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Falange, Autarky and Crisis: The Barcelona General Strike of 1951

'Salta la liebre donde menos se piensa'[1]

Barcelona, in February and March 1951, saw the most significant wave of popular protest since the heyday of the city's revolution during the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939. Thousands of people from various social groups and of diverse political backgrounds or affiliation united in an escalating three-week series of protests against the exploitation and violence that had been imposed for eleven years by the Franco dictatorship. Initiated by a boycott of the city tram system, the movement culminated in a general strike in which some 300,000 workers took part, paralysing the city and shutting down production in the industrial centres.[2] Within months of the Barcelona protests further strikes took place, both again in Barcelona and in other regions of Spain, principally, the urban centres. These events provide a glimpse of pent-up frustrations and suppressed identities under the dictatorship: class consciousness, progressive Catalanism, civic solidarity.[3] Not until the mass demonstrations of 1976 which heralded the arrival of democracy in Spain, after forty years of Francoism, would popular unrest reach the level of 1951.[4]

It is unlikely that Franco's regime was put in real danger. The massive apparatus of armed public control, which was, for reasons explored in this article, only briefly glimpsed in 1951, could not be more than inconvenienced by such a protest.[5] Moreover, Francoism's militant anti-communism meant that the regime was becoming a significant asset in the West's Cold War struggle against the Soviet bloc, and was therefore supported and maintained particularly by the United States government.[6]

European History Quarterly Copyright © 1999 SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, Vol. 29(4), 543–585.
[0265-6914(199910)29:4;543–585;010100]

But, combined with other factors, the Barcelona general strike of 1951 contributed to a slow change in the way domination was imposed under Francoism. The regime, its supporters, and the Western powers were all compelled to consider the possible dangers of mounting social unrest in Spain at a moment when the Cold War was demonstrably warming up. The start of the new decade saw the initiation of Spain's gradual incorporation into the world capitalist community of nations. In August 1950, the US President ratified a loan to Spain of $62.5 million. On the very day of the arranged commencement of the people's boycott of the trams in Barcelona, Franco was to be found revelling in the pomp and ceremony of the presentation of the credentials of the new American ambassador in the throne room of the Royal Palace in Madrid. Finally, partly thanks to financial assistance from abroad, but also pressured by this series of popular protests, the government, in March 1952, relinquished its hold on the country which it had achieved since the end of the Civil War through the rationing of bread.

I Repression and Resistance: Spain, 1936–1951

The confirmation and institutionalization of Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War was secured during the 1940s.[7] For the majority of the population, and particularly the working class, daily experience was shaped by the constant re-creation and imposition of 'victory' and 'defeat'. A dark shadow was cast over people's daily lives by physical, economic and cultural repression. The regime refused reconciliation until the sins of those who represented 'Anti-Spain' had been expiated. The years 1939–43, in particular, were marked by a wave of executions and imprisonment of 'Reds' and 'separatists', those who had 'hindered' Franco's nationalist 'Crusade' and fell outside the dictatorship's vision of 'the Nation'.[8] Moreover, it has been estimated that 200,000 Spaniards died of starvation in the early 1940s,[9] largely as a result of the dictatorship's economic and social policies.

Francoism was deeply suspicious of 'the City' as the harbinger of everything that was alien to *Hispanidad* (Spanishness). Although they were the focal point of state power, cities in general 'lacked history' as far as Francoist ideologues were

concerned, because they were associated with the rise of 'anti-Spanish' liberalism. The regime's social base was, on the whole, supplied by rural Spain. Barcelona, Spain's most populous industrial centre, was singled out as demanding a 'Special Regime of Occupation' in the wake of the Civil War. The threat posed by Barcelona was all the greater given the pre-war strength of regional nationalism that denied Spain's 'organic unity'. Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia, (as well as the Basque Country), in particular, were to be subjected to a concerted policy of cultural destruction after the war.[10] Labour was regimented by the imposition of an authoritarian system of state unions (sindicatos), run and manned by the regime's single party, Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista (FET y de las JONS).[11] Workers had to prove their loyalty to employer, state and *Patria*, and thousands were purged, forced to re-apply for their pre-war jobs, and unable to obtain reports of 'reliability' from 'persons of high standing'.[12] The people of Barcelona had 'degenerated' and had to be 'treated', coercively returned to *Spanish* 'health'. Catalan nationalism was viewed by the victors as a 'sickness', a foreign contagion, 'putrefaction' to be 'surgically removed'.[13] Catalan nationalists, when they avoided execution or imprisonment, were forced into exile or into hiding. Thousands of men and women were executed by the forces of the Francoist occupation. The authorities declared that 40,000 Republicans in Barcelona, with 'proven' culpability, having supported the cause of 'Anti-Spain', had been identified. British diplomats doubted that they would escape 'the extreme penalty'.[14] 'Military justice' was a farce and many received no trial of any kind. Firing squads could still be heard regularly in the city as late as 1942.

Given this desolate situation, it seems incredible that resistance of any kind was offered. Francoism attempted to break apart all collective solidarities except its own highly restrictive vision of Family and Fatherland. Indeed, as we will see, the mass action of 1951 was only made possible by fissures opening up within the dictatorship itself.

Collective expressions of working-class dissent were relatively few in the 1940s. But concentration by historians on the political organizations of the left which had organized the war effort but were functioning in exile after 1939 has, apart from the armed *guerrilla* campaign,[15] left an overwhelming image of passivity and

submission,[16] which is not borne out by sources that make constant reference to rejection of the dictatorship by the populace.

Workers had been the backbone of the defence of the legitimate government of the Republic against the coup of July 1936 and successfully defeated the rebellion in most of Spain's biggest cities, including Barcelona. Later they organized strikes even as Franco's army occupied territory during the Civil War and were the first targets of the repression.[17] They risked a great deal by organizing protests against the imposition of Nationalist authority and expressed their commitment to the democratic Republic. More action, principally against employers, but also against the state's involvement in the operation of the black market in food, was mounted, sporadically, during the early post-war years.[18] The organizers of the first strike in Barcelona under the dictatorship, in the major industrial plant of La Maquinista, Terrestre y Marítima, in March 1941, were shot without trial.[19]

The 1945 Allied victory over the Axis powers brought a wave of worker protests which were not primarily organized by the remnants of political parties but spontaneous eruptions of collective optimism.[20] The transport and metal workers of Barcelona celebrated Nazi Germany's capitulation in May by laying down their tools, signifying their defiance of a moribund authority and in expectation of the consequent downfall of the Franco regime that had been installed with the substantial assistance of Hitler and Mussolini. Clandestine leaflets pointed out that the Spanish Civil War was effectively 'the first of Hitler's wars of invasion'.[21] State syndical officials posted lists of strikers to walls, facilitating workers' detention by the police.[22] However, strikes were declared again in August to mark the end of the war in Asia.[23]

Throughout the later 1940s a constant pressure from below was maintained, pushing for improved conditions and culminating in the Barcelona strike of March 1951.[24] In particular, the factories of the industrial area of Manresa became a centre for protest. It was here that in January 1946 the first major strike of the Franco era, affecting several factories, took place, called in protest at the docking of a day's pay for a compulsory feast day to mark the fall of the town to Franco's troops in 1939.[25] Falangists considered it 'one of the worst attacks against our organization' and called for stern measures and reliance on the already discredited state unions, the Sindicatos Verticales.[26] The workers, mainly women, not only succeeded in their initial objective but

also forced a wage rise from employers. Within months, leaflets were seen to be distributed at the factory gates of the biggest textile works in Barcelona and a constant 'go-slow' had been instituted in support of a change of government.

In May 1947 another major strike, called initially to demand the reinstatement of May Day as a workers' holiday, took place in Bilbao, in the industrial heartland of the Basque Country. Support was impressive in the mines and steel factories; between 30,000 and 50,000 workers downed tools. The Falangist Civil Governor handled the unrest badly, applying tough sanctions and causing more workers to join the strike on subsequent days.[27] Later, in September 1949, a strike by 2,000 women for an increase in wages at the Barcelona textile plant, Trinxet Industrial SA, caused a military occupation of the factory.[28] By 1951, Vitoria, Pamplona, Valladolid, Alicante, Madrid and other areas were affected by strikes and protests. Organizers of strikes were liable to be sent to concentration camps like that at Nanclares, near Vitoria, which was notorious for its dreadful conditions. After the Vitoria stoppages in early May, 400 men were arrested, herded into the bull-ring, and had their hair publicly shaved before dispatch to camps. Basques in particular were forcibly deported from their home region to the interior, thereby punishing the families of 'the guilty'.[29] Although individually these protests did not have national implications, the Barcelona events of the same year focused national dissent.

Repression and control were applied in economic relations. Securing work and food, the necessities of subsistence for 'the defeated', were, inevitably, political issues. Coercion was reflected in a policy of autarky, or economic self-sufficiency, reflecting Francoism's triumphalism and protecting élite interests. The projected strategy of autarkic industrialization relied upon internal colonialism: labour-intensive production, low wages, a lack of effective price controls on basic necessities, and deepened levels of capital accumulation. Autarky aggravated food shortages and the Francoist authorities colluded in the growth of a huge black market which benefited the victors, facilitated social control, and made daily life a constant struggle.[30] Shortly before the 1951 protests, the government had received several warnings from local Governors (one of whom was later to be Secretary of the administrative council of the state's giant industrial holding company, the Instituto Nacional de Industria

[INI]) that the self-sufficient industrialization plan would have to be postponed and more food imported if market equilibrium was to be re-established. Ever-rising prices threatened an economic and, 'above all, [a] political crisis': 'The people are exhausted . . . the current system of intervention has completely failed . . . We must try other more efficient and flexible ways . . . What is important to me is saving the Falange and the regime.'[31]

Thus, Francoism relied on repression, the apathy of physical exhaustion, a lack of politically organized opposition, and tacit foreign support to maintain its authority. It was within this context of oppression that the Barcelona General Strike of 1951 emerged. But Francoism also relied on cohesion among the several 'families', or political groups, which composed the state structure.[32] The strike of 1951 would place a question-mark over all of this. In particular, considerable tensions within the state, locally and nationally, were revealed. While élites were benefiting most from socio-economic conditions, the Falange was at the 'frontline' in the economic civil war which followed upon the military struggle. Economic repression further discredited a Movement which economic élites had always looked on with hostility.[33] Henceforth, the regime would be unable to disregard voices of dissent. As Falangist officials themselves recognized, the reliance by the authorities on a kind of internal colonization as social control and the paying of tribute to regime loyalists was full of risks. This chaotic condition is revealed in intelligence reports at the height of the crisis:

> . . . If the principle of authority is not founded upon a just social order, at least in its most elemental sense, it lacks justification and will collapse by itself, since . . . collaborators of unrest will emerge, acting through solidarity or sympathy with the causes which provoke it.[34]

II Conflict within the Falange

The 1940s in Barcelona witnessed a limited but damaging political struggle among the forces of the Francoist 'New State'. The main struggle was between sections of the state party and representatives of the city's social élites.

Franco's single party was based on the Spanish fascist party, Falange Española, and the Carlist monarchists of the Comunión

Tradicionalista, forcibly, even unwillingly, fused by Franco in April 1937, and later known simply as the 'Movimiento'. This unification was part of a concerted strategy on the part of the military and the conservative civilian policy-makers of the 'New State' to emasculate the radical wing of the Falange. After the end of the war the strategy was maintained with the disarmament of the Falange militia, which had numbered some 26,000 in Catalonia in February 1939. Under the control of the army, the disarmament process was begun by September 1939 and formalized in July 1940.[35] Many of the militia had subsequently volunteered to fight as part of Franco's Blue Division on the Eastern Front during the world war. Numbers were obviously thereby depleted. None of this smoothed the constant tensions between party and military in Barcelona.[36] At a national level, the party had been numerically weak prior to the Civil War and failed to grow until after the victory of the leftist Republican coalition in the parliamentary elections of February 1936, when the erstwhile supporters of officially democratic parties flooded into the Falange.[37] But in Barcelona the party was still in a poor shape in July 1936. Less than a hundred Falangists took part in the failed military coup in the city.[38] Increasingly, henceforth, the Movement would become swamped by place-seeking *arrivistes* eager to participate in the spoils system which the administration offered and to protect specific economic interests.[39] Although many pre-war affiliates were lost in the Civil War, the party grew enormously in its aftermath as ex-combatants, ex-captives and 'purified' public functionaries were all granted membership.[40] This influx provoked considerable resentment among 'Old Guard' Falangists of the first hour, groups of whom were to rebel in 1951.[41] In Barcelona, a radical breakaway group, the Juntas de Agitación Nacional Sindicalistas (JANS), was formed in May 1949 with the objective of 'proselytism within work places . . . in favour of the National-Syndicalist Revolution', later to participate in the protest.[42] But the 'revolutionary élan' of Falangist radicals would ultimately become isolated in the superior interest of maintaining the pre-Republican social order.[43] Their rebellion failed because Falangists could not control the popular protest their actions unleashed. The strike had eventually to be put down by the forces of the conservative state, with which Falangists ultimately chose to co-operate, rather than be channelled in a radical direction. The events of February and March 1951 can therefore

be seen as a significant stage on the road to the taming and bureaucratization of the Movement.

Conflict was heightened by Madrid's material neglect of local government and by its restriction of the political room for manoeuvre in the provinces. In a letter written on the day of his removal from office in November 1939 the then Provincial head of the Party, Mariano Calviño de Sabucedo Gras, complained to the national Secretary General of the Movimiento that the local administration had been left '. . . completely devoid of resources with which to carry out its most elemental obligations'.[44] One of the main purposes of the Civil Governor under Francoism in the early decades was to act as the agent of this restrictive strategy.[45] The simultaneous holding of the post of provincial Party chief by the Governor meant that this centralizing force was most acutely felt by local Falangists. This conservative move was initiated in December 1940 in Barcelona with the appointment of the demagogic populist Antonio Correa Veglison as both Party chief and Governor. When the international scene changed in 1945, unfavourably for 'radical' Falangists, Correa, a great admirer of Nazism and Fascism, had to be dispensed with. Though he had done little to alter the subordinate position of the Party in Barcelona, his removal, in August 1945, produced a public demonstration of 2,000 comrades of the Party youth organization, the Frente de Juventudes, which was dispersed by mounted police.[46] The return of Correa was one of the demands of a section of the Party in 1951.[47] A damaging factionalism developed which perpetuated the decay of the local state authority as it slid easily into corruption. This was the context for the resentment towards the universally unpopular Civil Governor during the 1951 protests, Eduardo Baeza Alegría, who was considered as an 'internal enemy' within the local Falange.[48]

Baeza had affiliated to the Falange belatedly during the Civil War and was seen by conservatives as an 'unobtrusive', hard-working and efficient Party member, determined to gain the confidence of the *fuerzas vivas*, that is, the middle classes, of Barcelona. In 1947 he had replaced the anti-Falangist Bartolomé Barba Hernández, a reactionary army colonel, at the express wish of Franco himself, and it was expected by many (and feared by others) that his appointment would mean a revival of Party activities in the province. This had not been the case, much to the disappointment of the party 'Old Guard'.[49] A medical doctor by

profession, Baeza was no 'workerist' Falangist in the mould of the Old Guard hero-figure José Antonio Girón Velasco, Minister of Labour from 1941 to 1957. Franco had appointed him as a reward for his organizing of a sumptuous reception for the Caudillo and Eva Perón in 1947.

Therefore, the central antagonism was between militants of the Falange who had participated in the preparations and execution of the rising of July 1936, and a more recent heterogeneous intake which had joined the Movement since, many out of pure opportunism. The Barcelona strike of 1951 was seen at the time as a direct result of this tension within FET y de las JONS, 'between the old Falange and the new since the old had been deprived of their positions at the expense of the new'.[50]

Two specific and identifiable Falangist groups intervened in the Barcelona events. The first was led by José Fernández Ramírez, a member of Falange Española since before the Civil War and his faithful comrade Francisco Eyré Fernández, another of the 'Old Guard', who was head of the Judicial Office (Asesoría Jurídica) of the local state union organization, the Central Nacional Sindicalista (CNS).[51] José Fernández had been associated with the ultra-right fascistic group led by the unstable Doctor José María Albiñana, known as the 'Legionnaires of Albiñana', who in the first days after the military rising of July 1936 played a significant role in executing leftists.[52] In 1946 Fernández was made Barcelona Provincial Secretary of the Movement. The second group was associated with the Provincial head of the CNS, the Syndical Delegate, José Montero Neira. Montero was an outsider from Albacete whose objective seems to have been to revitalize the network of employer organizations in the province within the syndical structure, to the detriment of the radical element of the pre-war Falange.[53] José Fernández coveted the post which Montero occupied. In November 1949 Montero was promoted as National Secretary of Syndicates and his position as Provincial Delegate was given not to a local 'radical' but to Claudio Emilio Sánchez, the former delegate from the neighbouring Catalan province of Lérida. The Party's Barcelona 'Old Guard' was therefore marginalized within the syndical structure. Later, in 1950, Eduardo Baeza, the assailed Civil Governor, would remove the 'radical' Fernández, his integrity impugned in a leaflet put about in the province, claiming that he had always had an 'appetite for intrigue and

office-holding', had split the Party in 1934 because of this selfish ambition, and as a result had been expelled from Falange Española by its leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera.[54]

But there were also more deep-rooted ideological contradictions within the Francoist state. Economic autarky implied drastic measures of state intervention while simultaneously the regime upheld the principle of private property and initiative. This contradiction and Franco's own propensity to reward those loyal to him with high office and material gain[55] led to widespread corruption which aggravated economic hardship under the dictatorship.

The Barcelona tram company was a prime target for the rather confused Falangist critique of this situation. By the end of the nineteenth century public transport had become decisive in the success or failure of outbreaks of urban political protest. The identification of the trams as a target for popular protest in Barcelona had many historical precedents:[56] 'Throughout their most recent history, the people of Barcelona have stoned the trams each time that a general strike has broken out.' If a general strike was initiated and the trams continued functioning, failure was almost ensured.[57] The only answer was to stone them, turn them over, and set fire to them — 'the rhythm of normal life' had to be broken.[58] The tram became a problem of public order.[59]

During the tumultuous years of the Second Republic the poorly paid but highly organized tramworkers heightened political conflict.[60] In April 1933, hundreds of members of the youth movement of the conservative Catalan separatist party, Estat Català, drove trams in order to break a strike called by the anarchist CNT in support of dockworkers. In 1934 the trams were the main target of nocturnal incendiaries trying to force the company to reinstate strikers dismissed for leftist political affiliation in December 1933.[61] One of those sacked for organizing strikes was the CNT militant Ponciano Alonso, who was readmitted to the company with the electoral victory of the left-leaning Popular Front government in February 1936. During the Civil War he was part of the workers' committee set up to collectivize the tram company and 'persecuted' rightists. With the defeat of the Republic in 1939 he fled to France to avoid execution, though in his absence he was 'banished' from Spain and all his goods confiscated under the Francoist Law of Political Responsibilities.[62]

The city's trams were not run as a municipal service operated

for the benefit of the community, but were in the hands of a private company whose main concern was to increase profits under the protection of the local authorities and especially the City Council (Diputación) and the state Syndicate. Nationalist veterans, many of them ex-soldiers from the Falange stronghold of Valladolid, had replaced leftists sacked by the company following Franco's victory as a 'reward' for their wartime services.[63] But this did not necessarily mean undying loyalty to the company. Several Falangist informants working for the company had reported what they considered too close a relationship within the state union between the head of the tram syndicate and the employer. The last fare rise before the protest of 1951, which was supposedly imposed to finance a wage increase, had had no effect at all because an hour's overtime which was habitually worked was abolished at the same time. The company betrayed perfectly, it was felt, the exploitative nature of the local 'plutocracy'.[64]

A long-running feud had raged between a section of the local Party organization and the company. As early as March 1940 a FET informant commented that since 'liberation' certain 'anomalies' had been observed in the company. Senior positions on the board of directors and in management were occupied by individuals with suspect 'socio-political antecedents' who had 'blood on their hands' because they had supported the autonomous Catalan government elected during the Republic.[65] An attitude of 'absolute subordination' from the workers was demanded at all times, a demand which, according to the Falange, had led in the past to the 'bolshevist atmosphere' that produced the revolution of the 1930s. The management resisted the efforts of the Party to influence the operation of the economy in the city. The doctrine of the Falange was interpreted 'capriciously' and the legislation of the 'New State' was enforced 'arbitrarily' without a sense of 'Falangist spirit'.[66]

The seething tension between Party and company was hardly mitigated by the 'violent dismissal' of one of FET's representatives by the company in what a Party informant described as an 'unspeakable outrage' when the directors discovered that the worker concerned had been supplying information to the Party's Investigation and Information Service.[67] This incident only confirmed the lack of authority which the Party had in the big companies which felt only 'hatred' towards the Movement.[68]

A catalogue of charges were made against the company. The

work regulations which were in force on the 18 July 1936, which the Francoist state declared as valid while new arrangements were being devised, were scrapped by the tram company without any consultation with the authorities. The period of the Civil War was disregarded by the company in calculating promotions, wages, and pensions for those who had supported the military rebels, in spite of a contrary order by the government, thus, according to the Party, denying those who had 'spent time in "chekas" [Republican prisons] for supporting the Glorious National Movement' their due rights. The widow of a rightist worker who had been imprisoned by 'the Reds' and who died shortly after release was denied any financial assistance at all.[69] In short, the company had 'increased the number of [the Falange's] internal enemies' by carrying out a policy of sabotage and defeatism with regard to the National Syndicalist revolution, refusing to make special wage payments to celebrate 'Victory Day' while making 'more than 10 million pesetas' in profits. In spite of this, the company had refused to comply with the order of the Civil Governor to raise wages by 25 per cent to allow workers to feed themselves at a time of rampant black market inflation. The company declared itself willing to comply only if it was permitted to raise fares.[70]

But still services continued to deteriorate. One working-class district on the outskirts of the province with a population of 40,000 was served by just one tramline.[71] People who needed a second, third or even fourth job, or had to grow their own food in order to survive in the 1940s and could not afford to lose time, were promised additional trams which never materialized.[72] Falangists wondered how workers might be expected to 'comply with their obligations' if the company did not.[73]

By early 1945, it appeared that the company was deliberately pursuing a strategy to maintain discontent among the 'producers' and 'organizations of a revolutionary kind' in expectation of Allied victory in the war. The company was seen by the Party's Investigation Service as a virtual hotbed of subversion[74] which only encouraged the activities of undercover anarchist elements who were carrying out a campaign of armed robberies, demanding cash from industrialists or shop owners at the point of a gun.[75]

This interpretation was confirmed by the discovery that the trams were being used by the political enemies of the regime for the organization and collection of 'Red Aid' (*Socorro Rojo*),

money gathered by the remnants of underground republican political movements to assist the feeding of prisoners or their families who were unable to rely on any assistance from the state or on a wage from an employer, discriminated against for being the relatives of 'Reds'.[76] Money was collected through the sale by tram drivers of silver tokens to passengers. FET's investigation bureau claimed to know the identity of the principal culprits who had previously been detained 'because of their activities during the Red period'.[77] Many of those responsible for collections were apparently among those dismissed by the company during the process of 'purging' the workforce after the fall of the city.[78]

Trams were frequently sabotaged by workers. What were claimed as unlucky accidents were often deliberate obstructionism. 'Breakdowns' could be produced by driving the vehicles at full speed and then suddenly applying the brakes forcefully causing the system to overheat, or by going through crossroads at full speed making the tram jump the rails or snap the overhead cable. This was a particularly effective ploy during the rush hour in the city. As well as this, the police were concerned to discover that copies of the BBC bulletin, giving translations of English and Russian war dispatches — enemy propaganda in the eyes of most Falangists and Franco loyalists — were being liberally distributed on the trams. It is not perhaps surprising, then, that the ninth anniversary of the defeat of the military rising, in July 1945, should have been marked by the placing of a bomb on a tram in the centre of Barcelona.[79]

III Students and Falangists: The Tram Boycott

In December 1950, the municipal authorities, through the Ministry of Public Works and under pressure from the tram company, gained the approval of the Council of Ministers for a rise of 40 per cent, from 50 céntimos per journey to 70, to become effective almost immediately. An increase in tram fares in Barcelona had been under consideration by the local authorities for some time. In October the authorities had received a warning about possible reactions. In view of the ever-rising cost of living, which had reached a 'dangerous level', the syndical delegate, Claudio Emilio Sánchez, made plain that such an unpopular measure would be 'untimely'. While the cost of the

basic food necessities for a working-class family for a week had been 77.35 pesetas in 1936, by 1950 it was 742 pesetas and an imminent further rise in prices was predicted.[80]

The question of a tram fare rise of 10 céntimos in Madrid had already been referred to Franco's Council of Ministers which decreed at the end of January 1951, thanks to the pressure of the Madrid Falange, that there would be no such rise and that the fare would be pegged at 40 céntimos.[81] This lack of equality of treatment was one of the constant causes of complaint during the early stages of the unrest in Barcelona.

Protest was begun by calling on the populace, as citizens of Barcelona, to act.[82] On 8 February an anonymous leaflet, printed in Catalan and Spanish, was circulated, probably by the HOAC (Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica or Workers' Brotherhood of Catholic Action, the only independent workers' organization permitted by the regime and officially controlled by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church), calling for a boycott of the trams from 1 March until the fares were equalized. The call to action was well received and the leaflets were widely distributed by people passing them on to friends and workmates as suggested.[83] Radical Falangists were hostile to HOAC, which they considered a threat to the regime, the Party, and the 'revolution'. But they were 'forced to avoid a frontal attack' because of the regime's growing accommodation with Acción Católica and the entry of some of its leaders into the government after the end of the Second World War.[84] The Party needed to respond. More leaflets followed; some, calling for a 'passenger strike', were now signed by the 'Vieja Guardia', the 'Old Guard' of the Falange itself.[85]

At the same time graffiti began to appear on the walls of public places, particularly in the area of the university, attacking the directors of the tram company 'and their accomplices in the city council', spelling out the difference in price between Barcelona and Madrid, and calling on the population 'to rise up against the pillagers of Barcelona'.[86] The campaign quickly became extremely popular and 'the population [was] evidently disposed to support the "resistance" movement'.[87] It was claimed that the official Party organization within the university, the Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), had instructed its members to support the action against the fares, though this was denied by the SEU officials.[88] More likely, the initial student protest

derived from Catalan nationalist groups like the Federació Nacional d'Estudiants de Catalunya (FNEC) which had re-formed clandestinely in 1946 and was fervently anti-Falangist.[89]

In the streets there were attempts to persuade people not to travel by tram, even before the date set for the start of the boycott. This involved considerable personal risk. In the area of Horta the Francoist Municipal Guard arrested a young lad of sixteen for urging the passengers of a tram to leave the vehicle as a protest. At first the passengers took no notice; it was only when he was seized by the officers that they reacted unanimously in abandoning the tram.[90] On the evening of 22 February there were group demonstrations in the city and several small explosions successfully dislodged tramlines at strategic locations.[91] The first stoning of trams occurred the next day and went on for more than two hours while onlookers stood and applauded and arrests were made. These arrests only aggravated the situation and by the evening hundreds had joined in as stones rained down on the trams. When the police charged, the demonstrators sought refuge within the campus of the university. The forces of public order were stretched in putting down the protest movement as disturbances were now breaking out in various parts of the city simultaneously. It seemed to the police, as they were forced to move from one place to another, that events were being co-ordinated by the demonstrators through a previously devised plan.[92]

These initial outbursts were not efficiently suppressed, possibly because some of the police sympathized with the demonstrators.[93] The Civil Governor, Eduardo Baeza, chose to rely on the reflexive response of the regime and blamed 'communist agitators'.[94] This was belied by the fact that not a single one of those arrested was known as part of an anti-regime group. Indeed, many were members of the SEU who had previously collaborated with the forces of order in 'wiping out' groups of 'bandits' which had been 'terrorizing the population of Barcelona'.[95]

On Saturday 24 February the first barricades were erected by students outside the faculty of medicine. This provoked a series of charges by mounted police and, again, many arrests were made. In other areas, far from the university, more protestors were drumming up support. The situation was rapidly deteriorating and 'a psychosis of instability' was being created which was 'reflected in all the attitudes of the people'.[96]

On the same day the governing board of the university met. The head of the SEU proposed that measures be taken to compel students not to become involved in 'non-university matters'. He declared that the protest had not been started by the student body, that students were being used by the real instigators of the rebellion, and that there was a danger of these actions igniting greater disturbances.[97] The overriding fear was that the downtrodden and half-starving industrial workers of the city would become involved.

IV The Protest Broadens: Workers and the General Strike

The authorities were already aware that they were facing the most serious movement of dissent since the end of the Civil War in 1939. During the last few days of February, unrest in working-class zones was increasing. Workers were reported for openly expressing the 'impossibility of continuing to live under the current conditions'.[98]

Throughout, the Civil Governor was forced to make decisions uncertain of the support he had from the forces supposedly under his control.[99] On 24 February he had ordered the arrest of 'known anti-franquistas' who had formerly been released from prison and were subject to police surveillance in a capacity of 'conditional freedom' (*libertad vigilada*). Meanwhile a propaganda battle against the boycott was commenced, relying on the unsteady loyalty of the officials of the SEU and CNS. A first official warning was issued on 25 February in the provincial press, threatening that measures would be taken to ensure that the order rigidly maintained since 1939 would not be jeopardized.[100] By the night of the 26 February the Chief of Police was able to report that 'the city has the appearance of a population under police occupation'. All the armed forces of the police and Guardia Civil were mobilized in mounting a service of vigilance. They were ordered to break up, 'emphatically', any groups of more than two people. 'Violence without reflection' was to be used.[101]

As the industrial workers of the city became gradually more involved, it was clear that resistance to the authorities' collusion in the black market in food was an important motivation for the protest. The protest was not simply against the tram company

but, as the fly-sheets made clear, 'against the City Council [Diputación], against the Military, and against the pressmen, who among other individuals of importance, are participating in intolerable dealings with which a few attempt to enrich themselves in the shortest possible time at the expense of the many'. The markets of Barcelona were first to be put under heavy police guard as the disturbances broke. In the working-class *barrios* there was talk of employing similar methods against the markets 'and business in general' to those used against the trams.[102]

As the morning of 1 March arrived the transport boycott began in earnest as planned and the trams circulated through the streets of the city without passengers.[103] At 11.30 a group of workers attempted to force their way into the market of San José but were pushed back by the police. There were soon more violent incidents at the city's other markets. These activities had some success. At Gràcia the public protest at last forced the authorities to put meat on the counter and sell it at the official price.[104] This was an important achievement given the repressive significance of the black market. The market place was the site for the release of the pent-up anger of the people. According to a report of the syndical investigation service, at the market in Borne two people who had attempted to travel by tram were seized by the crowd, stripped, beaten, and sprayed with rotten tomatoes. That evening new leaflets were put out proclaiming that the boycott of the trams was only the first step and demanding the removal of all those who had been implicated in preventing the adequate flow of necessities to the population.

During the afternoon semi-organized demonstrations and marches took place simultaneously in various parts of the city. Around 300 people, according to police estimates, marched down the Vía Layetana, one of the main thoroughfares of Barcelona, toward the Civil Government building. The police, at several locations, simply charged any groups of onlookers and used their batons freely.[105] According to the authorities the cry was: 'Long Live Franco! Death to the Governor!' Franco, it seems, was seen as above corrupt practices, repression and administrative inefficiencies. At one of these demonstrations, at the crossroads of Valencia and Marina Streets, a five-year-old boy, the son of a worker at the Pegaso lorry manufacturing firm, was seriously wounded by a police bullet as the forces of public order fired on demonstrators.[106]

At 6.30 a hastily prepared meeting took place in the Governor's office with the hierarchies of the various organizations of the Movimiento to devise a strategy to deal with the mounting crisis. The Governor told them that he had been ordered by the Minister of the Interior, Blas Pérez, not to make contact with the press — and indeed, the Barcelona events were hardly reported in the heavily-censored Spanish newspapers. But he could explain to the meeting that recent events were 'a political manoeuvre' and that he was not concerned with defending any private interest but only with maintaining order.[107]

Public formality contrasted with behind-the-scenes panic. Having apparently reinforced Party morale, loyal Falangists were quick to assemble and form groups of ten and board the trams in plain clothes posing as passengers. They were not to carry arms, since, Baeza claimed, up to now, no shots had been fired; the working class had so far remained peaceful and it would be better if it stayed that way. The Governor himself would also go and ride in a tram to give an example to the rank-and-file.[108]

That evening, in house-to-house raids by the police, 300 people were detained and despatched to prison at the mercy of the military authorities. On the following day, however, the boycott was firmly maintained. During the afternoon it became known that the wounded child had died in hospital. A demonstration was immediately assembled outside the hospital, which was broken up by charges of mounted police. In several factories, including the Pegaso plant where the child's father was employed, stoppages were organized and worker meetings took place. At this stage the traditional organizations of the Left made their first intervention in their capacity as political groups. The first strike committee since the revolutionary heyday of early 1937 was set up in Barcelona.

However, the committee never managed to take control of the protest movement or the subsequent general strike. The boycott had a dynamic of its own, spontaneous and autonomous, and the strike committee, composed of representatives of the political organizations largely liquidated during the Civil War,[109] could not rely on sufficient forces to channel what was happening in the street. The committee was dissolved at the end of the tram dispute and took no part in the general strike.[110]

On 3 March there were more demonstrations which called for Baeza's immediate resignation. Again, these were broken up by

police. The state syndical organization had been shown as virtually worthless in resolving the social conflict which was growing with each passing day. The clear contradiction between the rhetoric of social justice and the reality of exploitation and repression meant that the state union had little power of persuasion. This impotence was recognized when the organizations of the city's economic élites, the genuine power-holders in the city, moved to defuse the situation which was seen as jeopardizing the fragile economic fabric of the city. These groups had long acted with relative autonomy, outside the syndical structure of which they were supposed to be an integral part. In the afternoon, their representatives met with the Provincial Delegate of the CNS, Claudio Emilio Sánchez.[111] The meetings lasted for three days and culminated in a resolution that the fares return to the old rate. But it was too late. Subsequent events proved this to have been a hopelessly inadequate response. In the event, Baeza anyway rejected the idea, seeing the question as one where his personal authority was at stake.[112]

Barcelona industrialists were acting out of fear and quickly distanced themselves from Baeza's hard-line position. Although local industry had been able to transfer onto the working class the Draconian consequences of the autarkic economic and social policy of the regime, it was increasingly believed that the monopolization and protectionism guaranteed by self-sufficiency were outweighed by the drawbacks of state intervention. An agreement was therefore reached between the representatives of industry, the central government in Madrid, the Barcelona City Council, and the company, behind the back of the Civil Governor. News of reversion to the old fare was conveyed by telegram from the Ministry of Public Works to Baeza in the early hours of Tuesday, 6 March. The authority of the Civil Governor had been usurped by Madrid.[113] On the same day the removal of the Mayor of Barcelona, the Baron of Terrades, was announced, officially because of ill health.[114] The end of the boycott was to be initiated by contingents of Falange militants, 'breaking the ice' and boarding the trams. However, resistance from the populace continued unabated. At the market of San Antonio a large group of women formed themselves into teams to attempt to stop the trams from running, persuading passengers to get out.[115] The crowd was finally dispersed by the deployment of bands of Falangists.[116]

The popular tram boycott had opened a public space for working-class protest. The initial movement had achieved a number of victories and it was clear that local authorities were now in some disarray. It fell largely to the local syndical organization to salvage a structure of control from the situation. Once again, those parts of the local authority most intimately associated with the Falange would bear the brunt of publicly reimposing authority. But it was partly the resistance of elements of the Party itself to a simple reversion to the *status quo ante* which determined that popular protest would not end with the victory over tram fares.

When an assembly of CNS delegates was called for the morning of 6 March, it was almost inevitable that things would not go as the syndical hierarchy planned. Among the 2,000 or more union delegates gathered there were a significant number of anti-Francoist elements. In particular, the presence of some PSUC militants was assured by the strategy of 'entryism' operated by the communists in Spain since 1948.[117] However, groups of disaffected Falangists also played a part in maintaining the protest. It was at this critical meeting that the call went up for a general strike against the cost of living and there were demands for the release of those detained during the boycott.

The assembly was presided over by the Provincial Syndical Delegate, Claudio Emilio Sánchez, assisted by the rest of the CNS hierarchy. His opening gambit was to claim, falsely, that the tram problem had been resolved thanks to the intervention of the Syndical organization, which had, for now, achieved the lowering of the fares. In fact, syndical leaders had displayed more sympathy for the hard-line attitude of the Civil Governor during the boycott and the vital influence over the company seems to have come not from syndicate officials but from the President of the Chamber of Industry. Foolishly, he then called upon the union delegates symbolically to board the trams.[118] The scepticism of those assembled was registered in the constant hectoring which his speech provoked. He could hardly be heard and was constantly interrupted 'by every kind of insult and taunt'.[119]

The syndical authorities were 'incapable of bringing the situation under control', only offering 'stammering' and 'half cut-off sentences'. With 'deathly pale faces through fear and completely demoralized' they left the hall: 'The syndical leadership disappeared as if the earth had swallowed them up, showing no further

signs of life.' This was followed by a series of general attacks upon the company, the local authorities, 'traitors' and those 'without morals' and even upon 'the Caudillo himself', something unheard of and 'not registered until now under any circumstances'. The 'masses' in the hall were now 'uncontrollable', taking over the place where the hierarchy had been and conducting their own meeting, refusing to move until all those detained were released. A delegation was sent to the Civil Governor's office to deliver these demands to Baeza. On returning, and having received assurances from the Governor, those assembled remained reluctant to leave, insisting that some of the prisoners should be produced to prove that they were not being deceived. Finally the meeting was dispersed by the police, having left the local CNS, supposedly the regime's vital organic link with the workers, in tatters.[120]

As a result of the meeting printed notices were distributed signalling 12 March as the day of the general strike. At least one of these leaflets was produced by the clandestine Catalan communist party, the PSUC. This was handed out particularly among the workers of the engineering works of La Maquinista and Vulcano in Barceloneta and in the centres of the big textile firms. The centre of the protest movement was shifting towards the workplaces of Barcelona industry.[121]

Other propaganda clearly originated with dissident elements of the Falange. A leaflet distributed on 10 and 11 March, Falangist in language and style, contained some devastating criticisms. It declared that the whole of Barcelona had unanimously acted against the 'boundless egoism' of the tram company and its selfish protectors, including Juan Antonio Suanzes, Minister of Trade and Industry, designer of the regime's autarkic industrialization strategy, and, naturally, Baeza, the Civil Governor. After such a clear victory for Barcelona, it was asked, 'for what are these gentlemen waiting before resigning?' It went on to call for the resignations of the Minister of Interior, the Chief of Police, the syndical delegate of transport, as well as the delegate for food provisions (Abastos) along with the extinction of his department with all 'its intrigues . . . and games; that is, the body which has brought so many privations to the Spanish people'.

The confusion of the state authorities in Barcelona, evident during the first week of March, was only confirmed by reactions to the call for a general strike. On 10 March a meeting took place

between the Governor, the Chief of Municipal Police, the head of the Armed Police, the Delegate of the state syndicates, the Delegate of Labour, and the Chief Commissioners of the Social Brigade and of the Special Services of the state police. The Governor, retrospectively attempting to justify his own actions during the conflict, reported on this gathering a few days later: 'Although the opinion of all those present was agreed that the strike would not happen, I reckoned that the action was more than probable and everybody was disposed to act from the first moment with the maximum decisiveness and the maximum vigour.'[122]

At 8 a.m. on the morning of 12 March the authorities received reports that small groups, and in many cases single individuals, were going from factory to factory giving the word, 'in the name of the syndicate', that the strike was under way. The Governor found himself surprised by 'the absolute absence of the police forces'. The chiefs of the forces of order either believed that workers would not dare go through with their threat to strike or were willing to risk some protest at the expense of Baeza. In any event, the speed with which the strike-call was spread made useless the measures which he had ordered the syndical delegation to take in the event of isolated conflicts. Thus all work was suspended at 9 a.m. At the same moment offices and shops were due to open, but workers here also stayed away. The strike was total in the textile industry, engineering, construction, and chemicals. Gas, water, electricity, postal and telephone services were all seriously disrupted, communications with Madrid being interrupted. Already at the focal points of the city large crowds were accumulating as workers made their way to the centre from the working-class zones of the periphery. The trams were one of the main targets of the discontent, as they were overturned and set alight. The Plaza Sant Jaume, the main public square and political hub of the city, was occupied by thousands of people demanding the resignation of the entire town council (*Diputación*) and doing away with 'Abastos'. A 'river of people' flowed down the Vía Layetana; the chant was 'syndicates of hunger' outside the offices of the official union where a barricade was erected. Not a single window of the Town Hall or of the building of the Diputación was left intact.[123]

Chaos reigned in the offices of the forces of order. The sense of panic is, again, almost comic. Baeza relates how:

> Recognizing the scarcity and the passive attitude of the Armed Police, I called the Chief of Police by telephone, who told me that he had given written orders which had not been obeyed. Faced with a declaration of such seriousness I hung up the receiver and, precipitately, with a secretary as driver, left for the Police Headquarters in a small car since my official one was not available.[124] We managed to get there with some difficulty because the great masses that came along the Vía Layetana made it very difficult for the car to get through. On arriving at the office of the Police Chief I called the Colonel of Armed Police, Sr. Cadenas. In a rather angry way, I made him see the seriousness of the moment; that the masses had made themselves possessors of the street, that forces were not arranged, and that he was absolutely responsible for everything. He answered me that if the police had not come out it was to avoid taking a provocative attitude that would complicate the problem. I ordered him immediately to get out onto the streets with all his forces and that all measures within his reach be taken, that order be imposed, and that the catastrophe which I saw being produced be avoided.
>
> I quickly returned to the Civil Government building, this time accompanied by the Chief of Police and as it was impossible for us to continue our way along the Vía Layetana (and) Paseo Colón because the demonstrations completely closed these wide roads, we had to go the long way round through adjacent streets which were unobstructed. Realizing the demoralization of the Chief of Armed Police, I immediately informed the Guardia Civil to prepare with every urgency all its disposable force and to get onto the streets, taking charge of the centre of Barcelona. Within a few minutes large groups stationed themselves at the front of the Civil Government building and seeing the passive attitude of the Armed Police, I ordered the Commissioners Quintela[125] and Polo who were in my office, to go outside to lift the morale of the officers; two shots into the air were enough to make the large crowd dissolve in rapid flight . . . Almost straightaway notice was received that along the Vía Layetana and the Paseo de Colón a large demonstration had formed which now flowed into the square in which the Post Office and Telegraph building is situated. I ordered the Commissioners of the Social Brigade and of Special Services to go quickly to break it up; on this occasion volleys of shots were not enough and faced with the aggression of the rioters and in an act of legitimate defence it was necessary to really employ arms managing straightaway to disperse the crowd after producing one death and several wounded among the rioters.[126]

During the morning of 12 March the Civil Governor had also visited the austere anti-Falangist Captain General of Barcelona, General Juan Bautista Sánchez, to ensure that the military authority of the city was apprised of the situation. He was requested to assure the Governor that, faced with the possibility of a general strike, the military services could be counted on to guarantee supplies and public services. Measures had already been taken and teams prepared for action should they be needed. However, the Captain General refused to intervene in putting down the unrest, saying that his troops should not be used to

quell disorder occasioned by the Civil Governor's failure to control his own subordinates and political supporters.[127] Franco himself took the situation seriously enough to order three destroyers and a minesweeper to the port of Barcelona and a detachment of marines was marched through the streets of the city. Large-scale bloodshed was prevented, however, by the confinement of the local garrison to barracks.[128]

Demonstrations in other parts of the city were finally dispersed, police forces being dispatched to put down the unrest. By 1 p.m. the Guardia Civil were in the streets and order was restored. The Armed Police, encouraged by the action of the Guardia Civil 'began using rifles'. At 2 p.m. Baeza issued an official note 'giving account of the true causes of the Movement that had been attempted and advising that the principle of authority would be inflexibly maintained'. According to the Governor, the events had been the result of a communist conspiracy, the motivation for which was clear: 'The same as those who from abroad have provoked the diplomatic and economic blockade of our Patria, they try it now when the blockade has been dissipated, when it can be expected that its economic consequences will also be dissipated.'[129]

By 8 p.m., Baeza claimed he was able to walk along the Paseo de Gràcia and Las Ramblas checking for himself that 'normality reigned'. He called the Minister of Interior by telephone to give him the latest details and to say that in his opinion the announcing of a state of exception was unnecessary, since the 'attempted revolt had been completely crushed'.

During the action functionaries of the local party had been assembled and organized into 'action groups' lending their services wherever required. Far from all Falangists looked sympathetically on the strike as it had developed after the tram boycott. These groups played a significant role, only partially successful, in attempting to persuade workers to return to work the following day. The Syndical Delegation set up eighty teams of officials which in eighty hired taxis spent the day passing through the working-class areas 'promoting' a return to work, countering 'the propaganda' against going back. Other groups attempted to persuade businesses and shops to open their doors to give an image of normality.[130]

According to the Governor, 'although the workers wanted to return to work', it soon became clear that 'approximately 50 per

cent' of the working population continued on strike. Since relative normality appeared to have returned to the commercial centre of the city, the Civil Guard was transferred to the industrial outskirts. Reinforcements from Madrid, Valencia and Zaragoza had already arrived.

Despite efforts to achieve 'normalization', at 9 p.m. the Minister of the Interior, Blas Pérez, was forced to order the closure of three important factories, an investigation being ordered into the cause of the continued defiance of workers and the identity of 'the promoters' of the strike. The logic of these imposed lock-outs was questioned by the Chief of Police and Captain General who had received assurances from the information services that a return to work was expected the following day, and feared that they would be counterproductive.

On 14 March there was a drift back as workers feared for their jobs and families. The forces of order in the city and Falange militants continued their labour of 'persuasion' but still there were sparks of resistance. In the textile factories of Poble Nou, for example, a group of women left work again in an attempt to sustain the protest. Baeza reported that in Terrassa the workers had gone back although in Manresa and Badalona the strike was carried on in some firms.[131] The police continued making 'preventative' arrests. In preparation for further planned protests on 22 May, the authorities sent out thousands of letters to those known to have been released under 'amnesties' for 'political offences' since the Civil War, threatening a return to prison to serve out sentences.[132] The labour of investigation was expected to be long and slow, but a thorough job was to be done. The Governor was clearly in no mood for relenting. The forces of order were prepared for the possibility that on the coming Saturday, pay day, there would be trouble, since, 'my orders are final and we are disposed to hand down the maximum sanctions if any boss pays any wage for the work hours lost. All those arrested remain automatically sacked from their firms. The principle of Authority now imposed, it is essential that the punishment, within the strictest justice, has the necessary exemplariness to avoid, as far as possible, a repetition of events like these.'[133]

V Aftermath

The first priority was to re-establish authority in Barcelona. According to information received by the British government, there were about 1,000 arrests as a result of the strike.[134] The main scapegoats detained by the regime were thirty-four workers, all previous members of the Spanish Unified Socialist Youth (JSU) or the affiliated Catalan Unified Socialist Party (PSUC). They included the PSUC's former leader, Gregorio López Raimundo, the textile workers Francisco Pedral and Isabel Vicente, and the transport worker, José Pagès. López was tortured and faced possible death; prisoners were frequently shot 'while trying to escape' during these years in Spain. Later he was expatriated after an international outcry. In July, twenty-two more 'communist agitators' were arrested and blamed for the Spring events and accused of attempting to 'reorganize' the PSUC.[135]

However, calls to 'the people of Barcelona' for further action continued and a great demonstration was called for May Day in the Plaça de Catalunya to demand a decent wage and 'to express our protest against the policy of repression and terror, of hunger and Francoist war, and our solidarity with the thousand victims of reprisals for the events of 12 and 13 March.'[136] A month after the March strike the government enforced a lock-out of the 9,000 mainly women workers taking industrial action in the textile mills of Manresa although employers were willing to pay the 70 peseta rise the women claimed.[137] In spite of a heavy police presence (the authorities had prior warning) many people, particularly women, would again leave work on May Day to join the protest before it was dispersed by squads of Guardia de Franco and the Policia Armada carrying rifles.[138]

Potentially of most concern for the 'renovated' authorities in the province was the obvious role which dissident elements from within the Party had played during the protest. Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, FET's Secretary-General, in a speech delivered in Galicia on 19 March, gave an indirect warning to Party rebels: 'National Syndicalism [is] not only the basis for the defence of the workers but also the foundation of the political, economic and social organization of Spain . . . These are the ideas and principles defended in the past, in the present and in the future by authentic Falangists and not those who belong to an

organization only to discredit it.' Some 'comrades [had] unwillingly and in good faith . . . instinctively fallen into Left-wing Marxism'.[139]

The strike was followed by a wave of dismissals within the local authorities, including the provincial CNS chief and the Civil Governor, Baeza, on 17 March, effectively depoliticizing authority in Barcelona.[140] The National Inspector of the Old Guard wrote to the Secretary General in May 1951 persisting with the need for a clear link between Party and state in the interests of a 'radical transformation that Spanish life needs . . .' and an 'absolute primacy' to the organizations of 'ideological apostleship'.[141] A new Provincial Chief of the Barcelona Old Guard was appointed who, however, found only 'an atmosphere of scepticism' in the party.[142]

Once the dust had settled, the radical Falangist JANS was disbanded as punishment for its involvement in the protests in Barcelona.[143] 'Comradely' relations would become a thing of the past. The stern new Civil Governor, General Felipe Acedo, began by abolishing use of the familiar 'tu' form of address and was to be known himself only as 'Excellency'. He shunned all contact with Party men.[144] The 'Provincial Council' of JANS, in the aftermath, reflected on the 'true crisis' that had provoked the strikes.[145] The cost of living had spiralled out of control while wages had declined. Prices were higher in Catalonia than in any other part of the country, according to the malcontents. However, although they had supported the boycott, these Falangists did not unequivocally support the general strike. Officially, at least, the JANS would only criticize the action of the Party hierarchy in dealing with the call for the strike. Had an 'authentic Falangist' been in charge of the CNS, it was claimed, there would have been no such escalation: 'A true oligarchy exists which shares out amongst itself the leading positions, and . . . the government lacks the necessary agility to bring about the removal of those worn out . . . substituting them with new people.' It seemed to some that 'immorality, weakness, and dishonesty were rewarded with promotion', appointments being made exclusively according to connection rather than to capacity.[146] However, no attempt was made to define how an 'authentic Falangist' might be more attractive to the workers. The 'critique' is thus reduced to denouncing a lack of 'Falangist ethics', and a call for a 'purge' within the leadership. The strike, it was argued,

could have been avoided had this leadership given clearer and more emphatic orders to union delegates, not permitting 'infiltrating elements' to take advantage. However JANS militants, and the Old Guard in general, were able to reveal their true loyalties by co-operating in the 'clean-up' operations in the wake of the strike. JANS militants claimed proudly that order was maintained at the site of the CNS 'for fear of incurring reprisals from us'.[147]

The disillusionment went beyond Catalonia. At the precise moment that the tram boycott was developing in Barcelona the government's anxiety was heightened by signs of unrest emanating from sections of the Party in Madrid, as well as working-class unrest in the Basque Country and even Valladolid, the Falangist heartland.[148] These protests were seen as examples to be followed. In Alicante a general strike was called for 22 May:

> A few weeks ago it was Barcelona, then Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa and Alava, now it is the Navarrese (it will not be said of them that they are communists); as one man the 22nd of May is our date. Everyone at home, so that it cannot be said that we are the scorn of good Spaniards. WE PROTEST BECAUSE WE ARE HUNGRY, there are too many office holders, official cars, interventions and wasters. Men of goodwill want only one thing, to work and be able to live from their labour. 'Alacant': Honour your duty. ¡¡¡Viva España¡¡¡[149]

Already in the winter of 1950 and the first months of 1951 signs of organized discontent had appeared in Madrid. Leaflets were distributed in the metro, for example, produced by dissident Falangists, proclaiming that 'Nobody should blame us for what this State, which trades with our name, does or plans.' In its title — *La Conquista del Estado* — this harked back to the early years of the Falange following the proclamation of the Republic. It claimed that in the sixteen years since the fusion of Spain's principal fascist movements and despite the 'sacrifices of blood' made, nothing had been done to bring about the revolution. 'Pseudo-Falangists', according to the Party critics, had only brought about 'ephemeral' concessions to the workers.

Investigations were set in train by the Social Brigade of the state police to weed out the Madrid malcontents. Such declarations, according to the monarchist opposition to Franco, were considered threatening to the rapprochement which the regime was developing with the United States. General Antonio Aranda, leader of the monarchist band of Generals, who had played an

important part in opening up relations with Washington, on discovering that Falangist propaganda was to be distributed at a demonstration organized to coincide with the presentation of the credentials of the American Ambassador, ensured that the US government knew that 'Franco was not dependent upon the Falange'.[150] He feared, however, that restlessness went to the very top of the Party, led by José Luis Arrese, Secretary General of the Movement in the period 1941 to 1945 and once a close associate of the pro-Axis wartime Interior Minister, Ramón Serrano Suñer. It concerned him that such propaganda appeared in the same typescript as did many of the 'official things' of the Party, and it was curious that although Franco knew about radical Falangist propaganda, when the Caudillo brought it up at the meeting of the Council of Ministers, Fernández Cuesta 'just sat there open-mouthed'.

The leadership of the national Syndical organization was immediately put on the defensive by the Barcelona events. As early as 13 March the National Syndical Delegate, Fermín Sanz Orrio, wrote to the Party Secretary General, Fernández Cuesta, with whom he was in constant contact during the crisis, promising to act harshly with all syndical delegates or officials against whom 'there might have been the least cause for complaint in these extremely serious circumstances'.[151]

At the same time, Sanz was anxious to play down the role performed by union delegates in supporting the strike. According to his information, those who had 'strayed from carrying out their obligations' were very few, particularly since, as he was keen to remind the Minister, there were some 8,000 to 10,000 union delegates (*enlaces*) in the city. Furthermore, in an attempt to play down any suggestion that the union structure itself had somehow become contaminated, he reminded the Minister to recognize the character of the position of *enlace*. This was 'a purely representative' role, with the *enlaces* 'excessively' reliant upon the groups of workers who elected them. The job had no official character in itself, nor were the *enlaces* the 'trustees' of the authority of high-ranking officials. Virtually their only job was to vote for members of the Boards of the local Social Section of the union, thereby 'avoiding the movement of large masses of voters'. Apart from this duty, carried out every three years, they simply had to convey the claims of workers to the appropriate syndicate and relay union instructions back to the workforce. The difficulty

was, as he admitted, that should these individuals not be elected by the workers themselves 'they would not be of any use to us at all'. He insisted that a great deal had been achieved through this system. The trouble had been brought about by just a few defects 'of which we have not been the creators but the victims'.[152]

However, Sanz could hardly fail to admit that although the current wave of labour conflict was now under control, 'the causes that undoubtedly motivated it' were not. This was a clear reference to the social conditions suffered by the population and the corruption endemic to the regime, both of which he had previously, though cautiously, criticized. The reality was that Sanz was only too aware of the weaknesses of authority that lay behind the crisis. It is ironic that while in the wake of the strike he was critical of 'speculation' about the 'failure of the Barcelona syndical organization', he had already a year previously had to respond to a report precisely entitled: 'The Failure of the Syndical Organization'.[153] Openly, however, he preferred to identify scapegoats: had the forces of order in the city been emphatically employed at the right moment 'perhaps the strike would not have taken place'. According to Sanz, the working class had been relatively tranquil until aroused by the 'attitude of protest of bourgeois elements of the population'.[154]

In July 1951, four months after the Barcelona events, a new Council of Ministers was announced with great pomp and official enthusiasm.[155] The formation of Franco's fifth government was hailed by the regime itself as the first complete reorganization of the state administration since August 1939.[156] British diplomats reported that there had been anxious and heated discussion in the Council of Ministers and that Franco had been pressed for Cabinet 'reconstruction'. The Caudillo, though, had resisted, wanting to rely on repression rather than reform.[157] The most significant innovation was the creation of a separate Ministry of Commerce, detached from the Ministry of Industry and, therefore, relatively independent of the industrializing strategy of import substitution. Suanzes, the architect of autarky, was dropped as minister, though he retained control of the INI. This marked a liberalizing turn that recognized the need to trade in order to satisfy the basic needs of the population.[158] The tram boycott, and the general strike that followed, contributed to this restructuring.

Though many more arduous and hard-fought protests would

be mounted before democracy came to Spain in the mid-1970s, following the death of Franco, the Barcelona strike marked something of a turning point. It signalled a shift from the brutal military-fascism of the 1940s, characterized, in part, by anti-Catalanism, to a more rational-bureaucratic authoritarian rule in the 1950s,[159] and from a continuation of the Civil War to a 'social opposition' based on a new developmentalism.[160] The grandiose myth of self-sufficiency and all its repressive effects to which Franco and his most loyal lieutenants clung during the 1940s was gradually dissolved after 1951. The mystique of the Civil War, the main formative influence of the regime, was slowly diluted not only at the insistence of 'the defeated', who never believed in it, but also through the disillusion of some of 'the victors' who had once done so.

Notes

1. 'The hare starts up from where it is least expected' (old Spanish proverb).

2. The fullest treatment is Fèlix Fanés, *La Vaga de Tramvies del 1951: Una crònica de Barcelona* (Barcelona 1977). See also Llibert Ferri, Jordi Muixí, and Eduardo Sanjuán, *Las Huelgas contra Franco 1939–1956* (Barcelona 1978), 148–74; Sebastian Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers and the City: Labour in Greater Barcelona since 1939* (Oxford 1990), 22–30; Gemma Ramos Ramos, 'Tranvías y Conflictividad social en Barcelona (marzo de 1951): actitudes políticas y sociales de una huelga mítica', in *Historia Contemporánea*, Universidad del País Vasco, 1991, no.5.

3. See Amando de Miguel, *España cíclica: ciclos económicos y generaciones demográficas en la sociedad española contemporánea* (Madrid 1986), 183.

4. See Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Barcelonas* (Barcelona 1987), 174–7; Sergio Vilar, *Historia del anti-franquismo, 1939–1975* (Barcelona 1984), 238.

5. In 1945 there were some 40,000 soldiers in Catalonia out of a total land army of 345,000, including barracks in the Barcelona industrial suburbs of Manresa and Mataró. There were also more than 6,000 Guardia Civil (about 1 per 400 inhabitants) in two divisions commanded from Barcelona and Gerona. Borja de Riquer and Joan Culla, *El franquisme i la transició democrática (1939–1988), Historia de Catalunya*, 7, (Barcelona 1989), 41–2.

6. Angel Viñas, *Los pactos secretos de Franco con Estados Unidos: bases, ayuda económica, recortes de soberanía* (Barcelona 1981).

7. Michael Richards, *A Time of Silence: Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain, 1936–1945* (Cambridge 1998).

8. For debate on quantification of the terror see Alberto Reig Tapia, *Ideología e historia: sobre la represión franquista y la guerra civil* (Madrid 1984); Michael Richards, 'Civil War, Violence and the Construction of Francoism', in A. Mackenzie and P. Preston, eds, *The Republic Besieged* (Edinburgh 1996), 193–234.

9. Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936–1975* (Madison 1987), 252.

10. *Catalunya sota el règim franquista: informe sobre la persecució de la llengua i la cultura de Catalunya pel règim del General Franco* (Paris 1973); Josep María Solé i Sabaté, *La repressió franquista a Catalunya, 1938–1953* (Barcelona 1984); Josep Benet, *L'intent franquista de genocidi cultural contra catalunya* (Barcelona 1995).

11. Manuel Aparicio, *El sindicalismo vertical y la formación del Estado franquista* (Barcelona 1980); Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, '*Patria, Justicia y Pan'. Nivell de vida i condicions de treball a Catalunya, 1939–1951* (Barcelona 1985), 25–52.

12. Riquer and Culla, *El franquisme*, 26; Francisco Candel, *Ser obrero no es ninguna ganga* (Barcelona 1978), 89–99; Solé i Sabaté, 'La justicia catalan franquista y sus fuentes', in David Ruíz et al., eds, *España franquista: causa general y actitudes sociales ante la dictadura* (Castilla–La Mancha 1993), 90.

13. See the comments of Franco's first Interior Minister, Ramón Serrano Suñer, in Rafael Abella, *Finales de enero de 1939: Barcelona cambia del piel* (Barcelona 1991), 59–60; *Catalunya sota el règim*, 292. On the pathological language of early Francoism, see Richards, *A Time of Silence*, 47–66.

14. Public Record Office, (PRO), Foreign Office Papers, FO371/24127/W2306/8/41, 6 February 1939.

15. See, for example, Eduardo Pons Prades, *Guerrillas españolas, 1936–1960* (Barcelona 1977); F. Aguado Sánchez, *El maquis en España* (Madrid 1975); Hartmut Heine, *A guerrila antifranquista en Galicia* (Vigo 1980).

16. This has served to lend weight to the spurious claims by writers sympathetic to Franco that 1939 witnessed a 'miraculous normalization' in Spanish society. See, for example, Fernando Vizcaíno Casas, *La España de la posguerra* (Barcelona 1975), especially 355.

17. See, for example, on Seville, Julio de Ramón-Laca, *Bajo la férula de Queipo: como fue gobernada Andalucía* (Seville 1939); A. Braojos Garrido et al. *Sevilla '36: sublevación fascista y represión* (Seville 1990); on Granada, Ian Gibson, *Granada en 1936 y el asesinato de Federico García Lorca* (Barcelona 1979); on Galicia, Carlos Fernández Santander, *El alzamiento de 1936 en Galicia* (La Coruña 1983); *Lo que han hecho en Galicia* (Paris 1938); on Córdoba, Francisco Moreno, *Córdoba en la posguerra. (La represión y la guerrilla, 1939–1950)* (Córdoba 1987); on the Basque Country, Juan de Iturralde, *La guerra de Franco: los vascos y la iglesia* (San Sebastián 1978); and on Zaragoza, Julián Casanova et al., *El pasado oculto: fascismo y violencia en Aragón, 1936–1939* (Madrid 1992).

18. For example, the protest at the company Moritz in Barcelona during 1940, the strike in Mataró, Barcelona in 1942, the stoppage at the Maestranza de Ingenieros in Cádiz in 1941 and, the major strike in Valencia at the cigarette paper factory at Alcoy, Ferri et al., *Las huelgas contra Franco*, 34.

19. Borja de Riquer, 'Dossier: el franquisme i la burguesía catalana, 1939–1951', in *L'Avenc*, January, 1979, 18.

20. Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, 'Luchas obreras y oposición al franquismo en la Cataluña de postguerra', in Tusell et al., *La oposición al régimen de Franco* (Madrid 1990), 24. Republican parties were left largely leaderless, particularly at a local level, by the repression and forced exile. Despite this, small groups associated with these parties did continue to trouble the authorities. For example, on the PSUC (Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya) and the CNT (Confederación

Nacional del Trabajo) in Barcelona see FET–JONS, DNII (Delegación Nacional de Información e Investigación), Barcelona 'Parte', August 1945; Boletín 383, 15 January 1942; on anarchists 'from Murcia', in the Catalan mining district of Malgrat, see FET–JONS, DNII, Barcelona Boletín 784, 30 June 1942; and formation of groups of 'libertarian youth' in the Barcelona district of Clot, FET–JONS, DNII, report, April 1940, AGA, Presidencia, SGM, caja 30; on 'groups of FAI militants' in Murcia, FET–JONS, DNII, Boletín 501, 28 February 1942. On resistance, both individual and collective, in the Asturian coal fields, see Ramón García Piñeiro, *Los mineros asturianos bajo el franquismo, (1937–1962)* (Madrid 1990), esp. 200–84. Also Isidro Guardia Abella, *Otoño de 1941* (Madrid 1976); Víctor Alba, *La oposición de los supervivientes* (Barcelona 1978): Fernando Jáuregui and Pedro Vega, *Crónica del antifranquismo*, Vol. 1, (Barcelona 1983); Valentina Fernández Vargas, *La resistencia interior en la España de Franco* (Madrid 1981), 109–36.

21. Reproduced in FET–JONS, DNII, Barcelona Boletín 784, 30 June 1942, AGA, Presidencia, SGM, caja 16, 5.

22. Angel Cortes, 'Quan la memoria encara roman fidel', *L'Avenç*, 58, (March 1983), 9–11.

23. FET–JONS, Barcelona 'Parte', August 1945, AGA, Presidencia, SGM, caja 165. Borja de Riquer, 'Rebuig, passivitat i suport. Actituts polítiques catalanes davant el primer franquisme (1939–1950)', in Tusell et al., *La oposición al régimen*, Vol.II, 191; Molinero and Ysàs, 'Luchas obreras', 22. See also Ferri, Muixí, Sanjuán, *Las huelgas contra Franco*, 57–9; Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, *L'oposició antifeixista a Catalunya (1939–1950)* (Barcelona 1981).

24. In Barcelona during November and December 1947, there were major strikes and a continual go-slow in textile factories. PRO/FO371/73356/Z2490/596/41G, 19 March 1948; FO371/89524/WS1101/1, December 1949; FO371/73356/Z4555/596/G, 28 May 1948.

25. Molinero and Ysàs, '*Patria, Justicia y Pan*', 225–6. The strike was preceded by other localized protests, in Castellar del Vallés, for example. Molinero and Ysàs, 'Luchas obreras', 22; Borja, 'Rebuig, passivitat i suport', 191; Ferri et al., *Las huelgas*, 78–84; Fabre et al., *Vint anys de resistència*, 196–202; FET–JONS, DNII, Barcelona 'Parte', September 1945, AGA, Presidencia, SGM, caja 165.

26. FET–JONS, Secretaría General, Circular no.179, 11 July 1946, AGA, Presidencia SGM, caja 41.

27. See José María Lorenzo Espinosa, *Rebelión en la ría* (Bilbao 1988); PRO/FO371/73356/Z2490/596/41G, 19 March, 1948; Z4555/596/G, 28 May, 1948; Z7549/10118/41, 4 November, 1949.

28. See the British diplomatic memorandum, PRO/FO371/Z7549/10118/41, 4 November 1949.

29. PRO/FO371/96158/WS1016/41, 16 May 1951; 96158/WS/1016/52, 29 May 1951; 96159/WS/1016/68, 28 June 1951; 96164/WS/1016/138, 13 December 1951.

30. See Michael Richards, '"Terror and Progress": Industrialization, Modernity and the Making of Francoism', in Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, eds, *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford 1995), 173–81; *A Time of Silence*, *passim*; Francisco Albuquerque, 'Métodos de control político de la población civil', in Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *Estudios sobre la historia de España* (Madrid 1981), 407–32.

31. The mild liberalizing reforms ought to have been carried out before the strike in Barcelona was provoked. Civil Governor of Asturias, Francisco Labadié Otermín, 13 February 1951, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73. For his criticisms Labadié was accused by one Minister of being a 'demagogue' and his dismissal proposed by Suanzes, Labadié letter, 26 April 1951. See also dissident Falangists in aftermath, Internal report of FET–JONS, Barcelona 'Algunas consideraciones políticas a cuenta de los sucesos de Barcelona', 14 March 1951. AGA, Presidencia, caja 73.

32. Amando de Miguel, *Sociología del franquismo* (Barcelona 1975).

33. FET–JONS, *Delegación Provincial de Barcelona*, 30 November 1940.

34. 'Algunas consideraciones políticas a cuenta de los sucesos de Barcelona', ibid.

35. Rafael Casas de la Vega, *Las milicias nacionales en la guerra de España* (Madrid 1974), 170.

36. Informe de Secretaría Provincial, Barcelona 19 September 1939, AGA, Presidencia, caja 31. Also 'Proyecto de creación de las milicias de Falange', 1940, Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, *Documentos inéditos para la historia del General Franco*, Vol.II, 1, 38–43. See also the reports of DNII on 'suspect' military officers, for example, 7 May 1942, Boletín, Madrid AGA, Presidencia, caja 16; 15 May 1942, Barcelona; and on calls for re-establishing the militia, 'Informe sobre la situación en Cataluña', FET–JONS report, August 1940, AGA, Presidencia, caja 31.

37. See Martin Blinkhorn, 'The Iberian States', in Detlef Mühlberger, *The Social Basis of European Fascist Movements* (London 1987), 320–48. Thousands of militants of the youth wing of the Catholic corporativist mass party, the CEDA (Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas), defected to the Falange in February 1936. The evolution of party membership prior to the Civil War is difficult to trace since the records have not survived. See, on Barcelona, 'Memoria que quema', *El País*, 1 November 1992, 10. Estimates of national membership for the beginning of 1936 range from 6,000 to 25,000. See Ricardo Chueca, *El fascismo en los comienzos del régimen de Franco. Un estudio sobre FET-JONS* (Madrid 1983), 130–2.

38. Josep M. Solé and Joan Villarroya, 'La trama civil del 19 de juliol a Catalunya', in *L'Avenç*, 90, (February 1986), 7; Carles Viver Pi-Sunyer and Teresa Climent, 'El personal polític de la provincia de Barcelona', in *L'Avenç*, (January 1979), 31.

39. Paul Preston, 'Populism and Parasitism: the Falange and the Spanish Establishment, 1939–75', in Martin Blinkhorn, ed., *Fascists and Conservatives* (London 1990), 138–56; Sebastian Balfour, 'From Warriors to Functionaries: The Falangist Syndical Elite, 1939–1976', in Paul Preston and Frances Lannon, eds, *Elites and Power in Twentieth-Century Spain* (Oxford 1990), 229–48.

40. Guy Hermet suggests that there were 36,000 members by July 1936, rising to 240,000 in 1937 and 650,000 by 1939. By early 1940, according to Hermet, there were 725,000. Although British diplomats estimated that the state party had around 3 million members by this time, others have estimated that in 1942 the party had 1,500,000 members nationwide. Dispatch, 2 January 1940, PRO/FO371/24507/C380/40/41. Hermet, *Los católicos en la españa franquista* (I), 373. On Catalonia, see Riquer and Culla, *El franquisme*, 65–9.

41. On the 'Old Guard', see Emilio Romero, *Los papeles reservados*, 2 vols,

(Barcelona 1985), I, 119–30. The 'Old Guard' in Barcelona constituted less than 1 per cent of the membership in 1939.

42. *Copia literal del Informe que emite la Conserjería Provincial de JANS de Barcelona al Mando Nacional de la Vieja Guardia*. March 21, 1951. AGA, Presidencia, caja 73.

43. The party was riddled with factionalism even during the Civil War. See SIFNE (Servicio de Información de la Frontera del Nordeste), report, 'Información sobre la situación de FET–JONS en Barcelona', 31 January 1938, AGA, Presidencia, caja 31. SIFNE, the Catalan Francoist state intelligence service was run by a leading member of the Barcelona bourgeoisie, José Bertrán Musitu, one-time President of the Lliga Regionalista. SIFNE was merged with the Servicio de Información y Policía Militar (SIM) in February 1938.

44. AGA, SGM, November 17, 1939, caja 30.

45. See Daniel Criach I Singla, 'El paper dels governadors civils', in Ramón Garrabou et al., *Franquisme: sobre resistència i consens a catalunya (1938–1959)* (Barcelona 1990), 151–6.

46. FET–JONS, DNII, Parte, 2 August 1945, AGA, Presidencia, caja 165.

47. See, for example, the fly-sheet reproduced in Fanés, *La vaga*, 184–5.

48. Riquer and Culla, *El franquisme*, 44.

49. PRO/FO371/73356/Z5846/596/41, 31 May 1948; Viver Pi-Sunyer, 'El personal', 33.

50. PRO/FO371/96158/WS1016/47, 21 May 1951. This was according to representatives of the Basque government-in-exile, who also pointed out that the situation in Bilbao was quite distinct. In the Basque city, 'there were no local Falange'. An 'un-official' Falangist demonstration to celebrate the third anniversary of Franco's entry into Bilbao was broken up by the local state authorities in June 1940. Letter of Director General of Security, José Finat to Pedro Gamero, Ministerial Vice-Secretary of the Movement, 1 July 1940, AGA, SGM, caja 67.

51. Ramos, 'Tranvías y conflictividad', 211–14.

52. Fernández was secretary of the local 'Old Guard' in the early 1940s. Previously he had supported General Miguel Primo de Rivera's Unión Patriótica in the 1920s. FET–JONS, DNII, Boletín 582, Barcelona 1 March 1941, 7, AGA, Presidencia, caja 16.

53. See Gemma Ramos i Ramos, 'El sindicat vertical: mecanisme de control social i instrument de poder', in Garrabou et al., eds, *Franquisme*, 149.

54. Jáuregui and Vega, *Crónica*, 140. Fernández was denounced as early as 1941 for 'anti national-syndicalist' activities. FET–JONS, DNII, 'Notas confidenciales', January 1941, AGA, Presidencia, caja 51. One of the founders of the Barcelona Falange, Carlos Trías, who was briefly to be provincial party chief, confirmed that in the early days the group with which Fernández associated had attempted to seize the leadership from Primo de Rivera. In the aftermath of the March 1951 strike, Fernández Ramírez and Eyré were defended by other members of the Old Guard. For example, letter of Francisco Saenz Iñigo to Fernández Cuesta, undated, probably March 1951, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73. Ramos, 'Tranvías', 212; Joan Thomàs, *Falange, Guerra Civil, Franquisme: FET y de las JONS de Barcelona en els primers anys de règim franquista* (Barcelona 1992), 356–8; Jaume Fabre, Josep Huertas, Antoni Ribas, *Vint anys de resistència catalana (1939–1959)* (Barcelona 1978), 23.

55. Ridruejo, *Casi unas memorias* (Buenos Aires 1962); Ramón Garriga, *Franco–Serrano Suñer: un drama político* (Barcelona 1986), 178.

56. For an account of similar activities during the Barcelona General Strike of 1902, for example, see Temma Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona* (California 1992), 63. Also '"Quietos! No lo queméis. El tranvía es amigo nuestro". Acción colectiva y revoluciones en España, 1917–1936', in *Sociología del Trabajo*, 22, 1994.

57. Ferri et al., *Las huelgas*, 154.

58. CNT, 'Sindicato único de la industria del transporte: sección tranvías', propaganda leaflet, Barcelona 1931.

59. Fanés, *La vaga*, 63.

60. The company employed 3,500 in 1931.

61. See Norman Jones, 'Regionalism and Revolution in Catalonia', in Paul Preston, ed., *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931–1939* (London 1984), 97–101.

62. See expediente 343, Arxiu General del 'Tribunal de Responsabilidades Políticas' del Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Catalunya, Barcelona.

63. Víctor Alba, *La oposición de los supervivientes, 1939–1955* (Barcelona 1978), 99–100.

64. *Copia literal del Informe que emite la Conserjería Provincial de JANS de Barcelona*, 21 March 1951.

65. The board included members of Spain's wealthiest and most influential families. Its president prior to the Civil War had been the Conde de Gamazo, a supporter of monarchist generals after 1939. Others included Juan Villalonga Villalba whose brother Ignacio, the Valencian banker, had been a leader of the Lliga Regionalista, the political movement of the Catalan nationalist middle class, and later of the CEDA, as President of the Catalan Generalitat, the regional government, from October to December 1935. Report, SGM, Vice-Secretario de Servicios, caja 21.

66. Some directors were accused of running 'war material factories' during the conflict. Others held positions in 'Negrín's Army' or passed the war 'living splendidly abroad and made their way to National Spain only shortly before Barcelona was liberated'.

67. The DNII was manned by Falangist radicals. It carried out intelligence services parallel to those of the several police bodies in each locality. In 1941 it had 693 agents nationally and, during that year, claimed to have provided 570,000 reports for Party and government, and had approximately 6,000,000 references in its file. *Arriba*, 8 May 1942, cited in Sheelagh Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era* (London 1987), 73. Until 1945 the DNII had considerable influence but was dissolved, perhaps for this reason, the following year. 'Parte', February 1946, AGA, Presidencia, caja 165. See also Riquer and Culla, *El franquisme*, 47/66/7.

68. Report of DNII, 28 August 1940, AGA, Presidencia, caja 30. It seems that the individual was officially dismissed for certain 'Red activities' dating back to the years before the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera in the 1920s, a practice that Francoist legislation facilitated.

69. Informe del Jefe Provincial, '*Información Relativa a la Compañía Tranvías de Barcelona S.A.*', March 1940, AGA, Presidencia, caja 30.

70. Informe del Jefe Provincial, 16 May 1940, July 1940, AGA, Presidencia, caja 30. For a post-strike self-justification by the tram company, see *El problema*

de las tarifas en las empresas concesionarias de servicios públicos (Barcelona 1952).

71. Dispatch, February, 1946, 70.

72. Vilar, *Historia del anti-franquismo*, 238.

73. Informe de la DNII, January 1941, AGA, Presidencia, caja 31.

74. Dispatches, Barcelona October 1945, January 1945, AGA, Presidencia, caja 165.

75. Ibidem; PRO/FO371/79684/Z/5655/10154/41 24 August 1949; 89481/WS/1015/5, 9 January 1950, for example.

76. According to the Falange, there were three organizations operating on the trams in the early 1940s. First, what it called the '*Socorro Rojo Comunista*' which was subscribed to by communists and socialists. Secondly, the anarchist CNT-FAI had a separate system for workers 'affiliated' to the old syndicalist union. Finally, there was the '*Socorro Rojo del Estat Catalá*' which was run by sympathizers of Francesc Macià's populist Catalan nationalist party. The city's police force was aware of these activities and was investigating as was the Party.

77. The money collected was then passed on to accomplices who boarded the trams under the pretext of supplying the driver or conductor with small change. Collection days normally coincided with pay days — the 2nd, 12th and 22nd of each month.

78. FET, DNII, Boletín no.677, 15 May 1942, Presidencia, caja 16.

79. FET–JONS, DNII, Dispatch, July 1945. More bombs marked Franco's visit to Barcelona in June 1949 and the anniversary of the military rising a month later. PRO/FO371/79719/Z/5241/1101/41; 79684/Z/5025/10154/41.

80. Report of Delegado Provincial to Secretaría General del Movimiento (SGM), October 1950. AGA, Presidencia, caja 59.

81. Ferri et al., *Las huelgas*, 150–1.

82. The tram boycott, as a cross-class protest, has been seen as the 'gesture of a city community, rooted in old traditions and struggles'. This form of collective identity was undermined by the developmentalism of the 1960s which gave rise to a new working-class movement. Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers and the City*, 25–8.

83. Fanés, *La vaga*, 179. For its role in the boycott HOAC's newspaper *¡Tu!* was suspended in June 1951. Basilisa López García, *Aproximación a la historia de la HOAC, 1946–1981* (Madrid 1995), 49–60.

84. See letter of Inspección Nacional de la Vieja Guardia, 31 May 1951, and hostile Falangist articles in *Pasquín*, February, October, December 1949 and October 1950, AGA, SGM, caja 71. Catholicism was principally represented in the government by Alberto Martín Artajo, President of Acción Católica, appointed as Foreign Minister in 1945, who was concerned about 'communist infiltration' into HOAC. See Javier Tusell, *Franco y los católicos* (Madrid 1984), 214–25. The Falangist newspaper *Arriba* later blamed HOAC for the disturbances. Editorial 24 April 1951, Feliciano Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos en España* (Madrid 1991), 128.

85. FET–JONS, report, 26 February 1951, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73.

86. Report of the SEU, '*El problema de los tranvías y sus repercusiones en la Universidad*', undated, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73, 1.

87. Report to SGM, 26 February, 1951, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73.

88. On the SEU, see Miguel A. Ruiz Carnicer, *El Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), 1939–1965: La socialización política de la juventud universitaria en el franquismo* (Madrid 1996). On Barcelona students and the strike, see

Josep María Colomer i Calsina, *Els estudiants de Barcelona sota el franquisme* (2 vols), (Barcelona 1978), Vol.I, 85–93.

89. The FNEC's slogan was 'All united against the young gentlemen (señoritos) of the SEU and the Falangists'. The FNEC competed with the SEU for recognition by international organizations, like Catholic student bodies. Colomer, *Els estudiants*, 68–91; *Catalunya sota*, 356–9. Students had already protested in 1947, turning over trams and setting them alight. International Union of Students, *La lucha de los estudiantes españoles contra el fascismo* (1950), 41.

90. FET–JONS report, 26 February 1951, 1–2.

91. *La Vanguardia Española*, 27 February 1951.

92. Ibid. 3.

93. This was the opinion of Party informants.

94. Some Falangists argued that the government underestimated the intelligence of the population in talking constantly of 'underground provocateurs'. The lack of names and affiliations and news of their corresponding punishment was widely questioned (6–7).

95. A reference to anti-Franco *guerrilla* rebels, probably anarchists.

96. FET–JONS report, 2

97. It was proposed that students incur 'academic sanctions'. The Rector of the university was denounced for not acting with sufficient firmness against 'wrongdoers'. However, on 26 February, an order was read to the students warning of the consequences if they did not desist from subversive behaviour. Only one professor refused to participate in the proclaiming of this official warning. Many students continued to stay away from classes. Armed and mounted police cordoned off the faculty of medicine, reawakening resistance. There was still no news of the condition of the more than 100 students already arrested. A demonstration was mounted and on being denied entry to the campus the commander in charge insisted, gun in hand. The students responded to his threats of opening fire by jeering and booing and hurling tomatoes. The crowd of spectators which had formed provided loud shouts of encouragement. On gaining entry, forty students were arrested at random. The Civil Governor, realizing the provocation, ordered that they be released. In the evening the doors of the university were closed and classes suspended. Undated SEU report, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73.

98. Report of the DNII, *'Incidentes en Barcelona con motivo de la elevación de tarifas del transporte urbano de superficie'*, 1 March 1951, 2.

99. Theoretically, he had control of all forces of order independent of the military, as well as access to the Guardia Civil which strictly was a part of the army. In March 1941 two new police bodies were established: (i) the Cuerpo General de Policía (divided into 'criminal' and 'politico-social' brigades) composed, by the end of the 1940s in Catalonia, of 800 non-uniformed functionaries, and (ii) the Policía Armada, formed at the time of the dissolution of the Republican Assault Guard. There were about 2,000 in this force at the end of the 1940s, mostly in Barcelona. There was also a battery of para-police bodies and citizen volunteer forces. Riquer and Culla, *El franquisme*, 45–6. Ultimate power lay with the Captain-General and his military forces.

100. *La Vanguardia Española*, 25 February 1951.

101. FET–JONS Report, 27 February 1951, 1

102. FET–JONS, Report, 'Incidentes en Barcelona', 8.

103. 'Not a soul used the trams' from 1 to 5 March. Letter of British Consulate

General Barcelona PRO/FO371/96156/WS1016/17, 6 March 1951.

104. The new Civil Governor, imposed on Barcelona after the strike, at first made a point of controlling food prices and visiting the city's food markets. A state propaganda campaign was initiated denying government responsibility for food prices. Report, 'Informaciones de Barcelona', 27 April 1951, AGA, caja 73; 'Anglo–French Hatred the Cause of Our Penury', *Madrid* 18 May 1951; PRO/FO371/96157/WS/1016/27, 16 April 1951. But prices soon rose again. 'Situación política'.

105. PRO/FO371/96156/WS1016/7, 6 March 1951.

106. Ferri et al., *Las huelgas*, 160. Thereafter, police were ordered 'to go slow' and 'take things easier'. Consulate General, 6 March.

107. *El Correo Catalán*, 3 March 1951.

108. 'Incidentes', 10. To the dismay of Party *militantes*, the tram company placed an announcement on a noticeboard advising workers not to charge passengers who displayed a party membership card, thus blowing the cover of the Falangist strikebreakers. This was interpreted by the Party as an attempt to set the population against it — once again the focus of popular discontent. Consequently, after 3 March, even loyal Party militants refused to board the trams any further.

109. The committee was composed of the following groups: the PSUC — the Catalan communist party in exile; the Moviment Socialista de Catalunya — a breakaway section of the main organization of dissident marxism of the 1930s, the POUM; the Front Nacional de Catalunya; Estat Catalá, Unió Democrática de Catalunya; and the principal clandestine union bodies of the socialists and the anarchists, the UGT and CNT respectively.

110. Ferri et al., *Las huelgas*, 161.

111. The meeting was composed of the Presidents of the Official Chamber of Commerce, Amadeo Maristany y Oliver, the Official Chamber of Industry, Antonio M. Llopis Galofre, the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, Joaquín María de Nadal, the Official Syndical Agrarian Chamber, Luis Pascual Roca, the Instituto Agrícola Catalan de San Isidro, José de Fontcuberta y de Casanova, the Fomento del Trabajo Nacional, Pedro Gual Villalbí, and the Cámara Oficial de la Propiedad Urbana, Ignacio de Bufala y de Ferrater. Ramos, 'Tranvías', 215–16.

112. Baeza was determined to restore his tarnished image, particularly in the eyes of Madrid's director general of security who had been dispatched to monitor events. Ferri et al., *Las huelgas*, 162.

113. 'El Ministro de Obras Públicas suspende las vigentes tarifas de los tranvías de Barcelona', *El Correo Catalán*, 6 March 1951.

114. Terrades was owner of one of the biggest textile firms in Barcelona, La España Industrial. He had been an ineffectual Mayor since 1945.

115. During the General Strike of 1902 in the city women had also prevented the trams from running, persuading people to alight and putting pressure on businesses to close down. See Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 63–6.

116. '*Copia literal del informe que emite la conserjería provincial de JANS de Barcelona al mando nacional de la Vieja Guardia*', 21 March 1951, AGA, SGM, caja 73, 3.

117. It is difficult to estimate the number or influence of such 'entryists' at this time. It seems likely, however, that in the syndical elections of 1950 substantial numbers of anti-Francoists, both associated with the old political groups of the left and independent democrats, would have participated, often at the insistence of

other workers anxious to gain some worthwhile representation in the structure. See Ramos, 'El sindicat'.

118. Ferri et al., *Las huelgas*, 164.

119. More opprobrium was heaped upon the vice-secretary of the party, his 'despotism', 'the immorality of his private life', and general lack of capacity for the job. *Copia literal*.

120. Ibid.

121. Strikes were also organized in the industrial suburb of Hospitalet. See Carles Santacana i Torres, *Victoriosos i derrotats: el franquisme a l'Hospitalet, 1939–1951* (Barcelona 1994), 352.

122. Report of the Civil Governor, *'Informe de sucesos ocurridos en Barcelona durante los días 12 y 13 de los corrientes'*, 14 March 1951, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73, 1.

123. See also Jáuregui and Vega, *Crónica*, 141.

124. A 'small car' was less conspicuous than the official limousine.

125. Eduardo Quintela Bóveda was head of the Catalan 'Social Brigade' of the Cuerpo General de Policía and a veteran of the pre-Civil War anti-CNT struggle.

126. According to British officials, three people were killed and several injured on the first day of the strike. PRO/FO371/96158/WS1016/45; *The Times*, 23 May 1951.

127. Balfour to Morrison, 21 March 1951, PRO/FO371/96156/WS1016/19; Fanés, *La vaga*, 137–41. In the absence of immediate military force from this quarter 'the Chief Admiral of the Naval Sector of the military services' offered to Baeza, 'on a personal basis', the solution of making him head of a state of Military Authority. The Governor convinced him of his ability to control the situation and that only in the event of the government declaring a state of war would such a step be necessary.

128. Telegraph, Madrid to British Foreign Office, PRO/FO371/96156/WS1016/18, 14 March 1951; Balfour to Morrison, 21 March 1951. See also Preston, *Franco*, 609. It has been suggested that the strike was looked upon by leading monarchists as an opportunity to stage a possible anti-Franco coup to restore a pro-monarchist government. See Vilar, *Historia del anti-franquismo*, 242–4. Franco appears to have been concerned by such a possibility. It may have been partly for this reason that the dictator ordered naval vessels to the port of Barcelona. Bautista Sánchez was thought to be a candidate to lead a new monarchist government with Franco retained merely as head of the military forces. See Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, *Un reinado en la sombra* (Barcelona 1981), 163–4. The Captain-General was virtually the only state official in Barcelona to survive in post in the aftermath of the 1951 strike. Later, in 1957, during a further tram-strike in the city, he had one of his many clashes with the severe pro-Franco replacement Civil Governor, General Felipe Acedo Colunga, over the repressive strategy of the latter, and suffered a heart attack, it was said, during a heated telephone conversation with Madrid. Franco was said to remark that he had thereby been 'saved the trouble of having to sack him'.

129. *Diario de Barcelona*, 13 March 1951.

130. In total 3,500 district Falange members and 1,500 Guardia de Franco and 'Old Guard' were mobilized in strikebreaking and restoring order. During the crisis Falange militants were deployed to protect the strategic buildings of the city,

like radio stations and newspaper offices, the Post Office, telephone and telegraph buildings, and the Diputación. Falangist squads formed into 'services against strike-groups'. Three hundred assisted the state's forces of order directly in their operations. Party men also offered assistance in maintaining supplies. For example, they were made responsible for transporting and guarding 100 tons of coal from the port to the gas factory.

131. FET–JONS, DNS, Report of Textile Syndicate, 'Relación de industrias en paro a las 11.30 del día 13 de marzo de 1951', AGA, Presidencia, caja 73; PRO/F0371/96158/WS1016/44, 9 May 1951.

132. PRO/FO371/96158/WS/1016/46, 23 May 1951.

133. PRO/FO371/96156/WS1016/8, 14 March 1951.

134. Letter of International Dept of Labour Party, to British government at request of exiled Spanish socialist party (PSOE), March 1951, PRO/FO371/96157/WS1016/21. Sir Robert Hodgson, who had been the representative of the British in Franco's zone during the Civil War, and was sympathetic to Franco and his regime, estimated that about 800 arrests were made in relation to the Barcelona strike. Hodgson, *Spain Resurgent* (London 1953), 240.

135. PRO/FO371/96164/WS1016/134/135. PRO/FO371/96159/WS1016/85, 30 July 1951.

136. FET–JONS, Secretaría General, Gabinete de Prensa, May 1951, AGA, SGM, caja 73.

137. 'Informaciones', 2; PRO/FO371/96158/WS1016/40 9 May 1951; 96157/WS/1016/33 25 April 1951.

138. The protest was particularly strong in Grácia, Sans and Poble Nou and, further out, Mataró. FET–JONS Report, 'Situación política y social de Barcelona', 5 May 1951. The Guardia de Franco were a kind of surrogate Falange militia. Each province had a local 'Franco Guard' which was used at rallies, and wore a distinctive uniform, but was officially unarmed.

139. Quoted in report of British Consul, PRO/FO371/96156/WS1016/9, 21 March 1951. See also the similar tone of speeches of Fernández Cuesta and Sanz Orrio at the Falangist 'National Workers' Congress, held in Madrid 4–11 March 1951.

140. FET–JONS Report, 'Informaciones de Barcelona', 27 April 1951, AGA, SGM, caja 73.

141. Letter of Alberto García Ortiz, 19 May 1951, AGA, SGM, caja 71. The Provincial Head of the party in Valencia was compelled to write to the Secretary-General in November 1951 to complain that it had been announced in the local press that transport fares were to be raised in the city and the Party had known nothing about it. It was seen as another attempt to discredit the Falange. 27 November, 1951, FET–JONS, Valencia, AGA, SGM, caja 71.

142. Letter to Secretary-General of Movement, 12 February 1952, AGA, SGM, caja 87.

143. See letter of Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, Secretario-General of FET–JONS, 11 April 1951, AGA, SGM, caja 71. The National Syndical Delegate, Sanz Orrio, had already been in contact with the Inspección Nacional de la Vieja Guardia and found that the JANS had been involved in the strike. The JANS had blamed the syndical organization for the 'difficult economic–social situation'. See his letter to Fernández Cuesta, 6 April 1951, AGA, SGM, caja 71.

144. 'Informaciones de Barcelona'; 'Situación política'.

145. Report, 21 March 1951, '*Algunas consideraciones políticas a cuenta de los sucesos de Barcelona*', SGM, AGA, caja 73.

146. Despite proven inefficiency and corruption, it was normal for Governors, on relinquishing positions, to be appointed head of an industrial syndicate. 'Informaciones de Barcelona'; 'Situación política'.

147. *Copia literal del Informe que emite la Conserjería Provincial de JANS de Barcelona al Mando Nacional de la Vieja Guardia*.

148. See Sueiro and Díaz Nosty, *Historia del franquismo*, II, 168–9; PRO/FO371/96158/WS1016/45, 23 May 1951; 96159/WS1016/56, 5 June 1951; AGA, Presidencia, caja 73, '*Nota informativa respecto al ambiente y orden público en Valladolid*', 14 March, 1951. *The Daily Telegraph* on 25 April 1951 reported that 80,000 workers were out for two days in the Basque Country.

149. Leaflets calling for a peaceful demonstration in Madrid on the same day demanding the abolition of the state syndicates were also distributed. Mainly owing to state repression, the protest was restricted to a partial boycott of trams in Madrid. PRO/FO371/96157/WS1016/29, 24 April 1951; 96158/WS1016/46, 23 May 1951. On government threats in the press, see *Arriba*, 13 May 1951; *ABC*, 17 May 1951; *Ya*, 18 May 1951; *Arriba*, 17 May 1951: 'The law must act without mercy against the least attempt at disorder.'

150. FET–JONS, report, *'Hoja Clandestina — "La Conquista del Estado"'*, 1 March 1951, AGA, Presidencia, caja 73, 14. Aranda believed that by April strikes were being organized by the exiled opposition to Franco. The regime 'had failed in its duty', which had led to the Barcelona events, which, in turn, had aroused popular political dissent. British Embassy Officials' conversation with General Aranda, PRO/FO371/WS1016/37, 30 April 1951.

151. Carta del Delegado Nacional de Sindicatos, SGM, AGA.

152. Carta Reservada del Delegado Nacional, 15 March 1951, SGM, AGA, caja 73. Sanz was, within months, removed from his post and made Ambassador to Pakistan.

153. AGA, Presidencia, Caja 59.

154. *Algunas consideraciones políticas*'. This view is open to question. Hunger atomized social groups but there was no real 'tranquility'.

155. *La Vanguardia Española*, 20–21 July 1951.

156. Although there had been two relatively minor Cabinet reshuffles in the intervening period, in 1941 and 1945.

157. PRO/FO371/96158/WS1016/41, 16 May 1951.

158. Pablo Martín Aceña and Francisco Comín, *INI: 50 años de industrialización en España* (Madrid 1991), 111.

159. Josep Fontana, 'Reflexiones sobre la naturaleza y las consequencias del franquismo', in Josep Fontana, ed., *España bajo el franquismo* (Barcelona 1986).

160. Alba, *La oposición*, 321; Balfour, *Dictatorship*, 28.

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