconstruction of the fixed bridges to the *Oficina Municipal Técnica de Puentes Fijos* (OMTPF), the

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[308] Fomento Año 1941/Sección XIV/Legajo 411/Número 6, "Fomento. Subvención Del Estado Por Reconstrucción De Puentes Fijos," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

[309] It is important to note that the reconstruction of the four fixed bridges was funded and coordinated separately from that of the two drawbridges (and the hanging bridge at the end of the Ría) from the start—such division is also implicit in the historical examination of the bridges carried out in the previous sections.

[310] General Mola had been one of the leaders of the coup, more prominent than Franco initially, and was particularly involved in the northern campaign until he died in an air crash shortly before the seizure of Bilbao.

[311] Fomento Año 1937/Sección XIV/Legajo 241/Número 375, "Exposición De Proyectos De Puentes Fijos," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

Fixed Bridges Municipal Technical Office, in order to prevent "the administrative kick-about".[312]

5.1.2 "A severe and acceptable ensemble"

The demolition of the remains still standing and the clearance of the scattered debris ran parallel to the actual reconstruction works. Andrés Yurrita was commissioned to demolish El Arenal bridge in mid-August 1937.[313] By mid-October, shortly after the OMTPF took over full responsibility for the works, San Francisco bridge had been demolished, and demolition of the San Antón, La Merced and El Arenal bridges was almost completed. The metallic parts of the fixed bridges were recycled, and there is evidence of how portions of them were used to manufacture war supplies. Several companies showed an interest in the metal structures as scrap.[314]

Reconstruction works took place almost continuously (workers resting only on Sundays) on those elements that were deemed most urgent, such as the compressed air *caissons*.[315] The sinking of the caissons into the Ría proved exceptionally laborious as broken pieces of ashlar blocks from the destroyed bridges were hit in doing so, and had to be removed before it was possible to continue the sinking. As the demolition works and the gradual reconstruction of the foundations proceeded, the new metallic frames for the spans were assembled at different workshops such as the famous *Altos Hornos de Vizcaya*. The Altos Hornos, like most of the Biscayan industries, had been spared from destruction during the Biscay war campaign. The spans were in most cases close to completion and ready to be brought on site by November 1937.

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[312] "[P]ara evitar el peloteo administrativo". Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 332/Número 9, "Proyectos Completos De Los Cuatro Puentes Fijos," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

[313] Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 354/Número 741, "Desguace Y Enajenación De Chatarra Procedente Del Derruido Puente De Isabel II," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

[314] *Maquinaria y Metalurgia Aragonesa, Sociedad Anónima Echevarría de Siderurgia y Metalurgia, Torre Aspiazu y Compañía,* and *Sociedad Española de Construcción Naval.* Construcción Naval, for example, returned a shipment in November 1937 on the basis that it was of bad quality, but then accepted a 12-ton load of wrought iron in March 1938. That same month, Torre Aspiazu accepted a load of 150 kilos of bronze.

[315] These are the watertight structures that have to be sunk into the water for workers to be able to lay or repair the foundations of a bridge.

The OMTPF handed in bimonthly reports detailing the progress made on each bridge, but it was not until late April 1938 that the director, José Entrecanales Ibarra,[316] delivered the full description and plans for the four bridges to the mayor. By then the works were at a fairly advanced stage.[317] In his report, Entrecanales began by thanking the city council, the Jefatura de Obras Públicas and the Junta de Obras del Puerto for having facilitated things for the Office, trusting its judgement and allowing it to carry on with the projects without requesting any information. Entrecanales then went on to explain the "fundamental ideas" that had inspired the drafting of the projects, ideas which, he added,

> "will soon be forgotten because of the normality the city has fortunately achieved under the new city council of the Nacionales, and to which the reconstruction of the bridges has significantly contributed".[318]

The first idea had been to accomplish the works within the shortest possible timeframe by taking advantage of the existing foundations. This had been feasible in all four cases, with the exception of the General Sanjurjo bridge. Second, the engineers had sought to serve different aesthetic purposes with each of the bridges. The San Antón bridge had been reconstructed in a deliberately non-modern style, thereby respecting the city's coat of arms, which depicts the San Antón church and the bridge. The Colonel Ortiz de Zárate footbridge, former San Francisco, and the General Sanjurjo bridge, former La Merced, had been designed with road planning in mind and with the goal of devising practical solutions to car traffic on the right riverbank. Finally, in the case of La Victoria bridge, the former Arenal bridge, priority had been given to the perspective of the bridge itself from the foreshortening points of view on each riverbank. Furthermore, the choice of "predominantly vertical elements" in the design of the bridge had been carefully explained and justified in an earlier, internal report, which argued that vertical bars would emphasise the contrast with the other bridges.[319] The appearance of the

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[316] José Entrecanales Ibarra, a prestigious Basque civil engineer, and Manuel Távora, from Seville, founded the construction company Entrecanales y Távora in 1931, which gradually grew into one of the largest and most influential Spanish companies at present. It recently changed its name to Acciona.

[317] Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 332/Número 9, "Proyectos Completos De Los Cuatro Puentes Fijos."

[318] "las ideas fundamentales [...] hoy prontas a olvidarse por la normalidad que la Villa afortunadamente ha conseguido bajo el Ayuntamiento Nacional de su Presidencia, y a la que ha contribuido en parte importante la reconstrucción de los puentes". Ibid.

[319] Another reason was that vertical bars were deemed more economical since only two horizontal elements were then necessary to create a parapet. Finally, the vertical bars would harmonise with the stone elements better, the edges of which were also vertical, with no horizontal mouldings.

bridge, its "personality", was in this case more important than its function "as a street over the river".[320] It was after all the bridge that commemorated the Nacionales' victory in Bilbao. Entrecanales also noted that a platform on top of the Portugalete rail station was being constructed, the old one having been demolished. Since the platform would probably come to affect the overall perspective of the Victory bridge, the Office had taken the precaution to design the bridge so that it would meet the future platform at the same level, creating a harmonious view of the embankment.

Fig. 5.16 La Victoria, formerly Arenal bridge, meets the platform over the Portugalete station (undated) (scan of a vintage postcard, adapted from the web).

On the whole, the head of the OMTPF foresaw that the completion of the works in the near future would do full justice to the technical solutions applied by the engineers. Nevertheless, he emphasised that

"the bridges, because of [the size of] their spans and budget—the latter being the result of the former and also of the concept that [had] animated the projects altogether—are very economical, that is, the bridges are, in general, modest works, as they ought to be in the circumstances the country is going through, the

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[320] Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 332/Número 9, "Proyectos Completos De Los Cuatro Puentes Fijos."

aim has been only to achieve, through simplicity and plain lines [...], *a severe and acceptable ensemble*" (italics added).[321]

A booklet for public distribution with the title *Nuevos Puentes de Bilbao* (Bilbao's New Bridges) was subsequently published by the city council, introducing the "new" bridges one by one, more or less replicating Entrecanales' descriptions. The booklet ended with a "message about the new bridges" in which mayor Zuazagoitia took the opportunity to divulge the story of their destruction, passionately elaborating on the *infrahuman* qualities of the demolishers. "Demented allies" in their "grotesque" love for a "non-existent nation" (the Basque nation) and their "hypothetical defence of the privileges of a class" (the working class), managed to "shatter Bilbaoan life":[322]

> "From that date, the torn stumps of broken stone and twisted iron reminded us that the Basque separatist with the fuse lit in his hand and the Red worker with the dynamite prepared in his hand had made their way over the bridges."[323]

5.1.3 Markers of the change of regime

The early attempts at organising an exhibition of the designs for the new bridges and the subsequent publication of the projects seem indicative of the city council's resolve to communicate with Bilbaoans, or at least communicate certain ideas *to* them. It is easy to identify the Nacionales' intention to undermine the Basque-loyalists' reputation by emphasising their allegedly barbarous and destructive nature, while exalting the change, order and efficiency brought about by themselves. One has to bear in mind that the conflict was still going on in other parts of Spain and that each side constantly sought to create as powerful propaganda discourses as possible. However, aside from nurturing the rebels' wartime propaganda discourse, the promise of the coming of a new era, the birth of a New Spain, had actually materialised in this case in the design of the reconstructed fixed bridges, which bore none or little resemblance to the structures of the destroyed ones.

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[321] "[...] los puentes por sus luces y por su presupuesto—hijo de ellas y también del concepto que ha presidido los proyectos—es muy económico, es decir, los puentes son en general obras modestas como corresponde a las circunstancias actuales de la Patria, y se ha tratado únicamente de conseguir, mediante sencillez y líneas simples [...], un conjunto severo y aceptable". Ibid.

[322] *Nuevos Puentes De Bilbao*, (Bilbao: Ayuntamiento de Bilbao, 1938).

[323] Ibid.

The new concrete bridges, with their simple and straight lines, had indeed little in common with their predecessors and their typically nineteenth- and early twentieth-century display of sinuous curves and abundant decoration. The scarcity of materials and the harsh and austere atmosphere of wartime Spain seemed to justify the rationalist if not minimalist aesthetic preference of Entrecanales, Bastida and the other engineers and architects involved in the projects for the fixed bridges. Even though manifestations of the emergent regime's symbolic equipment such as the imperial eagle, "the yoke and the arrows" (the Falangist symbol), and traditional Catholic motifs were subsequently added in the form of sculptures and wrought iron; the fundamentally rationalist scheme of the bridges, their clearly modern and functional character, was not altered. Thus, while condemning Basque workers and Basque Nationalists for their destructiveness, Zuizagoitia and other public voices on the rebel side must have implicitly acknowledged to themselves the opportunity that they had been left with in Bilbao to mark physically the birth of a New Spain.

Fig. 5.17 Photograph of stone ornamentation with "the yoke and the arrows" taken in contemporary Valencia (adapted from the web).

The transition to a new order was further signalled by celebrating the official inauguration of the fixed bridges on the 19th of June 1938, the first anniversary of the rebels' entry in Bilbao. None of the four bridges was fully completed on that date, but one of the purposes of this early inauguration was to indicate to Bilbaoans the efficiency of the new city council, and by extension, the Francoist government, as well

as feeding the idea that the Nacionales had restored order and stability to Bilbao. Even though the bridges were opened to the public only provisionally and with several elements missing, the OMTPF had indeed proved fairly efficient in reconstructing their basic structures, all within the year of their destruction and while the war was still going on. The symbolic relevance of the new structures should probably not be underestimated, either. Bilbaoans who crossed the bridges daily were inevitably reminded of the war and the political change that had taken place in their city.[324]

In late January 1939, six months after the June inauguration, there were a number of pending works on the bridges. Some structural details had to be dealt with, but most unresolved issues had to do with ornamentation, such as decorating the buttresses of the San Antón bridge with the Falangist "yoke and arrows" emblem and adding sculptures of the wolves, Santiago and San Antón, finishing the handrail on the Colonel Ortiz de Zárate footbridge, and painting the four bridges.

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[324] It is sometimes argued that the everyday built environment constitutes a powerful medium through which populations internalise social and political codes. The codes are not necessarily inscribed in the built structures *per se*, although one could say, for example, that monumental structures tend to produce feelings of distance and gravity. However, it is suggested that only when buildings and streets are able to evoke the history and sometimes explicit purpose of their construction (or destruction) in the viewer's or user's mind are they effectively transmitting or reinforcing particular codes.

Fig. 5.18 *San Antón (2006)* (photographed by the author).

Fig. 5.19 *La Merced/General Sanjurjo (2006)* (photographed by the author).

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Fig. 5.20 San Francisco/Coronel Ortiz de Zárate (2006) (photographed by the author).

Fig. 5.21 Isabel II/El Arenal/La Victoria (2006) (photographed by the author).

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5.1.4 Funding the reconstruction process

While the OMTPF was busy resolving the final details of the reconstruction of the fixed bridges, the city council tried to work out the finances. As noted earlier, the reconstruction works were initially funded through the 1937 extraordinary municipal budget. But soon the city council became aware of the Burgos government's reconstruction policies in other Spanish cities, and realised it could be entitled to state funding. In March 1939, close to the end of the war, the council discussed the possibility of applying for funding from the Junta de Obras del Puerto, the Biscay provincial deputyship and Franco's administration. Eventually it addressed an official request to the Ministry of Public Works, explaining the exceptional challenges it had faced because of the destruction of the bridges and cited several of the Burgos government's regulations on reconstruction and financial aid for reconstruction.

The war was officially ended on the 1st of April 1939, after which the Burgos administration fully took over Spain's government apparatus. More laws and decrees on reconstruction were issued in the following months, among them the Decree of 23rd September 1939, which governed the Head of State's "adoption" of towns and villages that had been particularly damaged by the war. The mayor of Bilbao addressed a letter to the Minister of Governance (who was ultimately responsible for national reconstruction efforts) "pleading" that article 10 in the Decree of 23 September be applied to Bilbao. As noted in the previous chapter, Barcelona's city council supported its claim for financial aid from the state on the same article. Article 10 opened up the possibility for city councils across Spain to seek partial financial assistance for reconstruction from the state even if they did not qualify as "adoptable" localities. The article essentially stated that, without attaining the full condition of adoption, the municipalities that had suffered significant losses of their public infrastructures could receive state subsidies if the Council of Ministers decided accordingly.[325] No specific conditions were fixed as to what the level of losses ought to be in order for the Council of Ministers to consider them. It appears as if the only way for city councils to be

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[325] Ministerio de Gobernación, "Decreto De 27 De Abril De 1940 Por El Que Se Concede Al Ayuntamiento De Bilbao La Subvención Del 50 Por Ciento De Los Gastos De Reconstrucción De Los Puentes Que Se Indican," (BOE, 1940).

granted funds was to present their case as convincingly as possible—and possibly to have privileged political connections.

Like Barcelona city council, Bilbao city council was also successful in its pleading. On the 27th of April 1940, it was granted a subsidy covering 50 per cent of the cost of reconstructing the bridges, the Ordunte dam, and the public water supply system. The subsidies would be paid by the Instituto de Crédito contingent on a report from the Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas and the approval of the Ministry of Governance.[326] Bilbao was granted a total of 2,305,004.35 pesetas. Interestingly, this amount seems to be less than 50 per cent of the total sum appearing on the municipal settlement documents, which suggests that the state did not fully cover the share it had promised in the end. According to the Jefe de la Casa Civil de SE (Head of the Civil House of His Excellency), however, the news of the grant was received with great enthusiasm by Bilbaoans. In a note dated 29th of May 1940, he thanks the mayor and the city council on Franco's behalf for the "demonstrations of fervent support" recently shown by Bilbao's population, and stresses that the reconstruction subsidy "is the best proof of the interest with which His Excellency follows the problems of that City [sic]".[327] The actual extent to which people had gone out onto the streets to celebrate Franco's generosity remains unclear today, but there is little doubt that the news of the grant must have filled the members of the city council with enormous relief.

Despite the material difficulties involved, the reconstruction of the four fixed bridges was a relatively smooth and successful process. The reconstruction of the two drawbridges, on the other hand, turned out to be more challenging. Unlike the fixed bridges, the drawbridges were not finished structures when they were blown up. Administrative and financial agreements with private contractors and other public entities were in place, and, unlike some of the contractors who wished to renegotiate the terms from scratch, the new municipal administration proved unwilling to ignore the existing agreements.

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[326] Ibid.

[327] Fomento Año 1941/Sección XIV/Legajo 411/Número 6, "Fomento. Subvención Del Estado Por Reconstrucción De Puentes Fijos."

5.2 The reconstruction of the drawbridges: rebuilding the unfinished

5.2.1 Unclear contractual responsibilities

The position of Basconia and partners on the attack on the Deusto bridge becomes clear from a letter that their representative Jesús Chirapozu y Céniga addressed to the city council on the 24th of July 1937. After evaluating the damage to the bridge, which he still refers to as the Deusto bridge (and not as the Generalísimo's), Chirapozu states that

> "[since] *significant damage has occurred beyond the contractor's control*, the situation of the works wholly differs from when the works were delivered to the city council and put to public use. *Notwithstanding this alteration*, Basconia and partners, without aiming to determine their [legal] situation vis-à-vis the City Council because of the use previously made of the bridge, take great pleasure in putting themselves at the [City Council's] service to *restore, in the shortest time possible, the enormous disaster* caused by the Red-Marxist barbarism, which has been so disruptive to Bilbao's normal life, and which we all should contribute to overcoming within our capacity" (italics added).[328]

The Public Works Committee's reaction to the contractor's letter suggests it had a very different assessment of the situation. The Committee rejects the contractor's "insinuations concerning any alteration of its contractual situation" and implies that "neither this attack nor any of the previous circumstances entail a decrease of the Contractor's obligations, which continue to be in force". Chirapozu's sympathetic words condemning the attack by the Red-Marxists, and his generous offer in the name of Basconia and partners to undertake the reconstruction works, are derisively interpreted by the Public Works Committee, whose members "merely appreciate [such good disposition] as a guarantee of the urgency with which the Contractor will perform the task that is part of his contractual obligations".[329]

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[328] "Que al producirse ajenamente a esta contrata, daños y perjuicios de gran importancia varía por completo la situación en la obra de cómo estaba cuando fue previamente tomada de la misma contrata por la Corporación Municipal y dedicada por esta a uso público. Pero que no obstante esta variación la Cia. Anma. 'Basconia' y consortes, sin entrar a determinar la situación en que se hallan frente a ese Excmo. Ayuntamiento por esa utilización anterior del puente, se complace en ponerse a su disposición para reparar con la brevedad posible el enorme desastre causado por la barbarie roja-separatista, tan perjudicial a la normalización de la vida en Bilbao y que todos debemos contribuir en la medida de nuestras capacidades a remediarlo." Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 765/Número 1292, "Proyecto De Construcción Del Puente De Deusto."

[329] "Entiende esta Comisión que no pueden ser aceptadas de manera alguna las insinuaciones que hace el Contratista sobre la modificación de su situación contractual, como consecuencia del mencionado atentado y otros antecedentes de su relación con el Excmo. Ayuntamiento, manteniendo, por el contrario,

In sum, Basconia and partners were not expected to sign a new contract for the reconstruction works, but to take on the works as part of their original contract. Nonetheless, the city council recognised that the armed attack on the bridge was beyond the contractor's control, which essentially meant that the damage to the bridge was indemnifiable.[330] Consequently, while the carrying out of the reconstruction work was mandatory for the contractor as part of his contractual obligations, the contracted companies would in due course receive compensation. The original budget for the Deusto bridge was increased by 17 per cent to cover the scrapping and clearance of debris and the actual reconstruction works. The rental of any *ad hoc* equipment was to be paid for separately. It was also determined that the contractor would continue to be paid every month until the works on the bridge were finally completed. Finally, the city council "strongly encouraged the Contractor to deploy maximum diligence in the reconstruction works", adding that such diligence would be taken into account, "as well as other aspects of the Contractor's behaviour", with a view to speeding up the payment of earlier, unpaid instalments.[331]

Eventually and in spite of their initial position, Basconia and partners accepted the conditions imposed by the city council without major resistance, possibly because the city council had made clear that the payments for works carried out prior to the destruction of the bridge were conditional on the companies' progress in reconstructing the bridge. Through this financial arrangement, Basconia and partners were to some extent in the hands of the city council. Along with the invoices for the present salvaging works, it went on submitting invoices for units of work carried out prior to the destruction of the bridge.[332]

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con toda convicción, la tesis de que ni este atentado, ni ninguno de los antecedentes conocidos, significa disminución de las obligaciones del Contratista, que continúan todas ellas vigentes. La buena disposición en la que el Contratista manifiesta encontrarse para llevar a efecto el trabajo de reconstrucción, debe ser solamente apreciada como garantía de la diligencia que ha de emplear en la realización de un trabajo que forma parte de sus obligaciones contractuales." Ibid.

[330] *Reglamento de 17 de julio de 1868* (Regulation passed on 17 July 1868).

[331] Fomento Año 1948/Sección XIV/Legajo 765/Número 1292, "Proyecto De Construcción Del Puente De Deusto."

[332] Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 493/Número 679, "Relaciones Valoradas De Las Obras De Construcción Del Puente De Deusto." Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 467/Número 4, "Certificaciones Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco Posteriores a La Liberación De La Villa," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

However, it was only several months later, on the 5th of October 1938, that the city council approved the payment for any reconstruction works on the Generalísimo Franco bridge.[333] This was only three weeks before the bridge was officially (re)inaugurated on the 25th of October 1938.[334] Once again, the bridge was opened despite not being fully finished. At this point, aside from the unpaid pre-19th June construction works and the post-19th June reconstruction works, there were post-19th June *construction* works awaiting payment. These corresponded to works on parts of the bridge that had not been finished by the time it was destroyed, and were managed separately from the other two categories of works.[335]

The accumulation of instalments relating to these three different categories of works might explain why it was not until the summer of 1943 that the Deusto bridge was completely finished and every payment settled. On the 19th of July 1943, the city council finally approved the return of the deposit that Basconia and partners originally paid when they took on the works for the drawbridge in 1932,[336] thereby terminating the contract and releasing the contractor from any further responsibilities. All in all, it had cost more than 9 million pesetas and thirteen years to complete the construction of the Deusto drawbridge.[337]

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[333] Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 467/Número 4, "Certificaciones Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco Posteriores a La Liberación De La Villa."

[334] Deliberately or not, the opening coincided with the second anniversary of the signature of the friendship treaty between Italy and Germany, which gave rise to the Rome–Berlin axis.

[335] Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 467/Número 4, "Certificaciones Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco Posteriores a La Liberación De La Villa."

[336] Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 493/Número 679, "Relaciones Valoradas De Las Obras De Construcción Del Puente De Deusto."

[337] See Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 469/Número 32, "Tomo Correspondiente a La Liquidación Final De Las Obras Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco, Suscrito Por La Dirección De La Oficina Técnica De Puentes Móviles, Bilbao, 28 De Abril De 1943.," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).
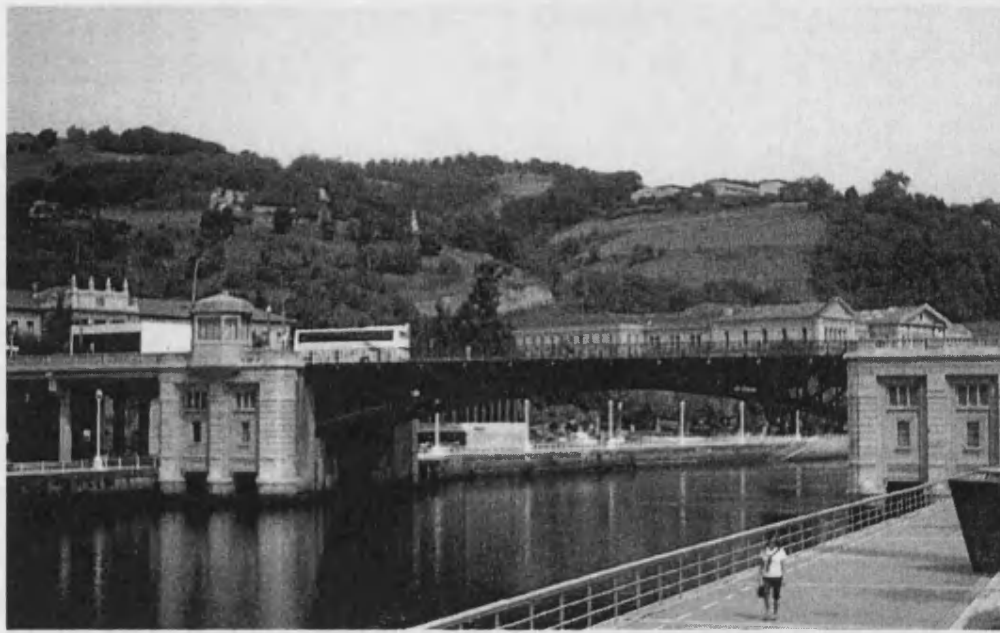
Fig. 5.22 The Deusto/Generalísimo Franco's bridge (2006) (photographed by the author).

5.2.2 Lengthy indemnification proceedings

The city council exercised the same logic in its relationship with Babcock & Wilcox, the contractor for the moving parts on the General Mola bridge, former Begoña bridge. As with Basconia and partners, the city council established that the payment for previous construction works was conditional on the company's progress in reconstructing the bridge. This placed Babcock & Wilcox in a difficult situation. The company's workshops had been militarised and most of their capacity was devoted to the production of war supplies. Hence, the company was not able to commence reconstruction of the bridge span, which meant that it could not be paid for the removal of debris that it carried out immediately after the explosions, given that payments were conditional on the progress made on reconstructing the bridge. The company claimed that the municipal administration had earlier determined that debris removal would be considered as separate from both construction and reconstruction works, and therefore not subject to the above condition, but the city council turned a deaf ear.[338] The payments were further complicated by the drawn out indemnification proceedings, since the city council also argued it could not pay Babcock & Wilcox until the company's indemnification file had been processed.

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[338] Fomento Año 1943/Sección XIV/Legajo 467/Número 3, "Relaciones Del Desguace Y Reconstrucción Del Puente Del General Mola. Margen Izquierda.," (Archivo Municipal de Bilbao).

After some time, however, the city council, advised by the Public Works Committee, changed its mind displaying some readiness to pay, and arguing contrarily that a significant share of the construction works carried out by Babcock & Wilcox prior to the dynamiting of the bridge remained unpaid, and also that "the delay of the indemnification proceedings could not be blamed on the Contractor, but was instead related to the administrative difficulty caused by the destruction".[339] At the same time, the city council made clear that this in no way implied that it acknowledged the existence of a new contract (a reconstruction contract) or that it committed itself to any further payments. This particular payment was simply an advance on account of the unpaid sums that corresponded to the company's earlier works on the bridge.[340]

In spite of the city council's remarks, the above procedure—justifying current payments on account of past works—was repeatedly used with Babcock & Wilcox, even though officially no works related to the reconstruction of the General Mola bridge could be reimbursed until the indemnification proceedings had been resolved.

This irregular situation lasted for as long as the indemnification process. In September 1940, two and a half years after the first payment in spring 1938, the city council approved another substantial payment of 233,565.58 pesetas, this time for actual reconstruction works, despite Babcock & Wilcox's indemnification file still being under review. Interestingly, in the municipal report approving the payment it is also implied that the city council had previously lent money to Babcock & Wilcox (a total of 920,000 pesetas). This suggests the existence of yet another legal and financial subterfuge through which the city council advanced money to Babcock & Wilcox while the indemnification process continued.

Another two years went by without the financial relationship between the city council and Babcock & Wilcox being officially resolved. On the 28th of May 1942, the general manager of the company personally wrote to the mayor requesting the settlement of the payments for the construction and reconstruction of the General Mola bridge. To date, the company had only been paid the 233,565.58 pesetas for reconstruction works, which was the amount it received in September 1940. Approximately another 800,000

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[339] See Ibid.
[340] See Ibid.

pesetas were pending. In a strikingly friendly tone, Babcock & Wilcox's general manager asks the mayor that at least the 600,000 that the company had requested in mid-July 1941—which the mayor had promised to reimburse in late February 1942—be paid.[341] By now, the indemnification proceedings were resolved and there was no administrative obstacle to making the payments. Nevertheless, Babcock & Wilcox's repeated requests and the mayor's unfulfilled promise suggest that the city council was still not in a position to pay.

5.2.3 The financial difficulties faced by the city council

The city council's approach to the contractors of the drawbridges may appear harsh and at times also unreasonable, even though based on existing administrative regulations. But the city council faced its own difficulties in trying to keep the municipal finances up to date. A report by the Municipal Treasury Committee dated 23rd September 1941 reveals a gloomy picture. The 1927 municipal budget allocations for the construction of the Deusto and Begoña bridges were almost exhausted, and the same was true for the 1939 municipal extraordinary budget allocations for their reconstruction. With the total of 248,402.22 pesetas remaining in the municipal coffers for the drawbridges it was utterly impossible for the city council to settle the pending payments. As noted earlier, the city council's share of the budget for the construction of the drawbridges was 50 per cent and only 25 per cent when it came to the reconstruction budget. The rest was to come from other public administration entities. Yet few of the funds promised by the Biscay provincial deputyship, the central administration and the port authority for the construction of the bridges had been paid in when their destruction took place in 1937. And by 1941, when the report was written, the reconstruction funds from the central administration had still not arrived.

What is most striking about the whole situation is that, despite being underfunded, but probably in view of the pressing need to finish the bridges, the city council carried on with the works although it was largely unable to pay the contractors. The usual response to a shortage of funds would have been to enhance the allocations with supplementary credits. But the Municipal Treasury Committee strongly discouraged the city council from doing so, urging it instead to collect the promised funds, using the fact that the

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[341] Ibid.

works were completed as an incentive for the central administration and the other public entities involved to pay their share once and for all.[342] Taking into account the fact that the city council had to cope with reluctant payers, it is perhaps more understandable that it used all the available legal means to defer paying the contractors. Ultimately, the city council played the thankless, combined role of coordinator, intermediary and attendant, caught between the urge to reopen the bridges, the contractors' legitimate payment requests and the co-sponsors' neglect of previously accepted financial responsibilities.

It could be argued that the situation described above is typical of what occurs when local governments engage in public works that exceed their funding capacity and force them to depend on other public entities for funding. The additional challenge in this case was the pressure of time. Such an essential set of infrastructures for Bilbao as the bridges had to be reconstructed quickly. To delay the completion of the works, which is perhaps the usual outcome in similar circumstances, was seemingly not an option either for the city council or the contractors. Nobody seemed to question that it was the city council's responsibility to make sure that the destroyed bridges were replaced. But it could also be argued that the replacement of the bridges was in the interest of the contractors. Restoring normality to Bilbao was a means to ensure that the city's commercial and economic activities resumed their dynamism, ultimately benefiting the private sector. Finally, in the contractors' view, the change of municipal governments probably called for a patient and flexible attitude, as a way of gaining the favour of the new leadership and getting more contracts in the future or making other advantageous arrangements.

The practical or administrative continuities in the management of the construction and reconstruction of the two drawbridges explained above once more contrasts with the ideological discontinuities that resulted from the new municipal authorities' emphasis on breaking with Bilbao's immediate Basque-Republican past. The inauguration of the Generalísimo Franco's bridge in October 1939 aptly illustrates how the reconstruction of the drawbridges provided an ideological moment for the manipulation of the recent past, which celebrated the advent of a new era of order and prosperity.

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[342] Ibid.

Fig. 5.23 The Ayuntamiento/Begoña/General Mola's bridge (2006) (photographed by the author).

5.3 The inauguration of the Generalísimo Franco's drawbridge

5.3.1 Programme of events

The inauguration of the Generalísimo's bridge took place on the 25th of October 1939. The programme for the day involved a series of carefully planned events, aside from the inauguration of the bridge, to make the most out of the visit of the Minister of Public Works, Alfonso Peña Boeuf, to Bilbao. After his arrival at 9:30 a.m., the Minister would first visit the Portugalete rail station and adjacent new streets and preside over the inauguration of *Capitán Haya* street. Before lunch, timetabled for 2 p.m. at the *Club Marítimo del Abra* (the Abra Sea Club), the Minister was to travel along the Ría to visit the Free Port, and attend the opening of the drawbridge. After lunch, he was to attend the inauguration of the monument to Churruca,[343] following which he would be shown the aerodrome and its accesses. An afternoon buffet was organised from 6 p.m. in the town hall's *Araba* room, presumably to offer the guests the opportunity to mingle more

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[343] In the late nineteenth century, engineer Evaristo Churruca designed the port of Bilbao and the channelling of the Ría.

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freely. At 8:30 p.m., the Minister would have dinner together with his professional colleagues, the civil engineers, at the *Bilbaína* restaurant.

Of all these visits and inaugurations, the one that received most attention from the public and the media was the opening of the Generalísimo Franco's bridge. On the 24th of October, the newspaper *La Gaceta del Norte*, distributed in northern Spain, and *Hierro*, a nationwide evening paper, included notes on the next day's opening events on their front pages. On the 25th, the day of the openings, *El Correo Español*, published nationwide, referred to the opening of the bridge, the monument to Churruca and the opening of Capitán Haya street on its second page, within the events section. *Hierro*, on the other hand, featured a large picture of the Minister cutting the opening ribbon of the bridge on its first page. On the 26th, most papers dedicated part of their headlines to the "solemn" inauguration that had taken place on the previous day. *La Gaceta del Norte* devoted its first page to the ceremony with photographs of the relevant attendees. *El Correo Español* included a large picture of the open drawbridge. The text emphasised the role of Bilbaoan crowds in making the day all the more festive. *Hierro*, in turn, featured several pictures, including one of the Deusto bridge destroyed.[344] It might be worth noting that the directors of these newspapers were all invited to attend the splendid lunch that had been organised to celebrate the inaugurations at the Club Marítimo del Abra.

5.3.2 Mayor Zuazagoitia's speech

At about 12.30 p.m. the Minister and his retinue gathered in front of the Generalísimo Franco's drawbridge and a sequence of official speeches followed. A copy of what appears to be the original draft of the mayor's speech is available in the municipal archive.[345] In his introductory words the mayor referred to the opening event as a *re-inauguration*, recalling that among the attendees there were those who had crossed the bridge on their way to prison after the bridge was first inaugurated on the 1st of December 1936. As supporters of the rebels, some of the present attendees had been

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[344] See Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 277/Número 109, "Inauguración Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco Y Demás Actos Que Se Celebrarán El 25 De Octubre De 1939. Año De La Victoria Y Monumento a Churruca.."

[345] The idea that it might be the original draft, and not the speech that was actually delivered, is based on the fact that it seems too long to have been read in full within the half an hour that was programmed for the inauguration ceremony, considering also that the Minister, and perhaps other leading figures, also spoke.

arrested by the Basque-Republican authorities in the months following the military coup. Through this second inauguration, the mayor suggested, their honour was being restored:

> "Therefore, the Generalísimo Franco's bridge represents under his name, like a banner, the effort of those illustrious Bilbaoans who were singled out by the enemies of God and Spain as their most outstanding champions because they maintained a conscience, an orientation, and an ideal, all based on the authentic principles of our Fatherland. Allow me to direct our thoughts towards them in the belief that the recollection of the combatants of yesteryear, of the war, and those who remain in the thick of things is the best way of symbolising the name of our *Caudillo*, Generalísimo Franco."[346]

Zuazagoitia then went on to examine the chronology and vicissitudes of the construction and reconstruction of the bridge, emphasising that it was

> "[p]lanned by [mayor] Moyúa's city council under Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship; projected during the last monarchic city council, under the presidency of Adolfo Careaga; it is a fully accomplished reality today".[347]

The mayor omitted the entire Republican period, between 1931 and 1936, when most of the progress on the construction of the drawbridges was made. By linking the last monarchic city council with the current one, the impression created is that the years in between were almost non-existent or that they lacked historical identity. Zuazagoitia's reference to the first opening of the bridge implicitly acknowledged that the bridge was finished under Republican rule, but it seems clear that his aim was not to recognise the efforts of the Basque-Republican city council, but instead to stress the political repression suffered by the rebels in the loyalist zones after the 18th of July military coup.

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[346] "Por ello, esté Puente del Generalísimo Franco, representa bajo su nombre <u>como guión</u>, el esfuerzo de aquellos ilustres bilbaínos que por mantener una conciencia, una orientación y un ideal basado en los principios auténticos de nuestra Patria, fueron señalados por los enemigos de Dios y de España como sus más destacados paladines. Permitidme que a ellos dirija mi recuerdo en estos momentos, por creer que así, pensando en los combatientes de antaño, en los de la guerra y en los que en la actualidad siguen en la brecha, es como mejor se simboliza el nombre de nuestro Caudillo el Generalísimo Franco." Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 277/Número 109, "Inauguración Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco Y Demás Actos Que Se Celebrarán El 25 De Octubre De 1939. Año De La Victoria Y Monumento a Churruca.."

[347] "Planeada por el Ayuntamiento de Moyúa durante la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera, proyectada en el último monárquico, presidido por Adolfo Careaga, llega a ser una realidad completamente terminada en el día de hoy[...]." Ibid.

Zuazagoitia's chronological review gained momentum as he described the blowing up of the bridges in June 1937:

> "Here we arrive at the 19th of June 1937, when the works were almost finished and the events you are all familiar with took place. The enemies, who were practically defeated, concentrated their hate and destruction on these [two] constructions, *which were the fruit of years of effort and administration*; and our dear Bilbao, which they say they loved so much, was subject to horrible explosions that rent asunder the two riverbanks" (italics added).[348]

Here, Zuazagoitia was both acknowledging the efforts of the Republican municipal administration in the construction of the bridges ("the fruit of years of effort and administration"), while denouncing the barbarism of the "enemies", who were also Republicans.

Nevertheless, Zuazagoitia seems to have had some interest in emphasising the continuities in the construction of the bridge. This may have been because two of the leading figures behind the project since its inception, architect Bastida and engineer Ortiz de Artiñano, who continued to lead the construction and reconstruction works after the explosions, were present at the opening:

> "*I will not remain silent* about the commendable work of the project-designers of the bridge, one of them Architect Bastida, and the other Engineer Ortiz de Artiñano, currently the director of the reconstruction works" (italics added).[349]

At the same time, Zuazagoitia remained silent about the role of engineer Rotaeche, whom the new city council purged because of his Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) membership. Paradoxically, by emphasising that he was not remaining silent, the mayor's formulation became an implicit confession of his exercise of omissions.

Zuazagoitia also took the opportunity to expand on his particular idea of the role of Bilbao for the New Spain by explaining the aim of the construction of the drawbridge. Although the goal of the original project had been to materialise the connection between Abando and the recently annexed Deusto, Zuizagoita wanted to underscore

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[348] "Y así llegamos al 19 de junio del 37, en que estando las obras casi concluidas, acaecen los sucesos que todos conocéis. Los enemigos, en franca derrota, centran su destrucción y odio en las construcciones fruto del esfuerzo y administración de años; y nuestro Bilbao, a quien tanto dicen querer, se encuentra sometido a horribles explosiones que tras de sí aíslan las dos márgenes de la ría." Ibid.

[349] "No he de silenciar la meritoria labor de sus proyectistas, uno el Arquitecto Sr. Bastida, y el otro el Ingeniero Sr. Ortiz de Artiñano, hoy director de su reconstrucción[...]." Ibid.

that the long-term ambition was to develop the estuary and the port as part of a wider national economic vision:

> "The municipality of Bilbao could not carry out a project thinking only about the present moment. Our people's character has always been entrepreneurial; with this in mind [the municipality] thought of expanding the port and establishing a port station along the riverbanks, connecting [Bilbao] directly with the interior to facilitate the exportation of the products that come from our *Mother Castile*" (italics added).[350]

A more refined version of Zuazagoitia's theory of the relationship between Bilbao and "Mother Castile" can be found in a conference paper he delivered in March 1946 in Madrid with the title *Problemas urbanísticos de Bilbao y su zona de influencia* (Urban problems of Bilbao and environs). There, Zuazagoitia emphasised how Bilbaoans' industrious and dynamic qualities stem from their Castilian ancestors, the merchants from Burgos, who arrived in the area in the early Middle Ages. Thus Bilbao soon became the port of Castile, its only access to the sea. Aside from the indigenous production of iron, Zuazagoitia maintained that it was the trade with Castilian wool that made the town rich. Moreover, in its permanent strife against the independent *anteiglesias* (Abando, Deusto, etc.), "the illustrious town of Bilbao" had always received the support of the Castilian authorities.[351] According to the mayor, the links with Castile were hence enmeshed in the very foundations of Bilbao.

The defence of Castile as Bilbaoans' original motherland was a relatively bold strategy for the new Basque leadership to "cleanse" the image of the city from the Nationalist taint left by the Basque-Republican city council, ensuring that the purity of its "Spanishness" was restored along with the bridges.

5.3.3 Post scriptum: lunch at the Club Marítimo del Abra

A total of 53 guests attended the lunch at the Club Marítimo del Abra, including leading civilian and military authorities, representatives of various chambers and trade unions, newspaper directors, members of the city council, and the president of the Abra Sea

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[350] "No podía el Municipio bilbaíno realizar una obra pensando exclusivamente en el momento. Las características de nuestro pueblo siempre fueron emprendedoras; pensó en ellas y miró la posibilidad de engrandecimiento del Puerto y del establecimiento en las márgenes de su ría de una Estación portuaria que le ligue directamente con el interior para exportar los productos que vengan de nuestra Castilla Madre." Ibid.

[351] Joaquín de Zuazagoitia, "Problemas Urbanísticos De Bilbao Y Su Zona De Influencia" (1946).

Club. Interestingly, neither the directors of the construction companies, nor any other representatives from the corporate world were invited, except for José Luis Aznar, leading representative of the Aznar family's shipping company.[352] Judging from the bill, no expenses were spared to provide the guests with generously served food, drinks and cigars. Sherries of various brands, ginger vermouths, Martinis, red wine, brandies, anisettes, coffee liquor and other spirits were repeatedly ordered throughout the meal. The total cost of the lunch, 3,394.60 pesetas, was split between the city council and the port authority.[353] It is not difficult to picture this animated, very masculine crowd, smoking, laughing and toasting over their dishes. Sixteen months after the end of the war, and in spite of the permanent food shortages among the population and the difficulties in paying the contractors, it must have seemed justified from the point of view of the new authorities to organise a feast that met the expectations of the victorious and joyful builders of the New Spain.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the new local authorities that the rebel military appointed in Bilbao in June 1937 were able symbolically and physically to mark the change of regime that resulted from the Civil War through the reconstruction of the destroyed fixed bridges and drawbridges while, in practice, significant administrative continuities underpinned the reconstruction process itself. As has also been explained, historically, floods, wars and urban planning have had significantly destructive consequences for the bridges of Bilbao. However, despite a long history of making and remaking, the destructive impact of the dynamiting of the bridges in 1937 was without precedent, and so was the ideological appropriation of the events by the new authorities.

Traditionally seen as infrastructures aimed at securing communication between the two riverbanks, from the late nineteenth century the bridges were increasingly seen as part of circulation axes across the older and newer parts of the city. The planning and construction of the drawbridges Begoña and Deusto beginning in the 1930s were part of the early twentieth-century liberal and Republican city councils' project for a modern,

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[352] The *Naviera Aznar* became part of one of the most important corporate holdings during Franco's dictatorship as it merged with *Banco Urquijo*, one of the leading banks at the time.
[353] For all these details, see Fomento Año 1940/Sección XIV/Legajo 277/Número 109, "Inauguración Del Puente Del Generalísimo Franco Y Demás Actos Que Se Celebrarán El 25 De Octubre De 1939. Año De La Victoria Y Monumento a Churruca.."

coherently designed, industrial Bilbao. The relevance of these two pieces of infrastructure became even more evident after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936 when port activity and car traffic increased in the city, calling for a premature opening of the drawbridges. The tension between the military logic of exception and the civilian logic of normality was specifically illustrated by the Basque-Republican military's demand to use the substructure of the Deusto bridge to hide war supplies and set up military workshops, and the city council's reluctance to put such costly public work at risk by turning it into a target of rebel air attacks.

The Basque-Republicans' dynamiting of all the bridges at once on the eve of the 19th of June 1937 created an unprecedented opportunity for the Nacionales to mark symbolically the Ría and Bilbao as a whole. The magnitude of the desire to mark the break with the previous regime was possibly also unprecedented. The Nacionales' idea of a New Spain, in their view an alternative to the Republicans' anti-Spain, was a modern ideological project, even though inspired by old, if not archaic values sometimes. Initially at least, while under the Falangist banner, it was introduced as a transformative, totalitarian project, which sought to launch Spain on a new, historic path—it was, from this perspective, the inauguration of a new era.[354] It is argued that symbolic and physical markers of the new era were eagerly looked for. In this sense, the destruction of the bridges constituted a powerful event that could be conveniently portrayed as the founding moment of the new Bilbao. By this logic, the old bridges had perished, victims of the violence of the *barbarous Reds* or the *enemies* of the *true* Spain. Yet out of their ashes emerged the new bridges, purportedly embodying the ideals of the New Spain: sobriety, humility, worthiness, pride...

The simple and straightforward design of the new four fixed bridges, and the construction material deployed, essentially reinforced concrete, adequately embodied these ideals, while reflecting the circumstances in which the bridges were reconstructed, in the middle of the war, as well as the engineers' own aesthetic preferences. The four fixed bridges were all inaugurated on the 19th of June 1938 the first anniversary of the rebels' entry in Bilbao—further marking, at a symbolic level, that a new Bilbao emerged on the date the rebels took over the city.

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[354] See José Luis de Arrese, *La Revolución Social Del Nacional-Sindicalismo* (Madrid: Ediciones del Movimiento, 1959) 13.

On the other hand, the practical dimension of the reconstruction of the two drawbridges challenges the idea that there was a break with the recent past. As has been shown, the continuous presence of certain companies, municipal employees and technicians, and a series of administrative and corporate agreements in the construction and administration of the two drawbridges before and after the rebels' seizure of Bilbao, brings to light a different story. The intricate legal arguments and administrative procedures underlying the reconstruction of the drawbridges were essentially the result of the new city council's refusal to view their destruction as a *tabula rasa*, which would have forced it to start the works from scratch. Instead, no new contractors were looked for, and Basconia and Babcock & Wilcox continued working on the construction and reconstruction of the drawbridges; no new reconstruction contracts were signed with the contractors; two of the three professionals originally hired to direct the works, Ricardo Bastida and José Ortiz de Artiñano, continued in their posts; the pre-war financial agreements with other public entities, such as the port authority and the Biscay provincial deputyship, remained in force; and the reconstruction works were basically resumed as if part of the original construction projects.

There is perhaps nothing surprising about such practical or administrative continuities. Could the new city council—and Franco's government by extension—ultimately afford to discard the knowledge and expertise of the staff involved in the construction of the drawbridges? Bureaucrats and businessmen who were more directly identified with the Second Republic and Basque nationalism, like engineer Rotaetxe, were purged. Yet, fortunately for the new city council, there were a number of individuals who, in spite of having worked for the Republican authorities, sympathised with the rebels' cause or, more often perhaps, did not have any explicit ideological affinities. These individuals could be kept in their posts without jeopardising either the image or values of the nascent regime. The attitude of Basconia and partners, on the other hand, who immediately and explicitly aligned themselves with the new leadership, is perhaps symptomatic of the ambiguous political position of the Basque industrialists during and after the war. But then again, neither the new regime nor the corporate world could afford to ignore each other without putting at risk their own survival in these politically constitutive stages. It is likely that those company members who disagreed with the new

political situation were simply silenced or removed to ensure the survival of the companies as wholes.

Aside from emphasising these practical continuities, it has been described how the exceptional challenges that the Nacionales' city council met as it tried to collect the necessary funding to cover the cost of rebuilding the bridges were fundamental to the process of reconstruction. Apart from the regular and extraordinary municipal budgets and the funds promised by the port authority and the Biscay provincial council for the construction of the drawbridges before the war, the city council tried to claim funding from the central administration retrospectively, on the basis of the new national laws regulating reconstruction after 1939. Even though Bilbao was granted a state subsidy to cover 50 per cent of the costs incurred, it took several years before the money came through. Meanwhile, the city council found all manner of legal means to delay the payment of the contractors, who nevertheless carried on with the works, arguably because they also had an interest in replacing the destroyed bridges and restoring normality to Bilbao.

The way in which Bilbao's city council was essentially left to its own devices for the immediate reconstruction of the bridges and only retrospectively granted partial state funding illustrates how reconstruction took place after the war in other Spanish towns and cities such as Barcelona (see previous chapter). This was partly the outcome of the anti-urban approach of the new regime, partly the result of a convenient institutional arrangement, which discharged the central government from the responsibility of directly and integrally reconstructing the country; only Madrid would be treated differently—at least on paper—as will be discussed in the following chapter.

The inauguration of the Generalísimo Franco's drawbridge on the 25th of October 1939 shows how the reconstruction of the drawbridges, like that of the fixed bridges, was used to underscore symbolically the break with the recent past. As described above, the new leadership overtly condemned the destructiveness of the Republicans, while conveniently manipulating the past, and celebrating its own constructiveness in the discourses that accompanied the opening ceremony. One interesting aspect of mayor Zuazagoitia's speech on the occasion of the opening was his urge to draw solid ties between old Castile and the Basque Country, and Bilbao in particular. Subsuming

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Bilbao's fate to that of Castile's was equivalent to reaffirming its "Spanishness", and a way of annulling the memory of the recent experience of Basque political autonomy.

Hence, both through the aesthetics of the reconstructed bridges and the official discourses accompanying their opening and setting to use, Bilbao's new leadership was able to mark the Ría with the promise of the New Spain, while omitting or understating the practical and historical links that tied the bridges to the city's most recent past.

Chapter 6

From grand reconstruction plans to piecemeal rebuilding:
Imperial Madrid and the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña

6. Introduction

The shift from the very ambitious early reconstruction plans for Madrid to the significantly piecemeal, privately driven rebuilding process that eventually took place in the capital city was typical of many of the Franco regime's policies, and more generally of many post-war regimes faced with reconstruction. By focusing on a particular site, the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña—a military complex built in the mid-nineteenth century on the Montaña del Príncipe Pío (Prince Pío's Hill), in the western part of the city, and practically destroyed during the conflict—the chapter aims to show how both economic and ideological causes, as well as issues related to history and memory, account for the abandonment of the Falangist plans for a neo-imperial Madrid, including the construction of Falange's Party Headquarters on the ruins of the Cuartel.

Within the regime's predominantly anti-urban discourse, the immediate attention paid to the capital city itself constituted an exception. After the war, the Falangists saw the opportunity to redesign the capital city in a top-down approach that was explicitly conceived as state planning. But Spain's harsh economic situation, including the arrival in Madrid of large unemployed populations from rural areas, together with the changing international scenario after 1945—which led Franco to distance himself from Falangism—resulted in a gradual rejection of the initial and possibly over-ambitious state planning projects. The reconstruction process of the capital city ended up largely in the hands of private owners and redevelopers. Public planning guidelines continued to exist but had little impact because they were seldom enforced. Moreover, although it is difficult to find documentary proof of this, both private and public entities used different legal and financial subterfuges to circumvent inconvenient planning regulations. The fate of the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña poignantly illustrates this abandonment of ideology and planning for a more pragmatic, yet eclectic and unpredictable response to the reconstruction needs of the capital city.

The chapter is once more divided into two parts. The first part examines the pre-war and wartime history of the Cuartel de la Montaña and its environs, and the second explores the post-war fate of the ruins of the Cuartel and the western part of Madrid (essentially, old Madrid and the district of Argüelles) more generally. The first part starts by addressing the history of the Montaña del Príncipe Pío, on which the military headquarters were located. This is a long and symbolically charged history, including the hill's prominent role during the Spanish War of Independence (perhaps better known as Napoleon's Peninsula War in an English speaking context) in the early nineteenth century. On the 20th of July 1936, the mutiny that was organised by the rebel military in the Montaña barracks and the subsequent control of the rebel military by Republican forces inaugurated the Spanish Civil War in the capital city. The following section briefly examines the destruction of the building on that day and subsequently. The building was damaged continuously throughout the conflict because it stood very close to the front line. Its early destruction led the Republican Committee that was responsible for the sanitation and reconstruction of the capital city during the war to plan the construction of a new parliament building on the site. The third section considers the project for the new parliament building and the comprehensive plan for post-war Madrid that Julián Besteiro, the director of the Republican Committee and his team, designed throughout the conflict and published just before Franco's troops entered the capital city and the war ended.

The first section of the second part of the chapter discusses the planning guidelines that the Falangists set out for the capital of the New Spain immediately after the war, and more specifically architect Pedro Bidagor's Plan. In spite of the many structural continuities with previous plans, including Besteiro's, the Falangist rhetoric suggested a break with the past. The differences were not merely rhetorical, however, and some key aspects such as the different socio-economic division of the city pointed to organicist, Nazi-inspired conceptions of the urban. Moreover, particular prominence was given to the *fachada* or grand façade of Madrid, which was seen as the *head* of Spain's *national being*. The ruins of the Cuartel were part of the grand façade, and a project for the *Casa del Partido*, or the Falangist Party's Headquarters, was designed for the site, echoing the massive structures that the Nazis built to hold popular gatherings.

The second section illustrates some aspects of the Falangist architectural programme for the neo-imperial capital city. Hapsburg-inspired, austere, monumental architecture became the reference point, and a law to recover (or recreate) seventeenth-century historic Madrid was passed. As explained in the third section, however, both Falangist planning and aesthetic principles were soon dropped as Franco shifted from a pro-Axis position to a markedly anti-communist stance with which he sought approval by the Allies. At the same time, it became increasingly clear that the autarchic economic programme that was based on state intervention and imposed after the war bore little fruit, and the regime became increasingly open to the initiatives of private developers.

The project for the Casa del Partido dropped and a number of seemingly random and erratic projects for the site of the Cuartel, which are examined in the fourth section, followed. Meanwhile, the ruins of the Cuartel served their own purpose. During the 1940s, a number of commemorations for the fallen soldiers during the mutiny of the 20th of July 1936 and the eventual seizure of the barracks were held. The purportedly contradictory sentiments triggered by the events of 20th of July seem to have contributed to the difficulty in deciding what to do with the site, which remained in neglect for three decades. The design for a park in the early 1970s, followed by the placement of an ancient Egyptian temple on the site, was perhaps an unexpected ending to the history of the ruins, also suggestive of the inconsistent and eclectic nature of the Franco regime.

The conclusion seeks to situate the history of the ruins of the Cuartel—which arguably epitomises the shift from the early ambitious post-war plans to the more piecemeal rebuilding of Madrid—both within the particular context of Franco's dictatorship and the broader context of reconstruction in Europe after the Second World War.

Fig. 6.1 Section of "La pradera de San Isidro" by Francisco de Goya (1787) showing la fachada *or the grand façade of Madrid and the Manzanares Valley* (adapted from the web).

Part I

6.1 Historical overview of the Montaña del Príncipe Pío

6.1.1 A strategic site

Madrid was originally built on a natural plateau that rises above the valley of the Manzanares river to the west, and the plains of La Mancha to the south. To the north and north-west the city is surrounded by the Guadarrama mountains. Along the edge of the plateau there are several protuberances or hills facing the valley. One of them is the Montaña de Príncipe Pío. Located close to the hill where the Royal Palace stands, it has particularly privileged views of both the mountains and the plain. It is also one of the highest elevations in the city. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the ownership of these lands—including the palaces and country houses that were successively built on the hill (among them the famous palace *La Florida*)—passed through the hands of several clerics and noblemen. In 1792 the hill became the property of the Bourbon king Carlos IV.[355]

After the end of the second Carlist War[356] in 1849, the plans for the construction of a military complex on the Montaña del Príncipe Pío were discussed for the first time. The Carlist Wars had shown that the Royal Palace remained relatively unprotected on its left flank. In addition, the rapid increase of the population in Madrid suggested the construction of new military barracks in key locations to secure the maintenance of public order in case of riots. The Montaña del Príncipe Pío seemed to be the ideal site for the new military facility. However, before the actual construction began in 1860, several years of decisions, counter-decisions and paperwork followed. When delimiting the plot and designing the barracks, including a safety zone, the planners had to take into account the progressively expanding new district of Argüelles, adjacent to the hill. Even though Queen Isabel II had generously ceded the lands in the area of the hill to the Army, some plots within it had previously been sold to the developers of the new district. Hence, there was a clash between military and economic interests that contributed to the delay of the final project. Moreover, the irregularity of the

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[355] See Víctor Nieto Alcaide, "La Montaña Del Príncipe Pío," in *Madrid. Tomo V. De La Plaza De España a El Pardo* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1980), 1623-24.

[356] As mencioned earlier, the Carlists defended the right to the Spanish throne of an alternative branch of the Bourbons, and started three wars during the nineteenth century. Prior to the 1936-39 Civil War, these were known as the Spanish Civil Wars.

topography of the hill posed some technical challenges to the architects and the planners.

Fig. 6.2 Bird's eye view of western Madrid. The white circles show the Montaña del Príncipe Pío (above) and the Royal Palace (below) (adapted from the wbe).

The facility was finally finished in May 1863 and named after Queen Isabel II, who, as noted, had pro-actively backed the project. (Let us recall in this context the construction of the first drawbridge in Bilbao in 1844, which was also named after the Queen.) The same year the works were completed, the General in Chief of the area handed in a petition to the Ministry of War asking for an enlargement of the Cuartel. Instead of hosting the two Infantry battalions for which it had been originally designed, the aim was now to host two Infantry regiments, which essentially meant doubling the barracks' capacity. Aside from the irony of this situation—the enlargement was being requested just as the works were finished—the fact was that overcrowding was endemic in most military headquarters at the time. It took six years to approve the enlargement project and yet the budget remained the same. This suggests that in the end the enlargement was not fully completed. Nevertheless, for several decades the Cuartel de la Montaña, as it became known, constituted the largest and most modern military facility in the capital city. It was also one of the few military barracks in Spain that had been originally constructed for this purpose.[357]

Fig. 6.3 Partial view of the Cuartel (1933) (Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid).

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[357] For a detailed account of the history of the Cuartel de la Montaña, see Jesús Cantera Montenegro, "La Construcción Del Cuartel De La Montaña De Madrid," *Madrid: Revista de arte, geografía e historia*, no. 3 (2000).

*Fig. 6.4 View of the Royal Palace and the Almudena Cathedral from the Montaña del Principe Pio
(2007)* (photographed by the author).

6.1.2 The shootings of the 3rd of May 1808

In his famous painting *Los fusilamientos del 3 de mayo de 1808*, the Spanish
nineteenth-century painter Francisco de Goya depicted the shooting of a group of rebel
guerrillas by Napoleonic troops on the night between the 2nd and 3rd of May 1808, at the
beginning of the Spanish War of Independence. The shootings, which are well
documented, took place in Madrid, on the Montaña del Principe Pío. The painting
vaguely represents a section of the skyline of the city, enough to convey the sense that
the event took place in what were the outskirts of Madrid at the time. The focus of the
painting is instead on the contrast between the fear-stricken faces and desperate body
gestures of the guerrillas who are about to die, and the attitude of the anonymous, lined-
up soldiers who, with guns on their shoulders, lean forward, ready to shoot.

Much has been said on Goya's dramatic painting. The contrast between the chaotic
appearance of the guerrillas and the disciplined formation of the French soldiers has
sometimes been viewed as representing the clash between Romantic and Enlightened
politics, the nation and the state, popular liberty and state despotism, and also between
irrationality and rationality. It is not surprising that Goya's painting appears to represent
the victims, the Romantic side, more favourably: the guerrillas after all were fighting
for the freedom of the Spanish nation against Napoleon's occupation. At the same time,

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in his painting, Goya—who sympathised with the liberal ideas that emerged from the French revolution—depicts a large lantern on the side of the soldiers, which illuminates the scene, particularly the guerrilla group. For Goya, Enlightenment could probably be viewed as facilitating state despotism (or totalitarianism), but also as a source of light with the potential to illuminate the popular classes, drawing them from ignorance and superstition. It could be argued that the complicated *dialectic of Enlightenment* (to use Adorno's and Horkheimer's celebrated expression) is well captured in Goya's painting, which, by the way, was hidden from the public for decades after it was finished in 1814.

Fig. 6.5 Francisco de Goya. "El 3 de mayo de 1808 en Madrid: los fusilamientos en la montaña del Príncipe Pío" (adapted from the web).

6.1.3 The events of 20 July 1936

More than a century later, on the night of the 20th of July 1936, another dramatic clash between ideological forces took place on the same site. It was the attack on, or the defence, and then surrender of the Cuartel de la Montaña military headquarters, where rebel officers, supportive of the military coup against the Second Republic, had created a stronghold, waiting to take over Madrid. As other Spanish cities were seized by the rebels and the news of a mutiny in Madrid spread, military and security forces loyal to the Republican government and popular militias began to surround the barracks to prevent the uprising in the capital city. There was an initial exchange of gunfire on the evening of the 20th of July. As the hours passed and the rebel officers did not show any

intention of surrendering, the Republican response grew fiercer: machine guns and bombers were deployed early on the 20th to subdue the men in the Cuartel. After several hours of intense bombings and exchange of fire, the Republicans managed to gain access to the headquarters, arresting the heads of the mutiny while, apparently, letting most soldiers go free.

The description of the events in the Cuartel partly depends on the side from which the narrator writes. The Republican government presented the event as the *attack and surrender* of the mutineers. The rebel mutineers referred to it as the *attack and defence* of the headquarters. On the 21st of July, the daily Madrilenian newspaper *El Sol*—on the side of the government—carefully reported the events in the Cuartel.[358] According to *El Sol*, "[t]he precautions of the Public authorities in the environs of the Cuartel", where something "unusual was taking place", on the afternoon of the 19th were followed by "the beginning of the [formal] siege" at 5 a.m. on the 20th. "The first cannon shots" were heard at 6 a.m. A few hours later, "the rebel forces surrender[ed]". *El Sol* reports that, according to the government, a soldier was sent from the barracks to tell the chief of the loyalist forces that the troops inside the Cuartel "were ready to capitulate because they felt deceived [by the rebel officers]. The gunfire exchange continued, and by 11:10 a.m. the rebel officers hoisted the white flag in the headquarters."[359] Thus, *El Sol* concludes, "[t]he soldiers in the cuartel de la Montaña [eventually joined] the side of the Government". As a consequence, the rebel officers were unable to control the troops and surrendered. "The rebel leader, General Fanjul, was arrested by governmental forces." Several other officers committed suicide before the Republican troops gained access to the barracks, according to *El Sol*.[360]

The rebels' depiction of the events contrasted significantly with the above and other similar depictions, written from the Republican side's point of view. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find direct testimonies by rebel supporters written on the day of the events or immediately after. On the other hand, two writings that came out after the end of the war, that is, three years later, are representative of how the events were interpreted and narrated over time on the rebel side. Particular effort was made in trying

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[358] "Various. Front Page," *El Sol*, Tuesday 21 July 1936.
[359] "Ataque Y Rendición Del Cuartel De La Montaña," *El Sol*, Tuesday 21 July 1936, 3.
[360] Ibid.

to explain, or perhaps even justify, the defeat of the mutineers in the Cuartel on the basis of treason. Writer Luis Montán, who took up the task of describing retrospectively the most significant events of the Civil War from the point of view of the rebels, suggested that the attack and defence of the Cuartel de la Montaña was the most unknown episode of the war. Based on the accounts of a Falangist and a soldier who managed to flee the Cuartel before the Republicans seized it, Montán sets out to give an "exact and detailed version" of the incident. The account reaches its highpoint when "the mystery of the Cuartel (...), the mystery that helped backing the treason" is unveiled.

> "In the midst of the gunfire, a white flag suddenly appeared in one of the windows on the lower floor facing Plaza de España. (...) Who placed the flag there? We might never be in a position to know."[361]

Montán continues:

> "And as if an order had been given, the mysterious placement of the flag coincided with the irruption of waves of assault guards and militiamen from the streets nearby heading towards the Cuartel."[362]

And, finally, he concludes:

> "The assault was so well prepared, that only through a secret arrangement with somebody inside the building could it unfold as swiftly and effectively [as it did]."[363]

It was thus clear to Montán that somebody had betrayed the mutineers, who might otherwise have been able to resist and carry on with the coup leading to the national-syndicalist revolution, which the Falangists claimed was always their aim. The writer also emphasised the barbarism of the Reds, who after gaining access to the Cuartel, had allegedly engaged in ruthless killings and pillage. He conceived the attack and defence of the Cuartel de la Montaña as one of "the bloodiest pages of the civil war [sic]", perhaps even "the first page of the history of this war, where the series of great crimes through which the red hordes [sic] would turn the lands of Spain into an immense blood

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[361] "Estando en pleno fuego, apareció de improviso en una de las ventanas de la planta baja recayente a la Plaza de España, una bandera blanca. [...] ¿Quién colocó allí aquella bandera? Posiblemente nunca se sabrá." Luis Montán, *Episodios De La Guerra Civil: Asalto Y Defensa Heroica Del Cuartel De La Montaña*, vol. 4, *Episodios De La Guerra Civil* (Valladolid: Librería Santarén) 23.

[362] "Y como obedeciendo a una consigna, coincidió la colocación misteriosa de aquella bandera blanca con la irrupción en oleada de guardias de Asalto y milicianos salidos de las bocacalles próximas hacia el Cuartel." Ibid. 24.

[363] "El asalto estaba tan bien preparado, que únicamente por una secreta inteligencia con alguien del interior del edificio pudo ser tan rápido y eficaz." Ibid. 25.

stain began".[364] Yet, he regretted, the events of the 20th of July remained enveloped by enigma and mystery, "which History [sic] might never solve".[365]

In his novel *El Cuartel de la Montaña*, significantly named after the military headquarters, José María Carretero alias *El Caballero Audaz* (the Audacious Knight), Falangist journalist and writer, narrates the days that preceded the outbreak of the war in Madrid, culminating in the attack and defence of the Cuartel. In contrast to the Republicans' account of the soldiers in the Cuartel feeling deceived by their officers, Carretero portrayed the "admirable fraternity and camaraderie" that emerged among the soldiery in the barracks during the key hours prior to the Republican forces' final assault on the headquarters. In a perhaps typical, Falangist, epic rhetoric, he suggested that "[d]anger erased any distances uniting everybody in an identical hierarchy [sic] before Death".[366] Nonetheless, the author seems deliberately to avoid the description of the assault on the headquarters and the mutineers' eventual defeat. Carretero's account of the events concludes with a description of how a mediator sent by the Republican forces to negotiate the mutineers' rendition was met with a firm and single response: the Cuartel would resist until the end—the mutineers were either to win or die.[367] The "beautiful tragedy of the Cuartel", in Carretero's words, is left to the imagination of the reader.

The understanding of the trauma of the 1936 military uprising and the ensuing civil war is in some ways rooted in the interpretation of the trauma of the War of Independence. It is suggested that the War of Independence—especially Goya's painting—has become a comfortable metaphor for the experience of the 1930s Civil War. There is often a collective assumption that the various conflicts that Spain has undergone in modern times share something essentially similar: the violent clash between revolutionary and reactionary forces, notwithstanding their ideological mutations and reconfigurations over time. And what better and more tangible example of the idea of a single, recurrent

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[364] "Una de las más sangrientas páginas de la guerra civil fue la del asalto y defensa del Cuartel de la Montaña de Madrid. Podríamos decir que ella constituye la primera página de la historia de la guerra, y en ella se inician, por consiguiente, la serie de grandes crímenes con los que las hordas rojas habían de convertir más tarde la tierra española en una inmensa mancha de sangre." Ibid. 5.
[365] Ibid. 28.
[366] "Se establecía, de hecho, una hermandad, una camaradería admirable. El peligro borraba distancias y unía a todos en idéntica jerarquía ante la Muerte." "El Caballero Audaz", *El Cuartel De La Montaña* (Ediciones Caballero Audaz, 1939) 181.
[367] Ibid.

trauma haunting modern Spain than the overlap in one place of the two dramatic events just described?

6.2. Destruction in the capital city

6.2.1 The Cuartel de la Montaña destroyed

The Cuartel de la Montaña was badly damaged on the very day of its attack and defence. The air strikes, the impact of machine-gun bullets, and the physical violence exerted by defendants and attackers left the building in bad shape. Subsequently, this section of the grand façade of Madrid and the district of Argüelles immediately behind it suffered the daily effects of bombings, but especially artillery fire, for more than two years. From the Cerro de Garabitas, a prominent hill, and other strategic positions in Casa de Campo where the rebels managed to establish their troops in November 1936, bullets and bombs rained over western Madrid day after day with varying intensity. Hence, Ciudad Universitaria (the University campus), Moncloa and Argüelles, including the Montaña del Príncipe Pío, were among the most targeted areas (see Fig. 6.2). Yet there was evidence of the persistent bombing and artillery fire across the city. As the famous Spanish novelist Max Aub noted, "in all the streets of Madrid—leaving aside the Salamanca district—there [was] at least one bombed house, ruined, with its innards in the open air".[368] The Salamanca district was the safety zone, which the Nacionales agreed on not attacking, and to which civilians were voluntarily evacuated. Unsurprisingly perhaps, this was the district where the conservative bourgeoisie resided.

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[368] Max Aub, *Campo Del Moro* (Andorra la Vella: Editorial Andorra, S.L., 1969 [1963]) 79.

Fig. 6.6 View of a section of Ciudad Universitaria. The big hole in the ground was apparently produced by a mine (adapted from the web).

6.2.2 The role of the Comité de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento

As the war progressed, the increasing problems of hygiene caused by the amounts of rubble, corpses underneath the debris, and homeless people in Madrid required the direct intervention of the Republican government. The municipal authorities were simply overcome by the challenges. The Republican government intervened, and created a new body, the *Comité de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento* (*CRRS*; Reform, Reconstruction, and Sanitation Committee) in April 1937, through the fusion of a number of smaller units that had been assisting the civilian population since the start of the war.[369] Initially, the Minister of Public Works, Julio Just Jimeno, was appointed president of the Committee, but from June 1937 the legendary Socialist leader Julián Besteiro, who had abandoned politics a few years earlier but resumed his career when the war started, replaced him.[370] The immediate duties of the Committee encompassed the clearance of rubble, diverse sanitation tasks, and, when possible, the improvement and continuing urbanisation of the city.[371] Later that year, the Committee's functions were extended and included

> "the defence and preservation of artistic heritage, the reconstruction, reform, urbanisation, and sanitation of the capital city, inner-city urban reforms, the

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[369]See Comité de Reforma Reconstrucción y Saneamiento, "Memoria 1937-1938," (Madrid: 1938), 13.
[370] See "Gaceta De La República, Núm. 92," Ministerio de Obras Públicas (2 April 1937), 27; "Gaceta De La República, Núm. 94," Ministerio de Obras Públicas (29 June 1937).
[371] "Gaceta De La República, Núm. 92," 27, 28.

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expansion and regional planning of post-war Madrid, as well as the regulation of accessing roads, communication, transportation and any other services linked to the plan or various plans mentioned".[372]

The Committee was subdivided into six sections, including one for the assistance to bombed houses (*Socorro de fincas bombardeadas*).[373] The interventions of this unit were systematically registered, allowing the Committee gradually to create maps that detailed the levels of destruction of the districts, blocks and buildings that suffered the impact of bombs and/or artillery.[374] (Unfortunately, I have not been able to retrieve the original maps, but I include a scan of one of the sample maps that appear in the Committee's 1937-1938 Memorandum; see Fig. 6.7.)
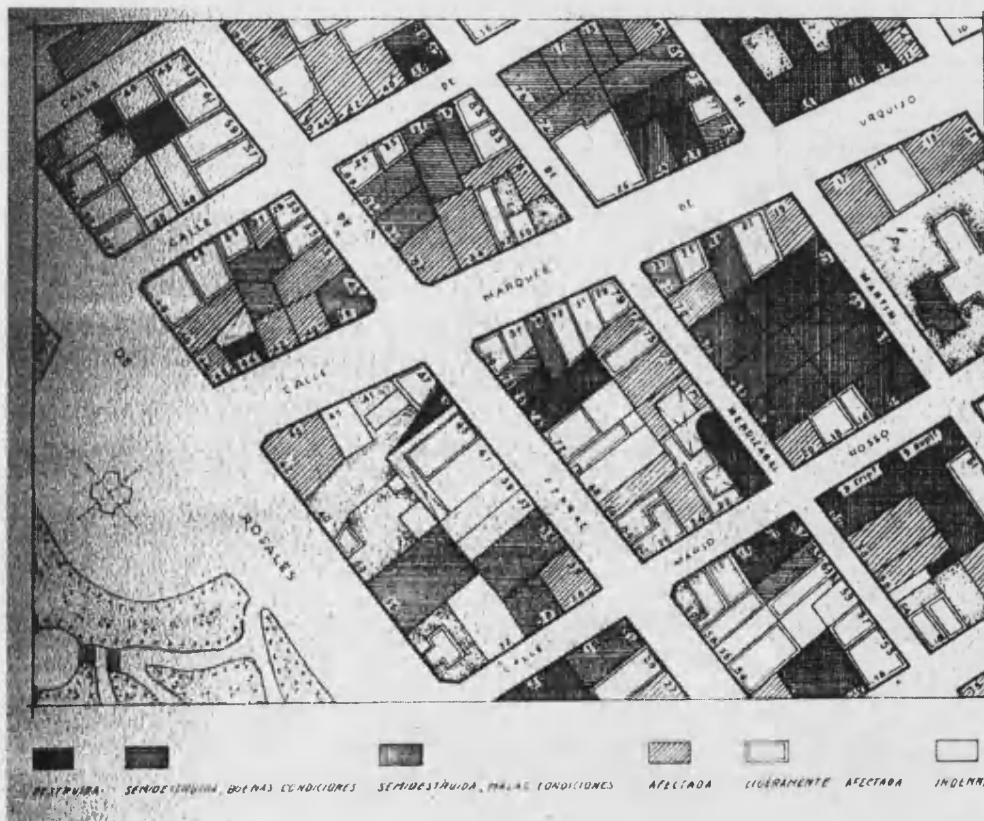
Fig. 6.7 Map of a section of Argüelles. The different patterns and shades represent different levels of damage to the buildings: from complete destruction (darkest shade) to undamaged (white) (scanned photocopy from the CRRS's *Memoria 1937-1938*).

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[372] "Será competencia del Comité el estudio de cuantas cuestiones se relacionen con la defensa y conservación del Patrimonio artístico, reconstrucción, reforma, urbanización y saneamiento de la capital. Así como todo lo relativo a la reforma interior, extensión y plan comarcal que hayan de integrar el futuro Madrid y la regularización de accesos, comunicaciones, transportes y servicios relacionados con el plan o los planes mencionados." Ministerio de Comunicaciones Transportes y Obras Públicas, "Decreto Disponiendo Se Rija Por El Reglamento Que Se Inserta El Comité De Reforma, Reconstrucción Y Saneamiento De Madrid.," in *Gaceta de la República* (1937).
[373] Comité de Reforma Reconstruccion y Saneamiento, "Memoria 1937-1938," 13.
[374] Ibid.

In order to prevent destruction—especially of the city's artistic heritage—the Committee carried out works to protect the façades of churches, museums, palaces and other significant buildings. The façades of the Prado Museum, for example, were covered behind piles of sandbags; the windows were protected behind layers of brick, earth and wood, and the roof was reinforced with concrete-asbestos.[375] Meanwhile, the most important artworks were transferred to safer locations like Valencia, where the Republican government also moved at the end of 1936. Fountains and sculptures, like *La Cibeles*, were buried in concrete, covered with sand and earth, and supported with palisades, or brick walls, in what looked like small hills.

Fig. 6.8 Protective structure covering the fountain La Cibeles *with the* Palacio de Correos *(the Postal Palace) in the background during the war* (adapted from the web).

Aside from keeping a record of the destroyed buildings, the CRRS was also interested in planning ahead and taking advantage of the opportunities for urban redevelopment that emerged from the destruction brought about by the war. An example of this was the Committee's projected expansion and embellishment of Paseo del Pintor Rosales, the long avenue flanking the district of Argüelles and ending at the Cuartel de la Montaña.[376]

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[375] Bustamante Montoro, "Salvaguardia Y Trabajos De Emergencia Durante La Guerra Civil (1936-1939)," 79, Vaamonde V., *Salvamento Y Protección Del Tesoro Artístico Español Durante La Guerra, 1936-1939* 24.
[376] Comité de Reforma Reconstrucción y Saneamiento, "Memoria 1937-1938," 78.

6.3 Planning the capital city during the war

6.3.1 The project for the Montaña del Príncipe Pío

The CRRS suggested that Paseo del Pintor Rosales could be extended down to the Plaza de España, thereby improving traffic circulation in an admittedly congested area. Moreover, because of its width and beautiful location, the avenue could potentially become one of Madrid's most stately boulevards. Boulevards were an important element in the modernist conception of city planning at the time. The increasing volume of cars in circulation certainly demanded wide, multi-lane avenues, but the function of the boulevard was also still very much regarded as of political-representative nature. This is perhaps most evident in the case of the capital cities of the European dictatorships of the 1930s. Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin were all keen to have grand boulevards, often flanked by state buildings, cutting through the inner cities.[377] Although free from totalitarian connotations, there seemed to be a political motivation behind the extension (and possibly widening) of Paseo del Pintor Rosales, too. The Republican Committee was considering constructing the new parliament building on the top of the Príncipe Pío hill, an idea which had apparently circulated for some time. Even though the Committee chose not to push the idea too strongly in its 1938 report, it noted that no private interests would be involved if the project was carried out, since the lands on the hill were owned by the state or the municipality. The fact that no expropriations would be necessary was implicitly understood to be a significant advantage.[378]

6.3.2 Besteiro's Plan

The extension of Paseo del Pintor Rosales was one of the partial urban transformations proposed in the *Esquema y Bases para el Desarrollo del Plan Regional de Madrid* (Scheme and Rules for the Development of a Regional Plan for Madrid), published by Julián Besteiro and the CRRS in spring 1939, close to the end of the war. The document has since become known simply as *Plan Besteiro*. Besteiro's team worked tirelessly throughout the conflict on developing a basic scheme for the planning of post-war Madrid. In a constructive spirit, if one may say, Besteiro and his colleagues preferred to

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[377] See Herman van der Wusten, "Dictators and Their Capital Cities: Moscow and Berlin in the 1930s," *GeoJournal* 52, no. 4 (2001).
[378] Comité de Reforma Reconstrucción y Saneamiento, "Memoria 1937-1938," 78.

view destruction as a potential advantage for the improvement of the city, as in the case of the ruined Cuartel. The replacement of the military barracks with a widened avenue and a new parliament building was congruent with the aim of reconstructing and enhancing the grand façade of Madrid, but also with the aim of preserving the Manzanares Valley as a green belt around this part of the city. The Republican 1933 *Plan General de Extensión de Madrid*, which took up some of the ideas presented in the international urban planning competition that Madrid city council organised in 1929, had emphasised the need for a green belt between the historic city and the first radius of suburbs, taking advantage of the watercourses of the Manzanares river and the Abroñigal stream bed, which surrounded the plateau on which old Madrid rose.[379]

Besteiro was fundamentally concerned with the situation of Madrid's less advantaged residents, who concentrated in unhealthy and untidy blocks within badly serviced neighbourhoods both in the inner city and the outskirts. Consequently, he favoured the idea of constructing new towns

> "outside the limits of the city and not in direct continuation with these limits, since the opposite would entail not only the persistence of the existing harms (the lack of open space and of contact with Nature), but their increase".[380]

This was also consistent with the city model that emerged from the 1929 competition and with broader European planning schemes (influenced by the 1933 CIAM[381]), which favoured the existence of green belts between each new ring of urban population. Aside from the theoretical advantages of this concentric city-model, Besteiro acknowledged the practical difficulty of constructing (or reconstructing) affordable housing within the limits of the compact city where land prices were always on the rise. Realistically, he saw no other choice than exploiting land that was far away from the city centre, but

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[379] Luis Azurmendi, "Orden Y Desorden En El Plan De Madrid Del 41," *Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo*, no. 1 (Número especial), Arquitectura para después de una guerra (1977): 15. See also Rafael Moneo, "Madrid: Los Últimos Veinticinco Años," *Hogar y Arquitectura (Revista bimestral de la Obra Sindical del Hogar)*, no. 75 (1968): 47-50.

[380] "[L]as obras de nueva construcción habrán de emprenderse en terrenos situados fuera de los límites actuales de la ciudad y que no estén en inmediata continuidad con esos límites, porque otra cosa sería, no sólo prolongar el mal existente (la falta de espacios libres y de contacto con la Naturaleza), sino acrecentarlos considerablemente." AA.VV., *Plan Besteiro 1939. Esquema Y Bases Para El Desarrollo Del Plan Regional De Madrid* (Madrid: 2004) 16.

[381] The 1933 Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne had as its theme "The functional city", producing the influential and controversial Athens Charter, which was not published until ten years later. The 1933 CIAM advocated lineal and not concentric urban expansion, which was hard to follow. It was instead the idea of creating green belts between different urban zones that contemporary planners picked up more eagerly.

with the potential of becoming well connected to the centre through the increasingly advanced means of transportation that were available at the time.

For sanitary, but also picturesque reasons, Besteiro was particularly interested in preserving the complex of gardens, parks, forests and hills that extended westward (Moncloa, Dehesa de la Villa, Casa de Campo and El Pardo), beyond the Manzanares Valley. Probably influenced by the vision of the devastation caused to this part of the Madrilenian countryside, which had acted as a wartime front since the winter of 1936, he insisted on its "incalculable beauty and natural qualities", recalling in romantic, if not nostalgic, language how it had "been interpreted by the pen and brush stroke of [Spain's] most famous artists", thus tying it to "the best of [Spain's] traditions".[382]

Fig. 6.9 Hollow structure and ruined façade of the Cuartel (undated photograph) (Archivo General de la Administración).

[382] "[E]n el límite Noroeste de Madrid se extiende una amplia zona verde, o parda, [...] pero de bellezas y excelencias naturales de un valor incalculable, interpretada por la pluma y el pincel de nuestros más famosos artistas y ligada así a lo mejor de nuestras tradiciones." AA.VV., *Plan Besteiro 1939. Esquema Y Bases Para El Desarrollo Del Plan Regional De Madrid* 19, *Esquema Y Bases Para El Desarrollo Del Plan Regional De Madrid (Plan Besteiro)*, (Madrid: Comité de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento (Ministerio de Comunicaciones, Transportes y Obras Públicas), 1939).

Indeed, Velázquez and other renowned Spanish painters set many of their royal and popular scenes (hunting, but also lunches and siestas) against the backdrop of the Manzanares Valley (see Fig. 6.1) and the Guadarrama mountains, which suggests a centuries-old, intimate relationship between Madrilenians and this part of the countryside. Besteiro saw the need for continuing and reinforcing such relationship by creating new green areas, but also improving the public's access to existing ones. As will be explained, the protection of the Manzanares Valley, trying to avoid urban development on either of the two river margins, was also a priority in early post-war plans, even though it was soon dropped in practice.

Aside from Besteiro's preoccupation with improving the poorest residents' conditions and their contact with nature, one of his most important contributions to the planning discussions of the first half of the twentieth century was his idea that Madrid should be planned on a *regional* basis. Like Ricardo Bastida, who envisioned future Bilbao as a metropolitan area in his 1923 Plan, Besteiro argued that bordering municipalities should become part of the future planning endeavours for the capital city.[383]

As already intimated, Besteiro's Plan was publicised just before the final defeat of the Republican government. Some authors suggest that, while knowing that his Plan would most likely be condemned to a shelf existence, Besteiro aimed to leave public testimony of the planning discussions and empirical work carried out on the Republican side between 1937 and 1939—hence his almost epic, last-minute effort to publish the document.[384]

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[383] AA.VV., *Plan Besteiro 1939. Esquema Y Bases Para El Desarrollo Del Plan Regional De Madrid* 17, 18, Azurmendi, "Orden Y Desorden En El Plan De Madrid Del 41," 15.
[384] See Carlos Sambricios introduction in AA.VV., *Plan Besteiro 1939. Esquema Y Bases Para El Desarrollo Del Plan Regional De Madrid.*

Part II

6.1 Planning Madrid after the war

6.1.1 Maroto's Plan

At the same time as Besteiro's plan came out in Madrid in spring 1939, engineer José Paz Maroto received the commission to design a general urban plan for the capital city from Alberto Alcocer, a supporter of the Nacionales, whose future mayoralty in Madrid had been decided by Franco's provisional government in Burgos. Paz Maroto had worked for the city council before the war, and had also been involved in the 1929 planning competition. He was thus familiar with the urban problems and challenges of the capital city, although scholars like Carlos Sambricio suggest that it was probably more the fact that he was residing in Valladolid during the war, where Alcocer and other supporters of the Nacionales established themselves, which made the future mayor rely on him.[385] In his plan, Paz Maroto developed many of the principles and ideas that had circulated in the 1920s and 1930s, including the need for viable routes of access to the city, better communications and transportation infrastructures, and urgently transforming the inner city.[386] Nevertheless, Paz Maroto's plan was surprisingly neutral and bureaucratically formulated considering the exceptional circumstances in which it was prepared, on the verge of the rebels' victory and Franco's provisional government preparing for the final take-over of the state apparatus. The lack of triumphal words and monumental projects was probably the main reason for which the Plan was dropped once the Nacionales entered the capital city and officially won the war.[387] Paz Maroto's formulations were possibly too bland for the vigorous image the new regime, especially the Falangists, sought to transmit.

6.1.2 Bidagor's Plan

As soon as the *Junta de Reconstrucción de Madrid* (Madrid Reconstruction Board) was formed on 27 April 1939, barely a month after the seizure of the capital city, its *Comisión Técnica de Reconstrucción* (Technical Reconstruction Commission) was assigned the task of creating a new plan for Madrid. Pedro Bidagor, who had been appointed head of the Department of Urbanism of the *Dirección General de*

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[385] Carlos Sambricio, "Madrid 1941: Tercer Año De La Victoria," in *Arquitectura En Regiones Devastadas* (Madrid: MOPU, Centro de Publicaciones, 1987), 82.
[386] Ibid. 83.
[387] Azurmendi, "Orden Y Desorden En El Plan De Madrid Del 41," 15.Luis Azurmendi, p.15

Arquitectura (General Architecture Committee) and was also part of the Technical Reconstruction Commission, became the guiding figure behind the new plan. During the war, Bidagor—who graduated as an architect in 1931 and was only 35 years old when he was appointed by the new regime—presided over some of the meetings that were held in the premises of the anarchist trade union CNT to discuss issues of urban planning and architecture, and his reputation grew among his colleagues, including Luis Moya, Carlos de Miguel and Gaspar Blein.[388] Aside from the perhaps ironic fact that the future regime's planners and architects exchanged their ideas in Republican Madrid under the auspices of the anarchists, it seems sensible to think that these wartime exchanges prepared Bidagor for his post-war commission. A first draft of the new plan was ready by 1942; it was then shown privately to Franco. The final draft was approved in 1944, but did not effectively become law until 1946.

The Falangists had already shown particular interest in the redesign of the capital city before the war. They saw the Madrid of their time as full of bad imitations taken from foreign and other Spanish cities and cheap, tasteless representations of the *castizo* character or Madrilenian local colour. Apparently, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of Falange, had once suggested that the best way of transforming Madrid would be to set fire on the city, placing fire-fighters close to the buildings that were worth preserving.[389] The war had somehow made Primo de Rivera's wish come true, although many of the buildings he would have deemed worth maintaining had also been damaged. The Falangists were extremely preoccupied with authenticity. They believed that by rethinking Madrid as an imperial capital city, the city's authentic character would be restored, including its genuine, profound Castilian spirit, which had nothing to do with the vulgar *casticismo*, which they identified with the all too colourful, nineteenth-century façades and dubious customs of Madrid's popular neighbourhoods.[390] As was discussed in Chapter 4, for most Falangists, authenticity— and not merely in aesthetic terms—was ultimately associated with seventeenth-century imperial Spain. While for some of them this might have meant literally recovering the seventeenth-century built form, for others it was more about infusing the city with the spirit of command, austerity and deep religious faith which allegedly motivated Spain's

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[388] Ibid.: 16, Moneo, "Madrid: Los Últimos Veinticinco Años," 50.
[389] Conde de Montarco, "Hay Que Cambiar La Fisionomía De Madrid," *Informaciones*, 2 February 1940.
[390] See "Madrid, Capital Imperial," *Informaciones*, 29 June 1939.

imperial rule under the Hapsburgs. The Falangists' primary assumption was that Spain's decline had essentially begun with the arrival in the early eighteenth century of the Bourbons, who had introduced foreign, dissolute customs and extravagant tastes.

Bidagor was successful in capturing the Falangist sentiment. He was able to convey the sense that his was indeed a *new* plan for a *new* imperial city, even though some of the planning conceptions underlying the plan mirrored earlier plans, including Besteiro's. Among the continuities there was a need to alternate urban population rings with green belts and accentuate the city's northern–southern axis. The latter essentially meant promoting the expansion of the city northwards and preserving the Manzanares Valley as part of a southern green belt by extending the *Paseo de la Castellana* and completing the subterranean railway between *Atocha* and *Chamartin*.

Unlike Paz Maroto's allegedly bland, bureaucratic language, however, Bidagor's 1944 Plan displayed a radical, almost epic rhetoric inspired by the Falangist principles of *hierarchy, service* and *fraternity*. Bidagor aimed to reflect these in "the mode in which the various urban elements [were] arranged".[391] To the Falangists, *hierarchy* essentially meant that the city had to adapt to its geographical location, taking advantage of existing valleys and elevations, and reserving the high areas for the most honourable buildings and activities.[392] *Service* was in a way a consequence of *hierarchy*, meaning that each zone of the city fulfilled a specific role according to its geographical location within the organic whole in which Madrid was conceived. *Fraternity*, on the other hand, implied that although there existed separate zones for different activities (*special, commercial, residential, green* and *industrial*, in Bidagor's terms), the general aim was to ensure that different social classes lived together in districts and neighbourhoods or *barrios* so that they would "feel forced to adopt respectable behaviours".[393] In other words, Bidagor, who was possibly influenced by German Nazi economist and planner Gottfried Feder's ideas, envisioned an organic city made up of smaller, hierarchically structured, self-contained units where residents of different social backgrounds lived together sharing all the amenities, from civic spaces (church, local party headquarters,

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[391] "Plan General De Ordenación Urbana De Madrid De 1944 (1946) "Plan Bidagor"," (Cartoteca de la Consejería de Medio Ambiente y Ordenación del Territorio de Madrid, http://www.madrid.org/cobras_publicas/centro_document/pgou_1944.htm, 1944).
[392] See "Madrid, Capital Imperial."
[393] See "Necesidad Del Decoro Urbano," *Arriba*, 12 November 1940.

school) to shops to leisure areas as if they were a big family.[394] The Falangists believed in the harmonious and virtuous coexistence of different social classes, and were deeply troubled by the isolation of workers in working-class districts where their material circumstances possibly improved, but where they were deprived of their dignity and the wealthier classes' paternalist affection, both of which they enjoyed in the traditionally mixed buildings of the inner city.[395]

Bidagor developed the above ideas in the twelve chapters of his Plan, where some other issues that had preoccupied his predecessors such as access to the city, the redesigning of the old city, the completion of the extension projects, the redevelopment of existing suburbs, the creation of a green belt, and the construction of new satellite towns were also addressed. But Bidagor was particularly keen to emphasise the symbolic dimension of his plan: the attention to the spiritual implications of Madrid's capital city status. Accordingly, he devoted the opening chapter to *La Capitalidad*—the capital's status. The language in this section is particularly powerful and grandiloquent; it is a language aimed to please the regime's leaders, primarily the Falangists, but also traditionalists and monarchists, who almost certainly did not feel alien to the reactionary implications of the idea of resurrecting Imperial Madrid.

The first consequence of Madrid's capital status, according to Bidagor's Plan, was that the city ought to become the bureaucratic centre from which the rest of the nation was to be ruled. This was consistent with the well-established centralist tradition that absolutist and constitutional regimes alike had followed in the past. Second, Madrid was to become a living example of history and tradition. Bidagor proclaimed that these

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[394] See Sambricio, "Madrid 1941: Tercer Año De La Victoria," 88.

[395] José Luis de Arrese, one of the regime's most prominent ideologues, illustrates the "moral implications" of the physical separation of the working class by telling the story of Señor Cruz, the panel beater, who lived in the attic room of Arrese's building—a socially mixed building, which also housed the landlord, an industrialist, an aristocrat and a trader. Arrese tells the reader that each time Señor Cruz's wife gave birth, all the neighbours immediately offered the family something to eat or wear. In exchange, Señor Cruz would repair the neighbours' broken taps and clean their water pipes. When Arrese crossed Señor Cruz in the entrance doorway, they would chat, share a smoke, "and speak badly of the government". But one day, "the union" offered Señor Cruz a flat in a working-class district. Once the panel beater moved there, Arrese claims, their "friendship and relationship was forever broken". Señor Cruz was now a worker, and Arrese and the other neighbours had suddenly become his potential employers. Arrese acknowledges that Señor Cruz's new flat probably was larger and nicer than the attic room. But, he argues, Señor Cruz, "is not a materialist, because he is a Spaniard", and was almost certainly less happy than before. Not unlike a "plague victim", Arrese concludes, Señor Cruz had been ousted from the inner city and deprived of the comradeship that he enjoyed with the gentlemen in his former building. Arrese, *La Revolución Social Del Nacional-Sindicalismo* 167, 68.

historical values ought to be associated with seventeenth-century Imperial Madrid, which, moreover, had produced a particular urban typology that subsequently became "characteristic of the most representative Spanish cities".[396] Third, not only was Madrid to look back into the (nation's) past, it was to re-enact such a past in the present and carry on with Spain's mission in the world. Such a mission was related to Spain's imperial enterprises in America and North Africa, but also to its potential role as cultural and historical mediator between Africa and Europe. Finally, by engaging in the *Liberation Crusade* (the war) against the Republicans, the new regime had embarked on a specific mission aimed at safeguarding the nation's integrity from the threat of Communist and atheist forces, in other words, the anti-Spain. This was possibly the New Spain's most important mission.

Spain's various "missions" were arguably captured in Bidagor's design for three main routes of access to the city (which partly existed already): *Via de la Victoria*, *Via de Europa* and *Via del Imperio*. The three axes fulfilled different aims. The first celebrated Franco's victory, the second connected Madrid to Europe, while the third "picked up the routes to Portugal, Africa and Hispanic America". Moreover, Franco had explicitly manifested his dislike of the poor, ugly suburban dwellings that extended along the city's existing roads of accesss. These gave a miserable impression, which did not live up to the image of the capital city of the New Spain.[397] Thus, the new lines of access sought to circumvent the slums on the outskirts and concentrate traffic to just three, monumentally conceived entrance avenues.

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[396] "Plan General De Ordenación Urbana De Madrid De 1944 (1946) "Plan Bidagor"."
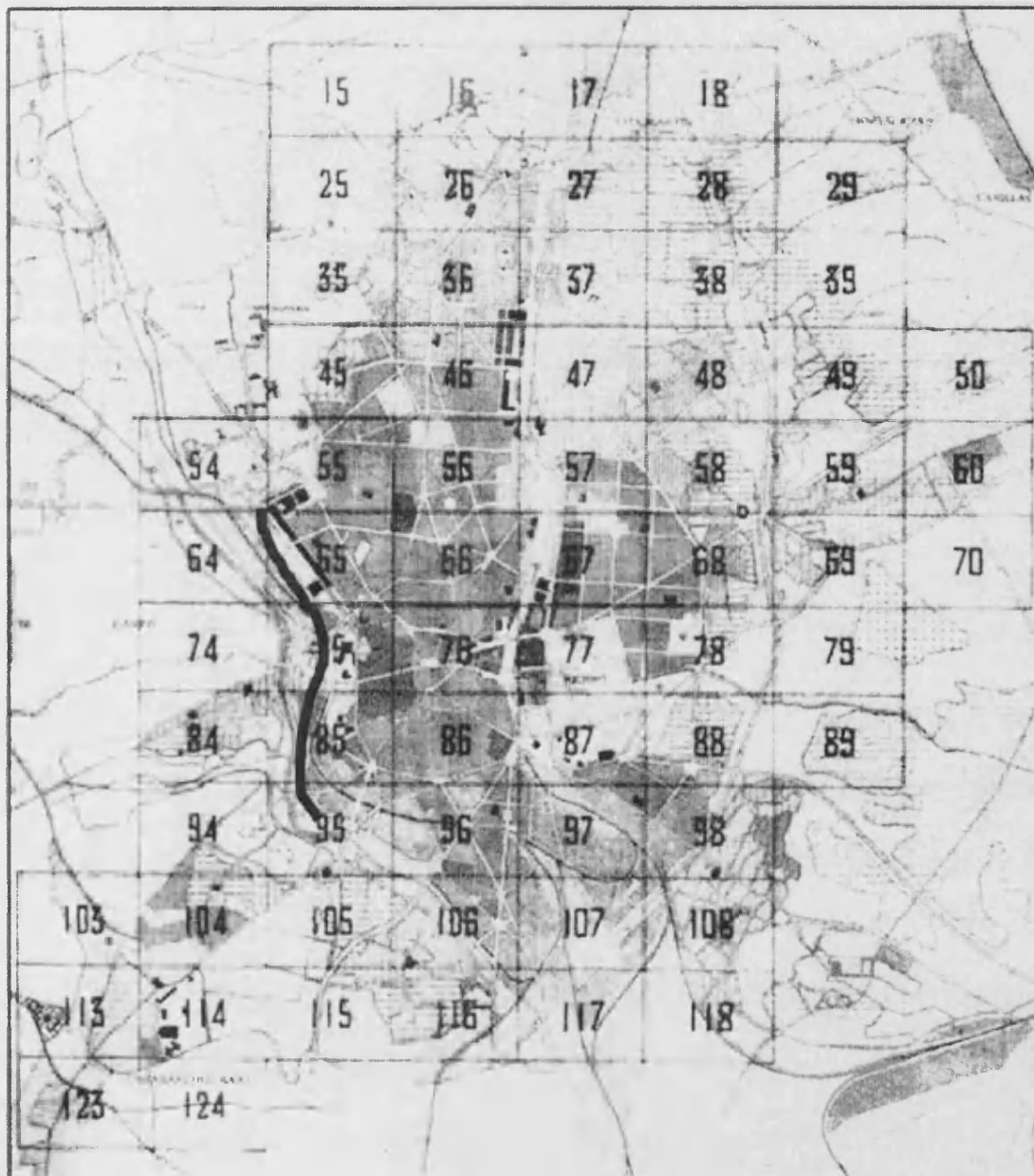[397] See "Necesidad Del Decoro Urbano."

Fig. 6.10 Bidagor's Plan (1946). The curved dark line on the left shows the course of the grand façade (adapted from the web).

6.1.2.1 The grand facade of Madrid

One of the means by which Bidagor's Plan aimed to reflect the spiritual and symbolic functions associated with Madrid's capital status was the grand façade of the city. Reference has already been made to the grand façade as the particular result of the geographical and topographical characteristics of the land on which the city was originally built: an elevation overlooking the Manzanares Valley, the Castilian plateau and the Guadarrama mountains. The notion of a grand façade emerged in the sixteenth century when the Hapsburgs built the Royal Palace on the remains of the Moorish fortification, which had stood on one of the cliffs overlooking the Manzanares, and other significant buildings were constructed along the western edge of the plateau. The proximity to the Palace, but also the privileged view of the wide and beautiful landscape extending at the foot of the edge, made the location attractive for the construction of noble edifices, which gradually contributed to shaping Madrid's physiognomy. The grand façade became a place from where to look out on Nature, but also a place to be looked at from Nature. It was itself a mixture of natural and artificial qualities.

The notion of the grand façade was thus not new to twentieth-century planners like Besteiro and Bidagor, and there had been a renewed interest in and celebration of the aesthetic qualities of this part of Madrid since the nineteenth century. As discussed earlier, Besteiro was keen to give prominence to the grand façade, but perhaps more so to preserve the Manzanares Valley. Yet it was precisely this contrast between the open, green space of the valley and the silhouette of the monumental buildings on the platform that rose over the valley which allowed for the concept of the grand façade. If the Republicans had won the war and located the new parliament building on the grand façade, exactly on the site where the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña stood, it would have further signalled the symbolic shift from a monarchical to a Republican regime, as the new building would have shared or even displaced the prominence of the Royal Palace. But, as we know, the Republicans did not have the opportunity to build the new parliament premises, and after 1939 the project was abandoned. Nonetheless, the idea of adding a new, politically symbolic building to the grand façade was not discarded by the Franco regime.

6.1.2.2 The Falangist Party's Headquarters

In his opening chapter on Madrid's capital status, Bidagor refers to "three symbolic buildings of utmost national evocation" on the grand façade, which together constitute an urban complex that "corresponds to the vital principles of the New Spain".[398] He argues that "Religion, Fatherland and Hierarchy are expressed in the Cathedral, the Palace and the new building of FET-JONS[399] [Falange's Party Headquarters] situated on the *sacred plot* of the Cuartel de la Montaña". Bidagor also suggests that being surrounded by "the old City", where the traditional and the popular come together, this complex of buildings is even closer to perfection.[400]

Fig. 6.11 Bombed-out houses in Argüelles (adapted from the web).

Unlike the Royal Palace and the Cathedral which already existed, even though in an unfinished state in the case of the latter,[401] the headquarters of the Falangist Party (FET-JONS) was still merely a project. Bidagor planned the building on one of the most privileged locations of the grand façade, the Montaña del Príncipe Pío, exactly where the remains of the military headquarters stood. Incidentally, as discussed earlier, the

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[398] "Plan General De Ordenación Urbana De Madrid De 1944 (1946) "Plan Bidagor"."

[399] FET y de las JONS (Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista) became the official state party after Franco's fusion of the Falangist movement Falange Española y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (which was in turn the result of a fusion) and the traditionalist Carlist movement.

[400] "Plan General De Ordenación Urbana De Madrid De 1944 (1946) 'Plan Bidagor'."

[401] The Almudena Cathedral was not completed until the early 1990s.

Cuartel de la Montaña was the scenario of the first clash between rebel mutineers and Republican forces in the capital in July 1936. The first rebel fighters (or "liberators" from the Nacionales' point of view) had fallen there, infusing the soil with their blood, which in the Falangist imaginary possessed almost sacred qualities. The implications of Bidagor's choice to build the Casa del Partido on the *sacred plot* of the Cuartel will be explored in the third section.

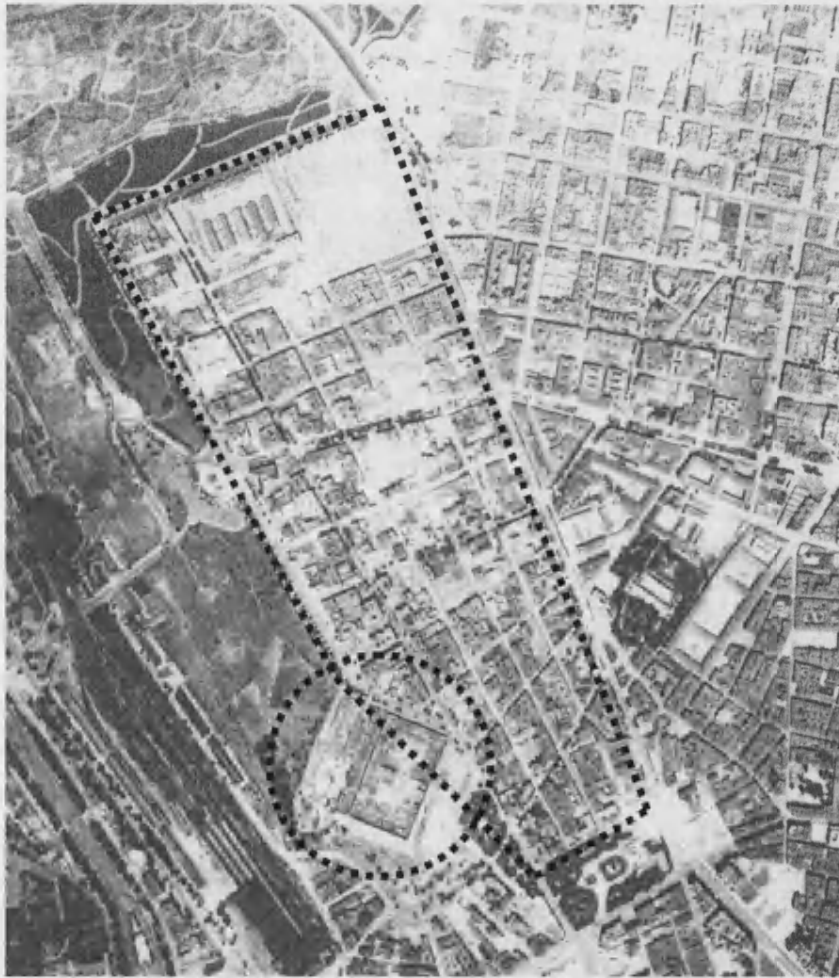Fig. 6.12 *The district of Argüelles (within the dotted lines) and the ruins of the Cuartel (within the dotted circle)* (scanned photograph from the Cartoteca de la Consejería de Urbanismo y Medio Ambiente de la Comunidad de Madrid).

Bidagor implied that a considerable portion of the district of Argüelles, largely in ruins because of the war, could be demolished, thereby creating space on the grand façade for

some of the Ministries, the "Ministries of Strength and Spirituality" (*Ministerios de Fuerza y Espiritualidad*), to quote Bidagor's own words, and perhaps also for the most representative embassies and other international offices. By locating most of the political organisation in Argüelles, close to the Royal Palace and the Almudena Cathedral, Bidagor sought to fulfil his organic concept of the city, where the grand façade was equivalent to the *head* of Madrid. The "Ministries corresponding to the material interests", on the other hand, could be located elsewhere, most likely in Nuevos Ministerios, which, in this view, represented the heart and bowels of the city.[402] Through the metaphor of the living being in which organs and limbs occupy distinct positions, Bidagor gave expression to the Falangist notion of hierarchy identified earlier.

6.1.3 Organisation and implementation of the new urban planning guidelines

Besteiro had suggested the need for "an organisation to harmonise the various interests at stake"[403] if Madrid was to develop into a larger regional entity. For Bidagor and his followers the idea of a single authority was intrinsic to the theory of the organic city and Madrid's capital status. It was argued that the economic and administrative challenges posed by the reconstruction of Madrid could "only be overcome through Unity [sic]".[404] According to Bidagor, the Junta de Reconstrucción effectively reflected the need to "unite the different centres that intervene in the development of the city in a single organisation", including "Madrid city council, the town councils of close-by villages, the Military Ministries, the National Movement Ministry, and the Ministries of Public Works, Industry, Agriculture, Finance and Government".[405]

The notion of the need for a unified political leadership, a single administrative authority, involving both local and national entities, was shared by other key figures in the planning process for the new Madrid. When discussing the difficulties in

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[402] See "Plan General De Ordenación Urbana De Madrid De 1944 (1946) 'Plan Bidagor'."

[403] *Esquema Y Bases Para El Desarrollo Del Plan Regional De Madrid (Plan Besteiro)*, 18.

[404] "Madrid, Capital Imperial."

[405] "[...] reunir en un organismo único los diferentes centros que intervienen en el desarrollo e la ciudad, que son: el Ayuntamiento de Madrid, los Ayuntamientos de los pueblos limítrofes, los Ministerios Militares, del Movimiento, Obras Públicas, Industria, Agricultura, Hacienda y Gobernación". Pedro Bidagor Lasarte, *Orientaciones Sobre La Reconstrucción De Madrid : Texto Taquigráfico De La Conferencia Pronunciada Por Don Pedro Bidagor Lasarte... En El Instituto Técnico De Construcción Y Edificación, El Día 19 De Febrero De 1941* (Madrid: Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones, 1941) 3.

reconstructing the capital city, the head of the city council's Department of Architecture, Gaspar Blein, contends:

"We have to assure ourselves that planning Madrid is such a significant matter that, if I may say, should put all the Ministries and the Municipalities in check. It is not about a few lines and coloured spots on some plans; Spain will not function if all its state mechanisms are not synchronised, starting with its head [i.e. Madrid], and precisely this is what we are proposing in order to tackle the reconstruction of Madrid. I repeat: unity of leadership."[406]

The appointment of José Moreno Torres—who had already been appointed head of Regiones Devastadas—president of the Madrid Junta de Reconstrucción, effectively reflects the idea of "unity of leadership" or "single command", to quote Bidagor.[407] From the Falangists' point of view, the reconstruction of Spain could not take place without the reconstruction of Madrid. Such a metonymical relationship is poignantly expressed by Blein when he argues:

"In Spain's being, [Madrid] represents the head, and if Madrid is not perfectly organised to accomplish its mission, it will be difficult for the national being to function properly."[408]

In contrast to Besteiro's acknowledgement of the need for coordination but simultaneous warning against the creation of a "new Minerva", fully armed and "ready to fight heroic battles",[409] the Falangist planners wanted exactly this: a powerful, omniscient, administrative Minerva to infuse all the parties involved in reconstructing and planning Madrid with a single (heroic) spirit and a common practice.

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[406] "Hay que convencerse de que la ordenación de Madrid es asunto tan serio que, si me permitís la frase, tiene que poner en jaque a todos los Ministerios y Corporaciones. Que no es cuestión de unas rayas y unas manchas de color en unos planos; que España no funcionará, mientas no se sincronicen, empezando por la cabeza, todos sus mecanismos estatales, y justamente esto es lo que proponemos para desarrollar la reconstrucción de Madrid. Repito: unidad de dirección." Gaspar Blein, "Dificultades En La Reconstrucción De Madrid," (Instituto Técnico de la Construcción y Edificación, 1941), 5.
[407] See Bidagor Lasarte, *Orientaciones Sobre La Reconstrucción De Madrid : Texto Taquigráfico De La Conferencia Pronunciada Por Don Pedro Bidagor Lasarte... En El Instituto Técnico De Construcción Y Edificación, El Dia 19 De Febrero De 1941* 5.
[408] "En el ser de España representa la cabeza y, sin que Madrid esté perfectamente organizado para cumplir su misión, difícil será conseguir que el ser nacional funcione como debe." Blein, "Dificultades En La Reconstrucción De Madrid," 1.
[409] *Esquema Y Bases Para El Desarrollo Del Plan Regional De Madrid (Plan Besteiro)* 18.

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6.2 Falangist aesthetics and post-war architecture in the capital city

6.2.1 Seventeenth-century Imperial Madrid

Parallel to, and often enmeshed in, the design of a general plan for the capital of the New Spain, there ran the search for the city's genuine aesthetics, which, as already suggested, was soon identified with seventeenth-century Imperial Madrid. The 1940 December issue of the magazine *Reconstrucción*, published by Regiones Devastadas, explored the motivations for such choice. To architect Luis Moya, for example, looking back to the seventeenth century was the only way of transcending the stylistic chaos generated by the incapacity of modern Spain to assimilate foreign and ancient stylistic contributions. Spain, Moya contended, had possessed

> "the power of assimilation—the power to receive and elaborate—sometimes with higher, sometimes with medium standards, but always sufficiently to be able to consider foreign and past contributions as the necessary nourishment to keep alive [our] style, always unique through the uninterrupted course of tradition".[410]

Moreover, Moya referred to the colonisation of America and the successful building enterprise that Spain had engaged in at the time through the prolific construction of towns in the newly conquered lands.[411] To Moya, the secret of Spain's success in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lay in its capacity to appropriate diverse influences and produce something genuinely Spanish and imperial. In his view, it was mainly through the mediation of Juan de Herrera, the architect of El Escorial, that Spanish golden-age architecture had been successful in incorporating

> "the oriental method—more as a rebirth of the Hispanic-Arab tradition than as an importation—the Italian method of the more severe times, and even certain aspects of the Flemish, [producing] an architecture [with] abundant means for responding to any kind of programme that a great Empire might need, and [becoming] a true Imperial architecture, like the ancient Roman".[412]

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[410] "[...] España poseía un poder de asimilación—un poder de recepción y elaboración—en grado superior unas veces, mediano otras, pero siempre suficiente para considerar las aportaciones de lo ajeno y de lo antiguo como alimentos necesarios para la vida del estilo, siempre único en el cauce de una tradición no interrumpida." Luis Moya, "Orientaciones De Arquitectura En Madrid," *Reconstrucción*, December 1940, 11.

[411] Ibid. 15.

[412] "Incorporada en la corriente tradicional por Herrera la manera oriental—como una nueva vida de lo hispano-árabe más que como una importación—la italiana del momento más severo, y hasta el modo flamenco en algunos aspectos, adquiere aquella arquitectura medios riquísimos para satisfacer toda la clase de programas que pueda requerir un gran Imperio, y es una verdadera arquitectura Imperial, como la de la Roma antigua." Ibid.

6.2.2 Historic Madrid

To the Falangists, architecture had thus the potential of recreating the atmosphere of the old Spanish Empire in contemporary Madrid, and one of the city council's projects (referred to in Bidagor's Plan as well) was restoring the historic, Hapsburg district of the capital city. Mariano García Cortés, author of *Madrid y su fisionomía urbana* (Madrid and its urban physiognomy) suggested, however, that

> "'Historic Madrid' has to produce the feeling of what it might have been, of what Imperial Madrid should have been, the head of the State, 'where the sun never set'."[413]

According to García Cortés, this could sometimes involve "falsifying" what had actually been there in the name of "historical truth".[414] Overt manipulation of the historical built environment was hence acceptable to García Cortés, who probably envisioned a stylised Imperial Madrid made up of both originals and replicas of *plateresque*[415] and Hapsburg architecture. And this did not include the inconveniences of the seventeenth century such as using "the streets [as] dumping sites" or restoring poor and miserable houses, which García Cortés associated with the old Jewish and Moorish neighbourhoods in southern Madrid and the hovels "*a la malicia*".[416]

The anti-Semitic elements of the regime's early neo-Hispanic imperial discourses are probably familiar to the reader by now. In particular, the association between Moorish and Jewish neighbourhoods with crammed and narrow streets and brick-architecture of poor quality seems to have turned into a cliché in the early 1940s (let us recall the discourses around the redevelopment of the Barri de la Catedral in Barcelona). At the same time, not even the Falangists could ignore the magnificent architectural

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[413] "El 'Madrid Histórico' ha de producir la sensación de lo que pudo ser, de lo que debió ser el Madrid Imperial, la cabecera del Estado, 'en cuyos dominios no se ponía el sol'."Mariano García Cortés, "El "Madrid Histórico" Debe Evocar Y El Genio Y Poder De Nuestro Pueblo," *Reconstrucción*, December 1940, 32, 33.

[414] Ibid. 32.

[415] Plateresque is an architectural style that developed in Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries characterised by its ornate qualities, emulating the craft of a silversmith.

[416] García Cortés, "El "Madrid Histórico" Debe Evocar Y El Genio Y Poder De Nuestro Pueblo," 34. "Casas a la malicia" (which could be translated into something like houses with malice) were the kind of constructions that emerged in Madrid in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a result of residents' legal obligation to host the king's servants more permanently. In order to avoid such obligation, Madrilenians began deliberately to construct their houses so they would not fulfil the minimum standards required to host the royal employees. They did this by subdividing each floor into more rooms or "hiding" rooms in the upper storeys, thus creating rather uncomfortable and reduced living spaces.

achievements of the period of Islamic domination or the fact that most of the street grid of old Madrid, including the noblest areas, still followed the original Moorish street layout. Hence, it was not without contradictions and with limitations that the terms Moorish and Jewish could be used in this context as metaphors for poverty and ugliness, which, on the other hand, as noted, were also identified with the working class and the Reds.

In an essay entitled *España: germanos contra bereberes* (Spain: Germans against Berbers), written while in prison in the summer of 1936, José Antonio Primo de Rivera—introduced earlier as the founder of Falange—partly resolves this contradiction by distinguishing between the Arabs and the Berbers, and ultimately replacing cultural difference with class difference. While he sees the Arabs—a higher civilisation—as leading the invasion of Spain in the eighth century, he views the Berbers—a nomadic, lower people, in his view—as the population group that in practice took over the Peninsula. According to Primo de Rivera, the (class) affinities between the Berbers and the indigenous Iberian peoples—who had previously been dominated, yet not integrated, by the Romans—resulted in their *crossbreeding*. Thus, in Primo de Rivera's elitist view, the Christian, Gothic kings that fought the *Reconquista* managed only to expel the Arab leaders. The remaining lower castes, who were by then a mixture of Berber and Iberian indigenous peoples, were vanquished and subsequently subjugated by the Christian noble caste of Gothic descent.[417] When understood as part of this quite simple class dynamics, the apparently contradictory act of praising the achievements of the Arab civilisation—including its urbanism and architecture—while showing disdain for the Berber or Moorish culture appears conceptually less problematic.

The acknowledgement of the contribution of the Arab civilisation to the Spanish nation resonates in the apparently more sophisticated and generous interpretation of Madrid's diverse pasts and traditions that Falangist intellectual Víctor d'Ors proposes when he celebrates Madrid as "a border city, within a territory, Spain, which is itself already a border".[418] By 1947, the redevelopment plans for historic Madrid—or "Magerit" as d'Ors refers to it, using Madrid's originally Arabic name—had made little progress, and

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[417] Miguel Primo de Rivera y Urquijo, ed., *Papeles Póstumos De José Antonio* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés Editores, S.A., 1996) 160-62.
[418] "Ordenación Histórico-Artística De Madrid. Conferencia Pronunciada Por D. Víctor D'Ors En El Instituto De Estudios De Administración Local," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura* 61 (1947): 51.

d'Ors blamed the delay on the continuing lack of a set of general aesthetic principles with which to reorder not only historic Madrid, but the city at large. In trying to overcome more rigid understandings of Imperial Madrid, which tended to privilege the north-western, allegedly nobler part of the city, he suggested that "Madrid has two faces, the silver face that looks to the north and the north-west, and the golden face that looks to the south and south-east".[419] According to d'Ors, the stony, yet solemn, bluish and greyish "Velazquean [and Herrerian] landscape" to the north-west—which Besteiro nostalgically evoked in the introduction to his 1939 Plan—had its counterpart in the yellow and red tones ("the Aragonese brick, Arab roof-tiles and Andalusian whitewash"), which he sees as typical of the south-eastern landscape, and were "immortalised by the brush of the early Goya".[420]

"Madrid looks, on the one hand, to Europe and the Western world; on the other, to Africa and the Mediterranean", d'Ors wrote. In architectural terms, Madrid had inherited "the grey German slates and the Baltic pinnacles, the Flemish windows, the alternating arrangement of openings and protruding volumes of France, and even the far-away Scandinavian spires and today still, the New York skyscrapers" from northern Europe (and North America). From the Mediterranean, on the other hand, Madrid had taken over "the arcades of Florence and the cupolas of Rome and part of the strong chromatics of Byzantium".[421]

D'Ors ends his comprehensive homage to the overlapping cultural influences to be found in the capital city by claiming that:

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[419] "Madrid tiene dos caras, la cara de plata que mira al N. y N.O., y la cara de oro que mira al S. y al S.E." Ibid.

[420] Ibid. It is perhaps worth noting that there were less poetic and more technical appraisals of the role of brick in Madrid's historical architecture, too. Luis Vivanco, for example, suggests that brick has both a *Mudéjar* (Spanish-Moorish) and a neoclassical dimension. The two differ in terms of how brick is incorporated into the buildings. While in the first case, brick is an active component of the design of the building, in neoclassical architecture brick becomes a passive component as the "expressiveness" of the building rests on the usually white stone mouldings and cornices deployed. See Luis Felipe Vivanco, "Funcionalismo Y Ladrillismo," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 119 (1951).

[421] "Madrid mira por un lado a Europa y el mundo occidental, por otro al África y al Mediterráneo. [...] Su mirada N. y N.E. abarca la piedra que viene de la montaña, especialmente con su gran genio Herrera, y las grises pizarras alemanas y los chapiteles del Báltico, las ventanas de Flandes, la ordenación de cuerpos en entrantes y salientes de Francia y aun las más lejanas agujas escandinavas y hoy todavía los rascacielos neoyorquinos. [...] ¿Y por el Este y el S.E.? Por ahí Madrid alcanza a mirar las arquerías de Florencia y las cúpulas de Roma y casi el fuerte cromatismo de Bizancio." "Ordenación Histórico-Artística De Madrid. Conferencia Pronunciada Por D. Víctor D'ors En El Instituto De Estudios De Administración Local," 51.

"[Madrid's] task is the same as that of Spain as a whole, but because of its border condition and capital status, with all the more reason: to hold [back] both tendencies, temper them, and finally integrate them into a higher harmony."[422] D'Ors suggests that the integration of the two Madrids into a "higher harmony" involves maintaining their distinct styles, colours and construction materials, and establishing the right proportion of each of the two traditions in the reconstruction of the old city and the development of the new city.[423] However, the notions of "tempering" and "holding back" again suggest the existence of an elite, a dominant class, who are seen as naturally responsible for maintaining the delicate social and aesthetic equilibrium of Spain. And, from a Falangist perspective, that class was at that time embodied in the victors of the Civil War.

6.3 The Falangist programme abandoned

Both Bidagor's Falangist inspired planning conceptions and the initial exaltation of Imperial Madrid were abandoned by the regime after a few years. As the Second World War evolved and the defeat of the Axis powers seemed increasingly possible, hardcore, pro-German Falangists, including Serrano Suñer, who had been one of the architects of the initial political organisation of the regime, were displaced. In view of the change of direction of the war, especially from 1943, Franco sought to distance himself from the identification of his regime with the Axis, giving more and more ideological room to the traditionalist (Carlist) *family*[424] and the Church.

As explained earlier, Bidagor's Plan was not effectively in force until 1946, thus after the end of the Second World War. From the start, however, it was largely ignored in practice. This was partly because of its ideological connotations and the difficult economic situation, but also because it had been conceived as a long-term plan that depended on the subsequent approval of hierarchically subordinated partial plans to become successful.[425] The curtailing of the initial ideological enthusiasm, which had motivated the Plan, together with the chronic lack of state funding, made it very

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[422] "En resumen, su tarea as la misma que la de España entera, pero aquí, por encrucijada y por capitalidad, con mucho mayor motivo: sujetar ambas tendencias, atemperarlas, integrarlas, por fin, en una armonía superior." Ibid.

[423] Ibid.: 51, 52.

[424] The different ideological tendencies within the Franco regime are usually referred to as *familias* or families.

[425] Juan Manuel Toledano, "Los Proyectos Parciales Del Plan Bidagor," in *Plan Bidagor 1941-1946. Plan General De Ordenación*, ed. Carlos Sambricio (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid; Nerea, 2003), 64.

difficult to implement Bidagor's planning guidelines. Private interests started to play a predominant role, negotiating if not imposing their own priorities in the drawing-up of the partial plans and the design of specific projects.[426] Bidagor's Plan had mirrored the Falangist architects' belief in top-down state-planning. According to some scholars, it was the last of a series of attempts to define a city project for Madrid, or in other words, the last effort to conceive of the future Greater Madrid from a unitary and global perspective.[427] In practice, the design of the *new* city ended up, or rather continued, in the hands of redevelopers such as the brothers Otamendi.[428] The result, over time, was a fragmented, uneven development of the capital city.

It is also worth noting that, by 1951, Bidagor himself acknowledged that his Plan, although well designed, had a number of weaknesses. These he saw as stemming from his earlier preoccupation with producing a rigid, monumentalist city, based on a traditional conception of the urban, and his disregard for more contemporary ideas, which now, a few years later, he considered better suited to address the needs of a twentieth-century capital city.[429] Bearing in mind the Falangists' idealisation of the seventeenth century, it is suggested that Bidagor's Plan can be understood in light of the European Baroque city-planning tradition, in which the fundamental aim of planning was the staging of power. And it was this preoccupation with the symbolic dimension of power that seemed increasingly alien to the later Bidagor and possibly his followers.

Parallel to the abandonment of Bidagor's Plan, the obsession with finding the genuine aesthetics and architectural style of the capital city as the head of the New Spain also dissolved, and individual architects gained more freedom of manoeuvre towards the end of the 1940s. According to Rafael Moneo, two competitions held in 1949 signalled the commencement of a new period in Madrilenian architecture and Spanish architecture as a whole: the competition for the *Basílica Hispano-Americana de la Merced* (the Hispanic-American Mercy Basilica), which was won by Luis Laorga and Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oiza, and the competition for the *Casa Sindical* (the Syndical House)

[426] See Moneo, "Madrid: Los Últimos Veinticinco Años," 52.

[427] Alberto Humanes Bustamante, *Madrid No Construido. Imágenes Arquitectónicas De La Ciudad Prometida* (Madrid: COAM, 1986) 29.

[428] The brothers Otamendi were behind the construction of the first underground line in Madrid, inaugurated in 1919. See Toledano, "Los Proyectos Parciales Del Plan Bidagor," 66.

[429] See Moneo, "Madrid: Los Últimos Veinticinco Años," 54.

on Paseo del Prado, which Franciso Cabrero won (see Chapter 3, p.100).[430] Discussions in architectural magazines became increasingly eclectic and previously banned foreign influences and ideas from Western Europe and the United States were again introduced.[431] Spanish golden-age architects had been celebrated for their capacity to synthesise diverse influences, but it was the particular result of their achievement in the seventeenth century that Falange had tried to revive in the 1940s without success. What the Falangist architects failed (or refused) to see was that the revival of a mummified style would never produce the kind of magnificent architecture which they envisioned. They failed to understand that the potential for success lay in the process itself—the openness to foreign influences and the capacity to assimilate them. This is possibly what many of them realised towards the end of the 1940s.

Hence, the attempt to find and impose a genuine Falangist aesthetics, especially in Madrid, constituted a relatively brief interlude in the history of planning and architecture under Franco. The ideological foundations of Falange were arguably weaker and shakier than those of Nazism or Italian Fascism. It could also be argued that the Falangist programme, regardless of its consistency, had few chances of surviving in the post Second World War international scenario, which led Franco to attempt to gain the favour of the Allies by getting rid of the most explicit signs of his association with the Axis powers, and instead exploit his pro-Christian, anti-Communist stance. But above all such reasons, Spain's economic limitations were decisive.

In spite of the chronologically and intellectually limited nature of the Falangist ideological experiment, the attempt to plan a new capital city and develop a national style testify to the enthusiasm that many men and women felt at the end of the war at the possibility of constructing a new Spain. In hindsight, with Franco's 40-year long repressive, but also lethargic, dictatorship in mind, it is perhaps difficult to understand

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[430] Ibid.
[431] See, for example, "Algunas Fotografías Que Han Figurado En La Exposición Iberoamericana," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. Número Extraordinario [Special Issue] (1946), "Amate L'architettura [Excerpt from Gio Ponti's Publication]," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 189 (1957), Azorín, "La Psicología Y La Arquitectura," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 12 (1941), Fernando Chueca, "Experiencias Arquitectónicas De Un Viaje a Norteamérica," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 133 (1953), "Notas De Una Visita a Estocolmo," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. Número Extraordinario [Special Issue] (1946), Diego Plata, "El Momento Español," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 184 (1957), J. Ramírez de Lucas, "Madrid - Milán: Empate Y Prórroga," *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, no. 199 (1958).

that such enthusiasm ever existed. The fate of the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña—considering their key position in Bidagor's project for the grand façade—is particularly revealing of how this initial passion dissipated, and how the potential for change at the end of the Civil War soon turned into status quo.

6.4 The projects for the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña

6.4.1 Commemorating the events of the 20th of July

> "Today, in the hours of peace, the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña are eternal."[432]

Fig. 6.13 Gathering in the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña (undated photograph, early 1940s) (Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid).

After the war, the Cuartel de la Montaña and the district of Argüelles, including the buildings along Paseo del Pintor Rosales and Ferraz, were almost completely in ruins. In spite of the buildings' precarious condition, a number of poorer families had found temporary accommodation in them. There is evidence that, in some cases, the families remained in these houses for years after the end of the conflict, refusing to abandon them despite the legal measures taken by the owners who wanted to reconstruct their properties.[433] Housing became an enormous problem in post-war Madrid. However, as

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[432] "Hoy, en las horas de paz, las ruinas del Cuartel de la Montaña son eternas." "Madrid. El Cuartel De La Montaña," *Reconstrucción*, August-September 1940.

[433] See, for example, Signatura 6-287*-42, "Ayuntamiento De Madrid N° 3066. Negociado De Obras De Ensanche. Clase Finca En Ruinas. Expediente. Ferraz 73," (Madrid: Archivo de Villa, 1941).

discussed in previous chapters, the bureaucratic processes that proprietors had to go through to receive state subsidies for reconstructing their buildings were extremely lengthy, and although no works were being undertaken on the ruined properties it was probably more difficult to evict potential squatters.

Figs. 6.14 and 6.15 Living among the ruins on Paseo del Pintor Rosales (1953) (Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid).

While the projects for the grand façade of the capital city, and more specifically the Casa del Partido, took shape in Bidagor's Plan, the ruins of the military barracks served their own purpose. A series of photographs—today available at the Archivo Regional de Madrid—indicate that a number of masses and commemorations of the uprising were celebrated amidst the remains, especially in the early 1940s.[434]

At least two masses were held in 1941, one of them to celebrate San Fernando, the patron saint of the Army Engineers, which was the military corps that had traditionally resided in the Cuartel. In 1942, the sixth anniversary of the defence of the Cuartel was also celebrated with a mass. There are also more than twenty very expressive, yet undated pictures of a ceremony that was held in honour of the officers and soldiers fallen in the Cuartel. All the photographs are suggestive of the nature of these religious and ultra-patriotic events: hundreds of women and men in black clothes, soldiers and

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[434] See Colección Fotográfica D. M. Santos Yubero, "Cuartel De La Montaña. Signaturas 32106, 32112, 37689, 45388," (Madrid: Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid, 1920-1987).

religious representatives congregating amidst piles of rubble and dust and surrounded by the solitary, breached façade walls of the once impressive structure of the Cuartel. The photographs poignantly evoke an atmosphere of combined devotedness and patriotism.

Fig. 6.16 Mass in the ruins of the Cuartel (undated photograph, early 1940s) (Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid).

Open air masses were a common practice in the early days of the regime. The practice started during the war in the cities that the Nacionales took over. The ceremonies were usually staged with care, suggesting a mixture of religious baroque and fascist military aesthetics, even though it is partly unclear who the actual "designers" were. The masses at the Cuartel were in this sense not unique, but instead part of a vast, comprehensive programme of tributes to the fallen and celebrations of the victory that became especially important in the immediate post-war period and even more so in the capital city.[435]

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[435] See Mary Vincent, "Expiation as Performative Rhetoric in National-Catholicism: The Politics of Gesture in Post-Civil War Spain," in *The Politics of Gesture*, ed. Michael Braddick (Oxford: Oxford University Press for Past and Present, (forthcoming)).
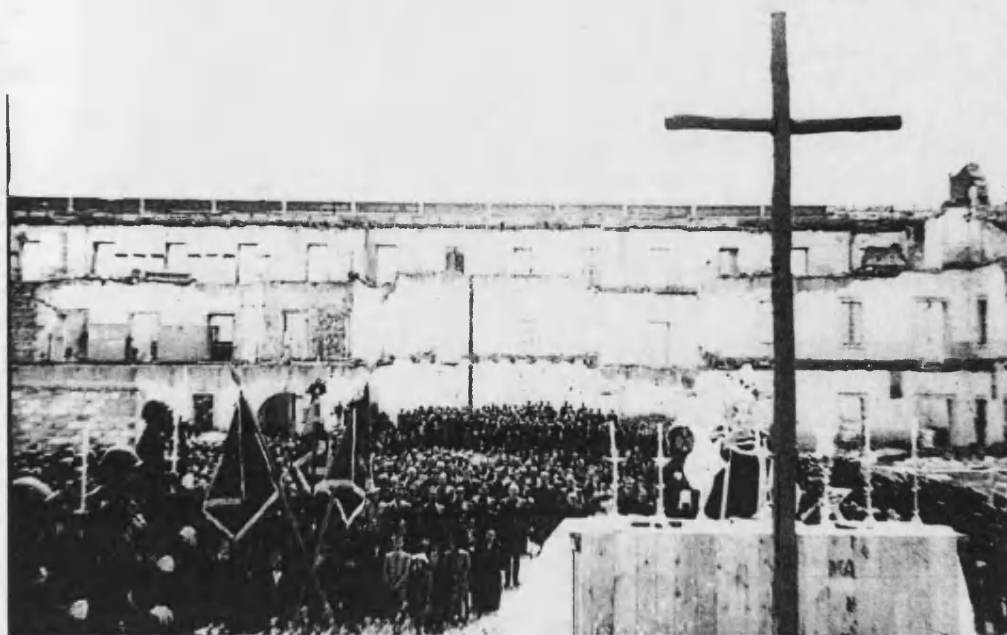
Fig. 6.17 Improvised altar in a ceremony amidst the ruins of the Cuartel (1942) (Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid).

There was perhaps something distinct about the celebrations in the ruins of the Cuartel. It was noted earlier that Bidagor referred to the ruins of the military headquarters as the "sacred plot of the Cuartel de la Montaña". In the context of the sacrificial mystique that impregnated Falangist beliefs and rhetoric the statement is not remarkable.[436] As already intimated, the soil of the Cuartel was sacred in this view because it was imbued with the blood of the young soldiers who died for the Falangist cause at the very beginning of the Liberation Crusade. However, as explained previously, the Cuartel was eventually seized by the Republican forces after a several hour-long battle, and the military uprising was thereby subdued in Madrid. It is suggested that the rebels' initial setback in Madrid, which, from their point of view, involved both their men's courageous behaviour and yet their defeat, posed a challenge for the now victorious military regime as to how to remember and represent these events.

It could be argued that for as long as the ruins of the barracks remained untouched, the ambiguity of the 20th of July events did not really need to be addressed. There was perhaps something comforting about the ruins and as the introductory quote suggests, perhaps an unspoken wish to leave the place in ruins forever, *eternally*. In a way, the

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[436] The three ideological pillars Religion, Fatherland and Hierarchy, which Bidagor also referred to in his Plan, all involve the notion of sacrifice to some extent. (For example, the Falangist Youth, a small organisation nowadays, still has the motto "Demand of sacrifice". See www.juventudesFalangistas.es/.)

ruins better reflected the notions of sacrifice and defeat, which the regime seemingly associated with the assault and defence of the Cuartel.

In the light of this, Bidagor's choice of locating headquarters of the Falangist Party on the sacred soil of the Cuartel, which at first sight might have seemed like a logical initiative through which to honour the fallen, becomes more ambiguous. Why erect the Party headquarters there and not a memorial or a temple, or a combination of both, similar to what later became *Valle de los Caídos* (Valley of the Fallen)?[437] Is it legitimate to wonder whether the trilogy Religion, Fatherland and Sacrifice would not have been equally compelling and true to the Falangist credo had Bidagor chosen to locate a memorial in replacement for the ruins of the Cuartel? Perhaps the defence of the Cuartel was not deemed a sufficiently heroic event, something the regime could not feel enough pride in to raise a permanent, monumental memorial. The intention behind the projected building, therefore, might instead have been to convey the strength and solidity of the new regime, almost in direct contrast to the mutineers' defeat and the crumbling military headquarters.

6.4.2 The successive projects for the ruined plot of the Cuartel

According to the administrative documentation available, the plot was indeed ceded to FET y de las JONS for the construction of the *Casa del Partido* (House of the Party). On the 17th of July 1943, the Caudillo approved the preliminary plans for the building that Falangist architects Manuel Ambrós, José María Castell and Eduardo Olasagasti had prepared. It was a neo-Herrerian[438] design for a monumental, 70,000-square-metre, five-storey building, which "combine[d] the representative and symbolic character of traditional Spanish architecture with the utilitarian qualities required by the daily and intensive activity of the Party".[439] In December 1944, Regiones Devastadas was commissioned to undertake the works. The demolition works and cleaning up of the

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[437] Valle de los Caídos is the monumental memorial and burial compound that Franco had construct outside Madrid, close to El Escorial, using the labour of thousands of prisoners of war and political prisoners.

[438] As previously discussed, Juan de Herrera, the architect of El Escorial, and *Herrerianism* became the stylistic reference point for Falangist architects.

[439] "Se trata de un edificio aunador en sí del rango representativo y simbólico de la tradicional arquitectura española y del carácter utilitario que requiere la diaria y acentuada labor de Partido." Julio Trenas, "La Nueva Casa Del Partido. Versión Arquitectónica Del Nacionalsindicalismo," *Fotos. Semanario Gráfico*, 24 July 1943. See also Cecilio Barberán, "La Arquitectura Ante Las Ideas," *Diario de Cádiz*, 3 September 1943.

area began in early 1945 and lasted until the summer of 1948. Almost 30,000 cubic metres of remaining stone and brickwork were demolished and removed, another 13,000 cubic metres of destroyed material was excavated and removed, and more than 20,000 cubic metres of earth were taken out from certain sections and used to flatten other sections of the plot. The total cost of the works was 3,381,649.76 pesetas.[440]
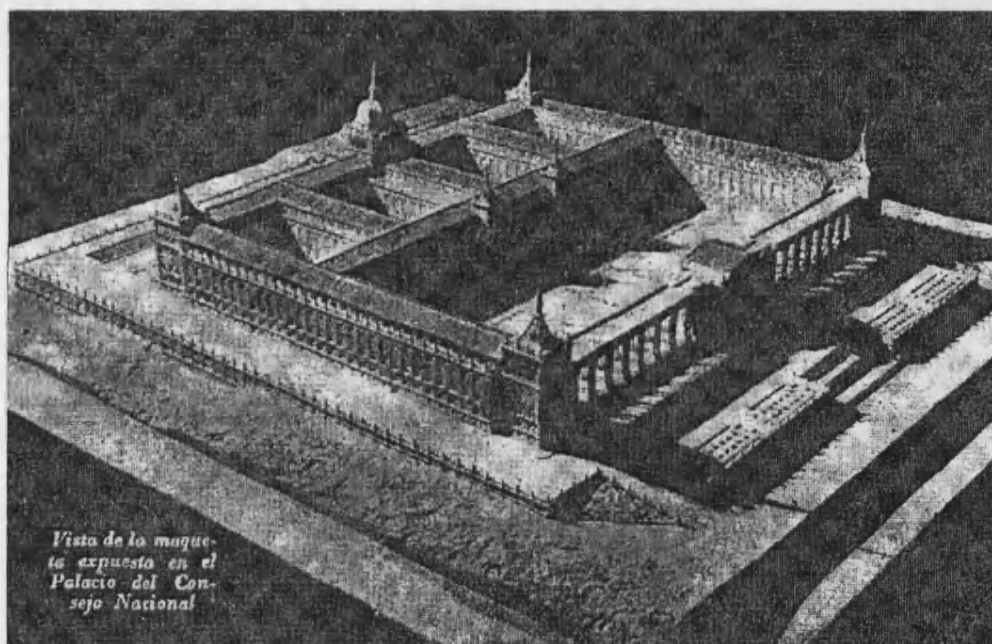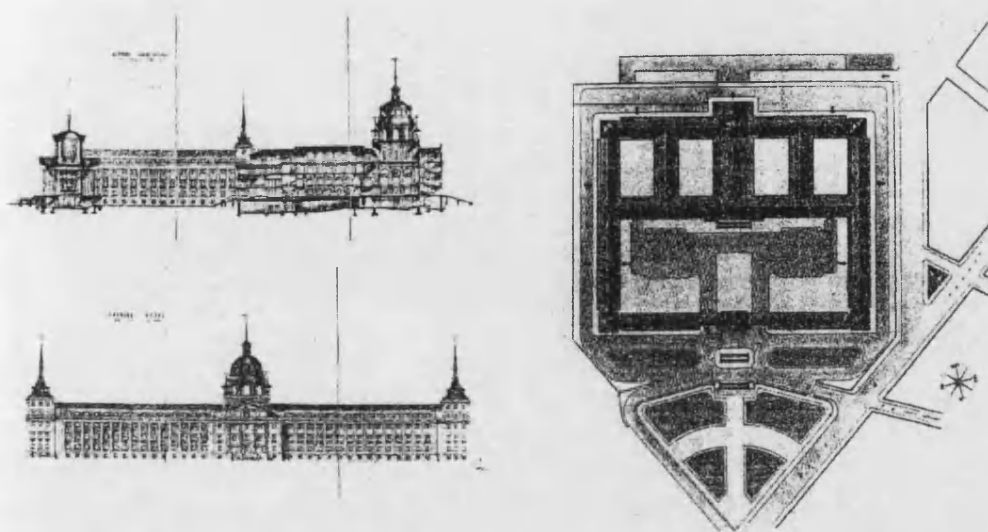

Fig. 6.18 Model of the Casa del Partido (1943) (scanned photograph from *Fotos. Semanario Gráfico*).

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[440] See (04)111 Caja 2392 Top. 76/03, "3. Ministerio De La Gobernación. DGRD. Sección De Construcciones Oficiales. Proyecto De Derribo, Descombro, Explanación Y Construcción De Cerramiento Del Cuartel De La Montaña. "Madrid"," (Madrid: Archivo General de la Administración).

Casa del Partido en el solar del Cuartel de la
Montaña. Madrid 1945

Fig. 6.19 Drawings of the projected Casa del Partido (scanned from *Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo*).

Nevertheless, by the end of the 1940s the project for the Falangist Party's had been abandoned. As explained earlier, the regime's increasing distancing from Falangism probably made the concept of a vast, monumental party house, where up to 18,000 militants could gather, less attractive. The regime was less and less comfortable with the notion of active party membership advocated by the Falangists, and found in the more passive and traditional role of the parish member a better model for civic participation. There were probably also financial reasons for not embarking on such a demanding building project. Ironically, though, one of Madrid's most emblematic high-rises, the *Torre de España*, was constructed during these years on Plaza de España, not far from the Montaña del Príncipe Pío, under the auspices of the brothers Otamendi. It has been suggested that Torre de España in many ways replaced the project for the Casa del Partido, becoming one of the fundamental architectural components of Madrid's grand façade and an unmistakable feature of the city's skyline, thereby poignantly reflecting the regime's eventual alignment with the economic elites and its abandonment of state-sponsored programmes, including architectural projects.

Subsequently, the plot of the former Cuartel was the object of an erratic series of unrealised projects, which point to the difficulties of finding an adequate use for the site. In 1952, a project to exhibit the models that Regiones Devastadas had created of

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some of the reconstructed villages and buildings was prepared. Apparently two pavilions remained on the site of the Cuartel, which could be adapted and reused for this purpose. It is not clear, however, whether any works were carried out or whether the exhibition finally took place.[441] Other data indicate that there existed a *picadero* or horse breeding facility and riding school on the plot by 1954.[442]

By the end of 1958, six years after the model exhibition venture, yet another project for the plot was designed. The Dirección General de Arquitectura planned to set up a clinic on the site and some minor works had already been undertaken by the time that the project was officially presented in March 1959. Nothing is said about the horse breeding facility, on the other hand. It is again unclear how far the works went and if the clinic was actually completed and eventually put to use.[443]

6.4.3 A park and an Egyptian temple

At the end of the 1960s the site had still not been given a definite function and was largely deserted, aside from some semi-abandoned sporting facilities, which may have included a football field. Suddenly it appears as if the interest in the neglected site revived. In June 1968, journalist Manuel Pombo Angulo, a renowned writer and journalist at the time, expressed his concern in *La Vanguardia* that no fewer than three ministries (Government, Army and the General Secretariat of the Movement) had requested licences for constructing on the site.[444] Pombo Angulo was shocked at what he saw as a contravention of the municipal law. It is not clear to which specific regulation Pombo Angulo referred to, but he argued that the public administration had the obligation of protecting the green area comprising the Montaña del Príncipe Pío and the adjacent parks Campo del Moro and Parque del Oeste. This goes back to earlier planners' attempts to safeguard the Manzanares Valley as part of a south-western green belt. However, by the beginning of the 1970s, most parts of the valley had been urbanised according to later, alternative plans aided by pressure from private

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[441] (04)111 Caja 2392 Top. 76/03, "3. Ministerio De La Gobernación. DGRD. Sección De Reconstrucción. Proyectos. Habilitación De Locales Para Exposición De Maquetas En El Antiguo Cuartel De La Montaña. Comarcal Zona Sur De Madrid. Memoria Documento Número 1," (Madrid: Archivo General de la Administración).

[442] "Plano Parcelario De Madrid (1954). Hoja N° 65," (Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Gerencia Municipal de Urbanismo, 1954).

[443] (04)111 Caja 2392 Top. 76/03, "Proyecto De Acondicionamiento En El Cuartel De La Montaña De La Clínica De La Dirección General De Arquitectura," (Madrid: Archivo General de la Administración).

[444] Manuel Pombo Angulo, "Cuartel De La Montaña," *La Vanguardia Española*, 6 June 1968.

redevelopers, who envisioned the potential for urban growth and development of the area. It was perhaps in view of this that Pombo Angulo saw the Montaña del Príncipe Pío as a last un-urbanised stronghold, which should be spared from redevelopment. He hoped, he wrote, that the news about the construction licences was simply a misunderstanding.[445]

It was not just the potential damage to the landscape that worried Pombo Angulo, but also that Madrilenians were forgetting the history of the hill. While Goya's painting and the events of the 2nd of May 1802 were often talked about, he claimed, the events of 20th of July 1936 were more seldom evoked, aside, he wrote, from the yearly masses that continued to be held in memory of the fallen in the Cuartel. "It would be sad for all of us [to forget]. Because it is always sad—for everybody—to forget a sacrifice", he concluded.[446] Pombo Angulo's article is interesting in that it takes up the motif of the sacrifice almost 30 years after the end of the war, yet this time with the subtly conveyed understanding that the sacrifice had involved not only the supporters of the rebels but "thousands of Madrilenians of all classes, tendencies and opinions". (This could be interpreted either in line with the expiation rhetoric which the regime often made use of, and according to which Spaniards regardless of their position or ideology had been part of a collective purge to redeem the Spanish nation; or as a more condemnatory comment on the horrors of the war and, in particular, the unnecessary deaths of the thousands of people who had perished in Madrid during the conflict.) In sum, Pombo Angulo's article suggests that there existed concern among residents, observers and possibly also institutional representatives regarding the fate of the plot of the Cuartel— not just because of the natural and aesthetic qualities of the Montaña, but because of the historical and symbolical meaning of the site.

Fears regarding the construction of the area proved unjustified. That same year (1968), a project for a park and a scenic overhang on the Montaña del Príncipe Pío was publicised and this time the works would be completed. The main goal was now to create a green zone on the hill. As suggested in an article that appeared in *Hoja del Lunes*, the hill was "the logical complement and a connecting link in the chain of parks

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[445] Ibid.
[446] "Sería triste para todos [que olvidásemos esto]. Porque siempre es triste—para todos—olvidar un sacrificio." Ibid.

(...) that enveloped western Madrid". It was argued that the plot of the Cuartel was the only black spot in an otherwise unspoilt chain of green and beautiful leisure areas. Aside from the semi-abandoned sporting facility, which the article does not provide more information about, the plot remained in a state of neglect, but this was now going to change. The article enthusiastically announced that suddenly "from the very centre of Madrid the most beautiful spectacle of Nature will be offered, something few European cities can provide; a place for rest and solitude, which Madrilenians need more and more".[447]

Thus, in spite of the disregard for the plans for a green belt along the Manzanares Valley, the need for creating a green area seemed to be the main justification for the late 1960s city council's decision to finally turn the site of the Cuartel into a park. Moreover, it is implied in some of the press articles on the subject that the city council had been involved in a long and tedious battle against the pressures from real estate companies, who aimed to redevelop the site.

The news about the park were well received, and journalist Francisco Casares, for example, argued that "[the] purpose [of the park] is reasonable, taking into account that Madrid does not have a surplus of green zones and that everything that is done in this sense will help the city".[448] For Casares, green areas primarily addressed the needs of children and the elderly. "Children [need them] for their games and their recreation and the elderly for their rest [...]."[449] It is perhaps significant that Casares moves from these considerations straight into the evocation of the events of the 20th of July 1936 when "the crowds (...) assassinated almost all the defendants and afterwards engaged in acts of debauchery and masquerade, walking around the streets of Madrid amidst screams

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[447] "Desde el mismo centro de Madrid se brindará el más bello espectáculo de la Naturaleza, como pueden ofrecer muy pocas ciudades europeas, y un lugar de descanso y soledad del que están necesitando cada vez más los madrileños." "El Cuartel De La Montaña Será Una Bella Cornisa," *Hoja del Lunes*, Monday 4 November 1968.

[448] "El propósito es plausible, si se tiene en cuenta que Madrid no anda sobrado de zonas verdes y todo lo que se haga en ese sentido beneficiará a la ciudad." Francisco Casares, *La Vanguardia Española*, 20 November 1968.

[449] "Los niños, para sus juegos y esparcimientos y los viejos para su descanso, necesitan ese tipo de espacios al aire libre." Ibid.

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and denunciations, carrying the uniforms, guns, leathers and cartridge holsters that they had stripped off the victims".[450]

The contrast between the innocent scene of the children and the elderly playing and resting in the park and that of the killing of the officers in the Cuartel could be seen as symptomatic of the problematic relationship to the events of the 20th of July among those who identified with the cause of the uprising. Imagining the innocent scene of infants and elderly people enjoying the greenery on the former site of the military headquarters, while reminding the reader of the mutiny and the uprising could be seen as yet another attempt at recalling the tragic events by simultaneously displacing them, in the sense of disassociating them from the material site where they occurred. Arguably it would be difficult for Madrilenians to associate a park full of children and elderly people with "the attack and defence of the Cuartel". Perhaps inevitably, the secular, ecologist-inspired discourse about the benefits of the new park for the city was interspersed with fragments of the lingering preoccupation with the spiritual and symbolic dimensions of the site. Two years later, in December 1971, the park was inaugurated by the then Prince of Spain, Juan Carlos, and a selected group of public officials.[451]

In the meantime, something happened which gave the history of the plot of the former Cuartel an unexpected twist. When the Egyptian government offered Spain an ancient temple in gratitude for the efforts of the Spanish archaeological mission in the Nubia Campaign (which the UNESCO organised to prevent the Nubia monuments from disappearing under the water of the Aswan high dam constructed in 1960), the Spanish authorities deemed the new park an ideal location for the Egyptian shrine.[452] Constructed in the fourth century BC by pharaoh Azakheramon for the worshipping of Isis of Philae, among other divinities, the Debod temple was taken into account in the design of the park, including the vegetation. Cactuses, palm trees and other exotic species were planted around a large rectangular pool in the middle of which the two

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[450] "[L]as turbas [...] asesinaron a casi todos los defensores y despúes se entregaron al desenfreno y la mascarada paseando por las calles madrileñas entre gritos y denuestos los uniformes, fusiles, correajes y cartucheras que habían despojado a las víctimas." Ibid.
[451] Manuel Marlasca Pérez, "Pasado, Presente Y Futuro De La Montaña Del Príncipe Pío," *Villa de Madrid*, January 1971.
[452] Nieto Alcaide, "La Montaña Del Príncipe Pío."; 1628-1229. See also http://www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/tangible/egypt/html_eng/index_en.shtml

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independent doors leading to the temple and the temple itself were placed, suggesting their original position on the Nile bank.

Parallel to the placement of the millenary Egyptian stones on the top of the hill, sculptor Joaquín Vaquero Turcios was commissioned to design a monument to commemorate the fallen in the Cuartel. The monument was approved by a specially designated committee in February 1972.[453] Vaquero Turcios, who was born in 1933, designed a modernist composition consisting of a concave space representing piled sandbags in stone or a trench, in front of which he placed a mutilated human figure in bronze, reminiscent of the broken sculptures that can be found on the friezes of ancient Greek temples.[454] The ensemble was to be located precisely where the two ramps that once led to the main entrance of the Cuartel started out on the avenue Pintor Rosales, and thus at the feet of the hill in the new setting. Ancient Egypt and classical Greece had made their way to *the sacred plot* of the Cuartel de la Montaña.

It is tempting to analyse the meaning behind the location of the Egyptian temple on the site—the fact, ultimately, that a pharaonic relic took the place of Falange's neo-pharaonic project for the ruined site. This could be tied to what was discussed earlier on the distinction made by Falangist intellectuals between the products of the Arab civilisation and the habits of the Berber peoples. In this case, it is the products of the Egyptian civilisation that are valued by the regime regardless of their otherwise problematic Northern-African origins. There is another possible interpretation that suggests a certain emulation of the European colonial practice of placing colonial icons on prominent urban sites. However, Egypt was never a Spanish colony, and the temple was offered voluntarily to the Spanish authorities by Nasser in the midst of the European decolonisation process. Therefore, the regime's conscious decision with regard to the location of the temple was probably more the result of functional than symbolic considerations. However, the question may still be left open as to the unconscious motivations behind the decision.

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[453] The *Comisión Ejecutiva de la Hermandad del Alzamiento Nacional* (National Uprising Brotherhood Executive Committee) was specifically created to select the final project. It was presided by the Captain of the I Military Region, Tomás García Rebull, and included, among others, the civil governor of Madrid, the president of the Brotherhood and representatives of the Brotherhoods of the three Armies and of the "Mothers and Relatives" of the fallen in the Cuartel. See "Será Levantado En El Parque De Debod Monumento a Los Caídos Del Cuartel De La Montaña," *El Alcázar*, 22 April 1972.
[454] Ibid.

On the 20th of July 1972, the 36th anniversary of the mutiny and the failed uprising in Madrid, the temple and the commemorative monument were simultaneously inaugurated. The news appeared on the front page of at least one daily paper, the Madrilenian *Ya*, and other newspapers such as the official paper *Arriba* referred to the event in their Madrid section.[455] The day after the opening, *Ya* devoted its entire front page to the inauguration, including two large-sized pictures, one of mayor Arias Navarro delivering his speech in front of the unveiled monument, and another of the Debod temple. The pictures generally predominated over the text, yet *Arriba* also included an article by Falangist veteran Carlos Rivas, a combined homage to the fallen and a call for attention to the present generations written in an arguably typical Falangist language:

> "We ought to continue to make ourselves responsible for the great accomplishment of the 18th of July and for the lesser accomplishment of the Cuartel de la Montaña, of all the implications and all the efficacies [sic], since only by starting out from these events will we be able to operate in current times devoid of lazy, unyielding and egoistic attitudes; by copying the heroic military and militant dynamism in the minority of officers, Falangists and *requetés* [Carlists], soldiers of a juncture and a cause, who in the midst of the urgent anxieties of the battle, vanquishers or vanquished depending on the case, were already forging more than a military victory, which was of course necessary, but would not have been sufficient."[456]

Rivas' article is also interesting in that it attempts to defend the benefits from the failed mutiny from a military point of view in the same passionate language that Luis Montán used when he depicted the events more than 30 years earlier. Rivas claims that the rebels were aware of their slim chances of succeeding in the capital city, "the defeat

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[455] See M. Santos Yubero, "Hoy Se Inaugura El Monumento a Los Caídos Del Cuartel De La Montaña," *Ya*, Thursday 20 July 1972. ; and "Esta Tarde Se Inauguran: Monumento a Los Caídos Del Cuartel De La Montaña Y El Templo De Debod," *Arriba*, 20 July 1972.

[456] "Habrá que seguir haciéndonos responsables de la gesta grande del 18 de julio y de esa gesta menor del Cuartel de la Montaña, de todas sus significaciones y de todas sus eficacias, puesto que tan sólo partiendo de tales hechos podremos operar sobre el tiempo actual sin inmovilismos perezosos y egoístas; copiando aquel heroico dinamismo militar y militante, en las minorías de militares, de falangistas y requetés, soldados de una coyuntura y de una causa, que en medio de las urgentes angustias del combate, vencedores o vencidos en cada caso, ya estaban forjando algo más que una victoria guerrera, que era, claro está, necesaria, pero que no hubiera sido suficiente." Carlos Rivas, "Cuartel De La Montaña," *Arriba*, 20 July 1972.

[being] almost expected from the very first moment". But he emphasises the importance of the "smaller deed" of the Cuartel and the failed uprising in Madrid within the larger scheme of things. Thanks to the mutiny, he argues, "thousands of red soldiers and militiamen with a lot of armaments were immobilised in the capital of the nation, unable to reach other critical places, where things hung from a thread, thus facilitating the consolidation [of positions] that were later decisive for the victory".[457]

Rivas' military-strategic interpretation of the events of the 20th of July 1936 adds to the already complex map of meanings ascribed to the Montaña del Príncipe Pío as it finally received a clearer function at the beginning of the 1970s. History, ideology, economic interest, urbanism and environmentalism came together on the Montaña del Príncipe Pío in an eccentric material and rhetoric manifestation, which is somehow captured by journalist Marlasca Pérez in the following excerpt:

> "Because all that is in relation [to the Montaña del Príncipe Pío] is staggered over time, immersed in a battle for something beautiful, edifying: the fight and death of a handful of Madrilenians against and for the French invader in 1808; the fight and death of General Fanjul and his men, Spaniards, against and for other Spaniards imbued by strange ideas and foreign ways, for the independence of Spain; the fight, this time without bloodshed, of a mayor, Don Carlos Arias Navarro and his Corporation, for a Madrilenian, territorial vindication; the heroic fight—bloodless too—of these same men against environmental pollution and land speculation."[458]

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[457] "[M]iles de soldados y milicianos rojos, con mucho armamento, quedaron inmovilizados en la capital de la nación, no pudiendo acudir a otros lugares decisivos, donde todo pendía de un hilo, facilitando con ello consolidaciones que luego fueron decisivas para la victoria." Ibid.

[458] "Porque todo lo que con ella se relaciona se halla escalonado en el tiempo, inmerso en un batallar por algo hermoso, edificante: la lucha y la muerte de un puñado de madrileños contra y por invasor francés, en 1808; la lucha y muerte del general Fanjul y sus hombres, españoles, contra y por otros españoles imbuidos de ideas extrañas, extranjerizantes, por la independencia de España; la lucha, en esta ocasión incruenta, de un alcalde, don Carlos Arias Navarro y su Corporación, por una reivindicación territorial madrileña; la lucha heroica—aunque también incruenta—de estos mismos hombres contra la contaminación atmosférica y la especulación del suelo." Marlasca Pérez, "Pasado, Presente Y Futuro De La Montaña Del Príncipe Pio," 16.

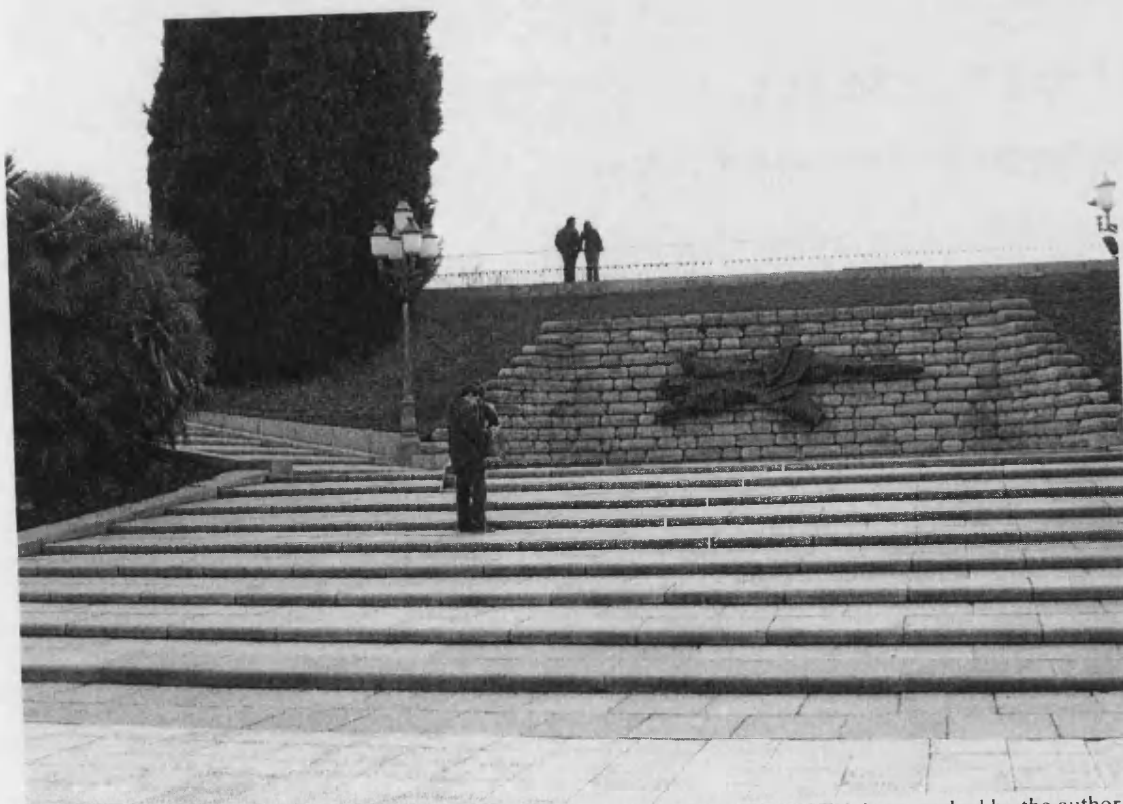Fig. 6.20 *The temple of Debod on the hill (2007)* (photographed by the author).

Fig. 6.21 *The commemorative sculpture by Vaquero Turcios below the hill (2007)* (photographed by the author).

6. Conclusion

At the end of the Spanish Civil War, the planners of the nascent political regime led by General Franco had an unprecedented opportunity of redesigning Madrid, the capital city. Unlike Fascist and Nazi planners who after all often cut through the existing, undamaged urban fabric of pre-war Rome and Berlin to complete their neo-imperial, megalomaniac projects, Falangist planners and architects in post-war Madrid faced a city in ruins, which allegedly made it easier (and less expensive) to undertake public works. While generally averse to the idea of the big city and much more prone to celebrating the rural, when it came to Madrid, the Falangists made an exception. In their hierarchical, organic understanding of reality, Madrid embodied the *head* of the *national being*, so the city needed careful planning guidelines which guaranteed that it would function adequately as the absolute political and administrative centre of Spain.

The new plan for the capital city authored by Pedro Bidagor was a tangible interpretation of the principles of the New Spain. The Falangists' conceptual trio *hierarchy*, *service* and *fraternity* was itself a response to the liberal revolutionary principles (liberty, equality and fraternity) of which only fraternity was maintained. The Falangists despised the liberal planning principles, which, according to them, led to anarchic and dysfunctional urban formations. Moreover, each part of the city should not be treated equally, but according to its importance for the whole. Finally, although fraternity and camaraderie lay at the very foundations of the Falangist ethos, these were very much permeated by a notion of military hierarchy and a conservative and patriarchical concept of the family according to which there exist "natural" hierarchies and distinctions between family members. An organic city, hierarchically divided into representative, commercial and residential zones, and made up of self-contained *barrios* or neighbourhoods where residents of different social backgrounds shared amenities, was, in synthesis, their ideal.

The initial enthusiasm that these simultaneously reactionary and revolutionary ideas triggered in planners, architects and possibly some members of the public— notwithstanding the parallel, brutal repression and massive killings of sympathisers of the former Republican regime—was soon dispelled. Aside from the increasing unpopularity, or inconvenience, of Falangist ideological conceptions after the defeat of Nazism and Fascism in Europe, the economic reality of post-war Spain called for more

pragmatic approaches to reconstruction. Top-down state planning was essentially abandoned for a combination of public planning guidelines and private projects, which in practice meant that private interests would predominate in the reconstruction and redevelopment of Madrid in the following decades. Along with private capital often came speculative and corrupt practices, of which there is a lack of documentary evidence.

As discussed earlier, the attempt to devise general urban reconstruction plans was pursued in several European countries after the Second World War. And as in Madrid, they were often discarded after some time. Municipalities trying to lead the reconstruction process in their cities faced private property management problems and usually lacked the resources to back comprehensive plans on their own. Most of the times town and city councils realised that they had to involve private developers, residents' associations, commercial chambers and so on in the reconstruction planning procedures, which meant that planning decisions were seldom bold and straightforward, but more often the result of compromises, resulting in the fragmentation of the reconstruction process.

But Falange's city plan and architectural programme for Madrid were problematic in their own terms as well. The emphasis of Bidagor's Plan on the symbolic display of power through neo-Baroque axes and squares and monumental buildings proved excessive in light, among other things, of the city's critical economic situation and the urgent need of housing for Madrid's growing population. On the other hand, the celebration of seventeenth-century Hapsburg Madrid as the capital city's genuine architectural style showed itself to be markedly reductionist. As Falangist intellectual Víctor d'Ors pointed out in 1947, Madrid's Moorish—or Arab—legacy was as intrinsic to the city as the Hapsburg tradition. The historic–artistic planning guidelines for the city ought therefore to incorporate both the northern, fundamentally Germanic influences, and the southern, African and Mediterranean influences, ensuring a balance between the two. It was implied that this delicate aesthetic balance had to be guaranteed from above by the regime's cultural elites. There was another challenging balance that the Falangists seemingly sought to maintain, namely that between traditional and modern values. However, despite the rhetorical appeal of the idea of a twentieth-century Madrid based on the spirit of seventeenth-century Madrid it was difficult to translate

this idea into practice. Moreover, as the case of the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña shows, there were sometimes "wrong" memories attached to the "right" place, which hindered the realisation of the neat, idealised Imperial Madrid that was originally envisioned by Bidagor and other Falangist architects.

The purportedly heroic defeat of the Falangist mutineers on the 20th of July 1936 was perhaps best reflected in the *eternal* ruins of the Cuartel. Yet, the nascent regime sought a more categorical solution to the devastated but symbolically and geographically prominent site on the grand façade of the city. Pedro Bidagor's suggestion of locating the Falangist Party's headquarters on the *sacred plot* of the Cuartel seemed to fit coherently within this logic. The monumental compound of architects Ambrós, Castell and Olasagasti on the Montaña del Príncipe Pío would not only have complemented, as was the intention, but also surpassed the other two buildings of "utmost national evocation" on the grand façade of Madrid, the Royal Palace and the Almudena Cathedral.

When the project for the Casa del Partido was abandoned in the mid-1940s it became arguably difficult for the regime to come up with an alternative for the site. The adjacent district of Argüelles was also not becoming the political and institutional *head* of the city that Bidagor had envisioned. Instead, it was turning into a conventional, residential area for the regime's bureaucratic and economic elites. Perhaps as a result of these changes in the direction of the development of the city, the regime lost interest in the Montaña del Príncipe Pío for some time.

The decision almost three decades later to design a park and place the ruins of the ancient Egyptian Debod temple on the site seemed in many ways a comfortable solution, which did away with the pressures from the real estate sector and buried once and for all (maybe) the ghosts of the Falangist mutineers, who had a small monument at the foot of the hill on a dedicated site. It is perhaps tempting to interpret the placement of the ancient Egyptian shrine—a building pretty much alien to Spanish culture—in more psychoanalytical terms (as indicative of Spain's complex relationship with North Africa, for example), but it is argued that the decision was of a more practical nature. By the early 1970s, the regime was largely in the hands of conservative bureaucrats who were less prone to epic monumentalisations and celebrations of old Falangist

heroes, and more comfortable with technocratic discourses about the benefits of green areas for the city.

The fate of the ruins of the Cuartel is a reflection of the regime's abandonment of the grand reconstruction plans for the capital city and their substitution for a significantly more piecemeal, privately driven rebuilding process. But the fate of the Montaña del Príncipe Pío also echoes the political and ideological shifts that Spain underwent during a fundamental part of its twentieth-century history. Within less than 50 years the hill saw the existence and/or projection of a nineteenth-century military compound, a parliament building, the headquarters of the Falangist Party, and, finally, the Egyptian Debod temple—not to mention the various more modest projects that were designed in between. Nowadays, few Madrilenians are aware of the rich history of the site and even fewer are conscious that it was once a Falangist relic. It could be argued that the Franco regime was eventually successful in burying the uncomfortable memory of its own supporters' early defeat—a memory that also inevitably evokes the fierce resistance against the Liberation Crusade of the Republicans who remained in the capital city—as well as Falange's dreams of a grandiose, imperial post-war Madrid.

Conclusion

The underlying aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate the usefulness of approaching history and political discourse in the context of war and violent political change by examining the transformations of the urban built environment. The thesis rests implicitly on the assumption that historically war itself, and the fear of war, have significantly impacted the structure of urban formations. By examining the destruction and reconstruction of three prominent sites in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid during the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath, three propositions have been introduced as exemplary of the intimate relationship between drastic historical events, the discourses that accompany them, and ensuing transformations in the built environment. Although the three propositions are potentially applicable to other, similar instances of urban wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction, they take on a particular meaning within the context of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship. The Spanish situation in 1939, when the Civil War ended, was fundamentally divergent from that of most contemporary European countries. When Spain began to recover from a brutal and exhaustive internal conflict, the latter were mired in the most destructive world war. Despite the intervention of foreign troops and volunteers, the Spanish Civil War was an internal war, which lends the conflict itself and the post-war recovery part of their distinctiveness. Moreover, the dictatorial regime that the victorious side founded after the end of the conflict was a unique combination of symbolic imperialism and material destitution. The aspirations to revive Spain's golden past coexisted with the attempt to achieve economic autarchy based on modern agricultural mass production. The latter soon proved impossible, but the discourses on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century imperial and Catholic Spain covered over the objective failure to bring the country back to the international forefront both economically and politically.

The Spanish Civil War can be understood as exemplary of traditional systems of warfare, involving regular armies, popular militias and clear front lines. In contrast, the extensive use of aerial warfare techniques and the systematic attacks on targets that were not necessarily on the front line, including major cities, constituted novel features. Spain became a testing ground for the German Luftwaffe and the Italian Aviazione Legionaria. While the destruction of Barcelona was mainly the result of air raids, Madrid suffered from both air raids and artillery fire. Bilbao was also the victim of

bombings and subsequently of artillery fire during the seizure of the city. Both the rebel and the Republican troops viewed aerial bombings as a means to destroy the enemy's supplies and weaken their morale—although the rebels were more active in the air. There is enough evidence to suggest that they also saw it as a means of terrorising the population. The fervent resistance of cities like Barcelona and Madrid and their radicalised working-class populations against the rebel military reinforced the latter's anti-urban sentiment. It is likely that the air raids were also conceived of as a way of punishing cities—the most prominent symbols of the atheist, libertine and Communist *anti-Spain* (*la anti-España*) in the rebels' view—thus anticipating the kind of political violence seen more recently in the context of the Balkan War and identified as urbicide.

Not unlike the experience of some European cities during both the First and the Second World Wars, emergency reconstruction efforts in all three cities, notably Barcelona and Madrid, were fairly successful. Historic edifices were protected, rubble was removed, damaged façades were held up, records of the damage were kept, and smaller but important projects such as disinfection clinics to avoid epidemics were carried out. Extensive networks of air-raid shelters were constructed in most cities. As explained in Chapter 3, Barcelona's shelters are particularly well documented. Local passive defence boards were in charge of these efforts in most towns and cities. This was the case in Barcelona, where residents' associations and trade unions also played an important role in the construction of air-raid shelters. In Madrid a wartime Reform, Reconstruction and Sanitation Committee was created exceptionally by the government, in view of the magnitude of the problems faced by the besieged capital city. Considering the unprecedented nature of the destruction caused by the new types of bombs used by the military and the unremitting lack of proper construction materials, both the refuges and the protective structures shielding monuments and edifices were surprisingly effective.

When Franco's troops won the war and his provisional government fully took over power, several institutions, some of which had been created before the end of the conflict, were put in charge of the reconstruction process, a process viewed as a physical, economic and moral enterprise. In spite of the regime's emphasis on unity of command, the responsibility for the rebuilding of the New Spain was fragmented across different bodies and branches such as the Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones, the Instituto de Crédito Nacional para la Reconstrucción, the Dirección

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General de Arquitectura and the Instituto de Colonización. Such fragmentation did not particularly contribute to making the process more efficient. Moreover, aside from the case of the "adopted villages"—which were reconstructed in full by the state—most of the initiative was placed in the hands of private owners and municipalities. The state offered partial loans and subsidies that the former could apply for from the Instituto de Crédito to fund their reconstruction projects. The application procedures were often tedious, and it could take years for the funds eventually to arrive, as demonstrated by the cases of both Barcelona and Bilbao city councils' applications.

Franco allegedly refused to receive foreign finance, but few countries were anyway in a position to offer monetary aid to Spain while they were themselves caught up in financing the Second World War. After 1945, although most European countries were economically assisted by the United States, the Allies were not particularly keen on lending Franco a hand. The regime had to rely fundamentally on "national sources" during its first two decades of existence. But Franco's autarchic programme was presented to the public as a deliberate, ideologically informed choice. The confiscations and economic sanctions imposed on individuals who had remained loyal to the Republic during the war was one of the national sources that the government drew from. Another important source was the income generated by the employment of prisoners of war and political prisoners as forced labour, including on major works of reconstruction. Of the salaries that both private and public companies paid for hiring prisoners, the state kept a substantial part, which went straight into its coffers.

Cities did not figure prominently on the regime's agenda. The regime's main priority was rural reconstruction as a means of preventing or deterring peasants and villagers from migrating to the cities, and developing the kind of class resentment that, according to the victors, had fuelled the communist revolutionary atmosphere leading to the outbreak of the war. Through initiatives such as the colonisation of irrigated lands, coordinated by the Instituto de Colonización, the regime sought to anchor the population in functional agricultural units where families were offered decent and hygienic households, and taught "proper" living habits. Part of Falange's discourse presented the city and the countryside in strong opposition, the former being viewed as a place of ruin and degeneration, the latter as a source of honesty and virtue. The European metropoles, and London in particular, were regarded as liberal aberrations,

unworthy of emulation and essentially alien to Spanish planning tradition. Such tradition, as has been explained, was identified with Spain's intensive building activity in its American colonial domains in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At other times, Falange's ideologues sought something closer to a compromise between the urban and the rural—"countryside urbanism and city ruralism"—and were especially keen to rehearse their planning ideals in the capital city.

One might find examples of the three modes of reconstruction discussed in Chapter 1— restoring, replacing and leaving in ruins—among the reconstruction plans and actual works of Regiones Devastadas, including some notable examples of deliberate ruin preservation such as Old Belchite. Generally, and in accordance with the predominantly backward-looking spirit that animated the regime, restoration was preferred. Initially, the restoration designs for destroyed buildings in towns and cities as well as the designs for new constructions in the adopted villages or new colonies were filtered through the so-called "national style". This style was based on a broad understanding of traditional sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish imperial and colonial architecture. While the more "imperial" emulations of El Escorial were reserved for monuments and official buildings, the simpler Baroque, colonial architecture was the guiding concept for the design of town and village houses. The general preference for sober lines and little ornamentation was motivated by the austere atmosphere of the post-war years, as well as by the actual scarcity and limited selection of construction materials available. Reinforced concrete was hard to obtain, for example, and bricks and tiles were produced by craftsmen using traditional methods.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that Falange had a genuine desire to devise something akin to a national reconstruction programme. The emphasis on rural reconstruction, the belief in the importance of rebuilding a representative capital city as the physical head of the nation, the aim to achieve moral regeneration through the renewal of the built environment, and the search for a national style were some of the fundamental principles on which this programme was based. The problem was that it was difficult to ground modern economic growth on agricultural production in a country that had undergone few changes to its predominantly quasi-feudal system of landownership. And the conservative landowners who had supported Franco in his Liberation Crusade were unwilling to give up their age-old privileges. Without economic growth from

which to extract public funds, few of the other principles could translate into practical results.

When Falange was removed from its role as the ideological backbone of the regime, the idea of the New Spain became increasingly vague, eventually disintegrating into the various ideological components that had been brought together under the banner of the Liberation Crusade in the first place: the military, the reactionary Church, and the financial oligarchy. Even though the institutional framework for reconstruction remained largely unchanged throughout its existence over the two decades of autarchy, the direct participation of the private sector in public reconstruction works and building enterprises increased over time as the members of the financial oligarchy were appointed chief executives and advisers of the newly founded state companies producing effectively a symbiosis of public authority and private capital. This was also to the detriment of planning guidelines and regulations, which were enforced less and less. The result was an uneven expansion of most Spanish cities, including Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid. Moreover, Falange's search for a national style, immediately understood as a reactionary exercise, bore less intellectual fruit than many architects had expected, and did not produce particularly notable practical results, except for a few representative urban buildings—especially religious institutions—and the "adopted" villages that Regiones Devastadas reconstructed in full.

Within this context, the opening of Avenida de la Catedral in post-war Barcelona illustrates how destruction can facilitate the implementation of controversial planning, acting as a catalyst for urban redevelopment. For seven decades the plans for the opening of Gran Via C were brought back and forth in trying to mitigate the impact of the pickaxes on the dense, historic fabric of the old city. But one city council after another persisted in this aim. At the beginning of the 1930s it finally seemed as if the works were going to take place despite residents being against the opening of the avenue as well as the most progressive architects, the members of the GATCPAC. The outbreak of the Civil War in July 1936 put the plans on hold.

Nevertheless, the bombs that the rebel air force dropped on the port city between 1937 and 1939 did a substantial part of the pickaxes' work. With the Barri de la Catedral in ruins after the conflict, it was much simpler for the city council to justify its demolition.

Despite the drastic change in political regime, the purges and the appointment of a new city council, the pre-war plans for reforming the inner city were simply resumed. The difference was that nobody openly complained now, except for the members of the urban property chamber, who were concerned that public funds were being used to finance projects that went beyond reconstruction in the strictest sense, arguing that this would ultimately involve, as it did, increased property taxes. Like most city councils, Barcelona city council faced the challenge of putting together sufficient funding to tackle reconstruction. In the end, the city received a state subsidy to cover cleaning and clearing tasks and a partial state loan for reconstruction. But the most substantial part of the funding was negotiated with Banco de España, the national bank.

Although Barcelona's politically privileged position as the capital of an autonomous Catalonia during the Second Republic and its reputation as a meeting point for the cultural avant-garde ended with the advent of Franco's military dictatorship, the Barcelonan economic elites were able to preserve their power and secure the city's role as an industrial and commercial port enclave. At the same time, commerce and trade were not overly and openly valued within the new regime's Spanish nationalist-Catholic, anti-Semitic ideology. One way the city's political and cultural authorities found of compensating for Barcelona's strong commercial tradition was to highlight the city's Roman military legacy.

The opening of Avenida de la Catedral allowed the city council to continue the project of unveiling the Roman military belt, including its impressive towers. This was at the expense of the commercially vibrant Barri de la Catedral, which like most suburbs or *vilanoves* had its origins in the Middle Ages, a culturally ambiguous period in Spain's history with which the regime identified much less. More than the purely archaeological value of this venture, some commentators seemed interested in justifying the demise of the old houses and stores by stressing the superiority of Roman Barcelona, the city of stone, over medieval Barcelona, the city of brick, associated with Jews and Reds. Other journalists and writers celebrated the transformation of this part of old Barcelona in terms of progress and modernity. Still others, such as Ricardo Suñé, implicitly challenged the project by producing nostalgic accounts of the Barri de la Catedral and old Barcelona as the genuine repositiories of Catalan customs and traditions. The celebration of the 600th anniversary of Plaza Nueva in October 1955 offered an

extraordinary opportunity for nostalgic Barcelonans to mourn publicly the demise of the old square and the Barri de la Catedral.

The reconstruction of the bridges of Bilbao reveals the difference between the symbolic and the practical rupture that a change of political regime involves. Whereas the new city council purportedly used the reconstruction of the fixed bridges as a means to mark Bilbao and the Ría symbolically and visibly with the stamp of the New Spain, the continuities in the administrative procedures, and even financial arrangements underpinning the rebuilding of the two drawbridges, suggest less of a rupture. The sober aesthetics of the four new concrete fixed bridges contrasted with the richer and more ornamented design of their predecessors, arguably replicating what was conceived as an opposition between the Falangist (and ultimately Spanish) ideals of restraint, honesty and hierarchy, and the excessive and sinuous character of the products of Liberalism. Such aesthetic choice, as noted, was also motivated by the scarcity of construction materials available at the time and possibly the engineers' preference for rationalist design.

The city council's determination to maintain the pre-war contracts for the two drawbridges as well as certain pre-war funding agreements with other public entities is seen as evidence of the administrative and practical continuities that simultaneously characterised the new authorities' management of reconstruction. Moreover, the city council's delay in paying the bridge contractors was once more the result of the difficulties it envisaged in trying to collect sufficient funding. Aside from the money granted by the Biscay provincial deputyship and the port authority on the basis of existing pre-war agreements, Bilbao was granted a state subsidy that covered 50 per cent of the cost of reconstructing the bridges. Yet the funds did not arrive until a few years after the works had been completed, thus forcing the city council to exhaust all the available legal means to justify the postponement of the payments to the contractors.

The emphatic condemnation of the Republican troops for blowing up the bridges and the more or less subtle silencing of the fact that the two drawbridges were essentially built during the years of the Second Republic again reflect the new authorities' need to emphasise symbolically the break with the previous regime. Thus post-war regimes tend to blame all the destruction on the vanquished enemy and often use wartime ruins

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to discredit it. Furthermore, post-war regimes can easily take full credit for the accomplishment of a building or piece of infrastructure as if they had not just reconstructed it, but conceived of and built it in the first place. Finally, like Barcelona's new authorities, which did not want the city's history to be exclusively associated with trading, Bilbao's officials were keen on reinforcing the city's Spanish pedigree after the brief but intense experience of Basque autonomy. Bilbao was now depicted as the historical port of Mother Castile, and Bilbaoans as the direct descendants of old Castilian merchants.

The modest fate of Falange's and Pedro Bidagor's very ambitious plan for a new Madrid based on Nazi and neo-imperial conceptions of the urban—including the project for Falange's headquarters on the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña—confirms the proposition that excessively idealist reconstruction plans, founded on the aspiration to create new cities, are not necessarily successful. In spite of the unique opportunity to create something entirely novel that a flattened city represents, most of the experiences of post-war Europe, including Spain, suggest that there are often structural and circumstantial factors that work against a complete redesign of the pre-war city. In the case of Madrid, the economic situation of post-war Spain did not allow for large public expenditure. As already intimated, the lack of public funding called for an increasingly leading role for private capital in the reconstruction and redevelopment endeavours in the capital city and a growing leniency with regard to the application of urban planning regulations. Moreover, Franco's apparent enthusiasm for the Falangist project for a modern neo-imperial capital city lasted only three or four years—for as long as he deemed it useful to align the regime with the Axis powers. Ideology, or perhaps the lack of a consistent ideology, thus also worked against the implementation of Bidagor's Plan.

Situated on the emblematic Montaña del Príncipe Pío, on which the first members of the Spanish guerrillas were shot by Napoleonic troops in early May 1808, the ruins of the Cuartel de la Montaña, or rather their post-war history, encapsulates some of the contradictions that arguably characterised the Franco regime 150 years later—contradictions which doubtlessly helped the dictator to remain in power for as long as he did. The untouched *sacred* plot of the Cuartel, imbued with the blood of the Falangists who died in the failed Madrid mutiny, for which one project after the other

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was designed, but never implemented, in some ways mirrors the Caudillo's ability to promise, to commit to the different groups that supported him, and then to withdraw without consequences.

In the early post-war years, numerous masses and commemorations of the fallen were celebrated (or staged) amidst the ruins of the Cuartel. The design for a massive monumental compound to host Falange's headquarters—yet another emulation of El Escorial—in 1943, arguably reflected Falange's determination to assert its power and future existence and not just mourn its fallen soldiers. But by then, the power of Falange within the regime was already being questioned in view of the fate of the Axis powers. In the early 1970s, after almost four decades of neglect, the last remains of the former military barracks were finally levelled. That the plot was turned into a park subsequently, and an ancient Egyptian temple placed on the top of such a historically and symbolically charged site, can be interpreted as another indication of Franco's cynicism. But the history of the ruins of the Cuartel could also be seen as characteristic of Spain's collective inability to digest the events of the 2nd of May 1808 and the 20th of July 1936—in other words, the inability to overcome the trauma of the nation's secular modernisation.

In this sense, the Spanish War of Independence (1808-1814) can be viewed as the opening of a historical interlude in Spain's political trajectory as it prompted a brief, yet unprecedented period of liberal constitutionalism (1812-1814), which was however immediately followed by the restoration of monarchic absolutism. More than a century later, the Spanish Civil War put an end to the equally brief, ground-breaking interlude of the Second Republic, and led to the establishment of a reactionary dictatorship. Yet the Civil War can be seen as both a re-enactment and a closure of that early nineteenth-century interlude and all ensuing failed attempts by liberal elites to place Spain on the track of progressive, secular modernisation. In its own attempt to overcome the trauma of the nation's secular modernisation, the Franco regime followed a reactionary modernist path, which consisted of designing a new political façade on the solid remains of the structure and foundations that previously sustained the edifice of absolutism and militant Catholicism (the military, the Church and the landowning nobility). Through this political edifice—notwithstanding its mutations over the years— the regime sought to preserve the old order within the nation using modern state means,

while symbolically restoring the values and aesthetics of Spain's golden past. Although the tensions and contradictions between the regime's practical concerns and symbolic aspirations are already tangible in the discourses on, and plans for, the post-war reconstruction of the specific sites examined in this thesis, further research on the post-war reconstruction of Spain's built environment under the same premises would probably reinforce the analogy made between the realms of the political discourse and the built architecture of the regime. What is perhaps disturbing in such an analogy is that the new façade and old foundations of the regime's political edifice were reflected in traditional façades and modern interiors in its built architecture.

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